



Washington Butterfly
Association

G'num*

The newsletter of the Washington Butterfly Association

P.O. Box 31317 Seattle WA 98103

www.naba.org/chapters/nabaws

*G'num is the official greeting of WBA. It is derived from the name of common Washington butterfly food plants, of the genus *Eriogonum*.

WBA Meeting Programs

WBA meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month. They are held at the UW Center for Urban Horticulture (3501 NE 41st Street, Seattle) and begin at 7:00 p.m. The first fifteen minutes are used for social reception and viewing of displays.

JANUARY 15:

Winter Party – potluck and white elephant gift exchange starting at 5pm at the home of Jon Pelham.

FEBRUARY 2:

“Butterflies and Wildlife of Northwestern Brazil’s Rainforests” – *Dave and Jo Nunnellee*

MARCH 2:

“Exploring Utah Habitat” – *Ian Young and Mary Maxwell-Young*

Message From Our President

by Maureen Traxler

Board Retreat

The WBA Board held its biennial retreat in November. We discussed two important topics—the work plan for the next two years, and WBA’s policy on butterfly collecting. Future issues of G’Num will have more detailed information about the work plan and the collecting policy. For now I’ll tell you that the work plan focuses on education, conservation, membership and field trips. We’re looking to WBA’s mission statement for inspiration and vision of what WBA can be in the future. I hope all of you will also think about what you’d like WBA to be, The Board would love to hear your ideas—we want WBA to be an organization you want to be part of.

Volunteers

One of the goals of the WBA work plan is to involve more members in WBA activities. Here are some of the activities we’d like you to help with. Please contact me if you’d like to work with the Board on any of these. None of these projects requires a lot of time—you can choose how much of your time to share with WBA. My phone number is on the back of this newsletter.

- Design and place ad for spring butterfly class
- Coordinate sales of WBA materials (tee shirts, checklists, field info booklets)
- Help design booth to be used as a WBA display
- Sell donated books on Ebay.
- Help with a butterfly garden project

You can also find volunteer opportunities on WBA’s web site at www.naba.org/chapters/nabaws

Our species profile for this issue is the Yuma Skipper, *Ochodes yuma*.

The Yuma Skipper is a member of the family Hesperidae, the large worldwide family of butterflies known as skippers. In Washington State most of our skippers fit into two subfamilies, the Pyrginae or "spreadwing" skippers, and the Hesperinae or "grass" skippers. In Washington there are 29 species of skippers, 17 of which are grass (monocot) skippers. The grass skippers include the genus *Ochodes*, which is represented by two species in Washington.



Like all grass skippers those in the genus *Ochodes* often hold their wings in two planes, the hind wings horizontal and the forewings elevated at an angle. A common alternate position is with both wings held together over the back, with only the ventral sides visible. Skippers in the genus *Ochodes* are typified by orange wings with poorly contrasting yellow spots on the ventral hindwing (vhw).



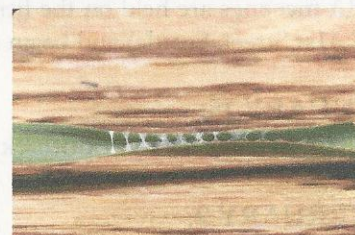
While *Ochodes sylvanoides*, the Woodland Skipper, is enormously abundant in late summer, the considerably larger *O. yuma* is rare in

Washington, occurring only in marshy areas with Common Reed (*Phragmites communis*), its larval foodplant. The Yuma Skipper does not venture far from its aquatic host plant, and may be found flying among dense vegetation at the base of these tall grasses, or nectaring on nearby flowers. *Ochodes yuma* has a late summer flight period and has been reported on the wing from late June to early September.

Within Washington State the Yuma Skipper is known only from an established population discovered by Jon Pelham at Dry Falls in Grant County, and from one or two tiny colonies along the Columbia River in Klickitat County discovered by Bob & Thea Pyle. The species occurs in small patchy colonies in several western states including Oregon, the Great Basin of California, western Colorado and points further south. While *O. yuma* apparently utilizes only the native variety of Common Reed, the very similar introduced European variety of the same plant is

considered a noxious invasive weed by agricultural interests. As a result detailed mapping is now available showing stands of both varieties in Washington, which may make it easier for lepidopterists to locate new colonies of this rare butterfly.

O. yuma is single-brooded in Washington, reportedly double-brooded further south. The life cycle is poorly documented, but *O. yuma* apparently overwinters in the egg or first instar larva (a second instar larva was recovered in Washington in the spring). Even the earliest instars create shelters by rolling the middle part of a *Phragmites* leaf into a circular tube and stitching it together with silk strands.



The larva lives in the tube, venturing out, apparently at night, to feed on the tip of the shelter leaf. When the leaf end has been consumed the larva moves to another leaf and creates a new shelter. Old abandoned shelters with their eaten leaf ends are easily spotted in proper habitat. The larva grows very slowly but reaches a surprisingly large size. In captivity pupation occurred within the leaf nest, but in the field many empty nests were examined without finding any pupae, suggesting that the mature larvae may wander to another location before pupating. On eclosing, *O. yuma* adults stay close to their host plants, flying out only to nectar on adjacent flowers. Adult males can often be seen searching for females, flying slowly through dense vegetation at the base of the huge *Phragmites* plants, where poison oak is usually abundant.

The Yuma Skipper resembles the very common Woodland Skipper, but is much larger and usually less distinctly marked.



The vhw yellow spot band may be virtually absent in *O. yuma*, especially in males. While a small male *O. yuma* might be

confused with a large female *O. sylvanoides*, there is a marked difference in size between comparable sexes. Males of *O. yuma* can be distinguished from females by the presence of a black stigma on the dorsal forewing, by their smaller size and usually by less distinct yellow spots on the vhw.

In the short, dark days of winter, the memory of a favorite butterfly can cheer me up wonderfully. The poet William Wordsworth described this cheering experience when he wrote of seeing a field of daffodils on a long-one summer day:

I gazed and gazed but little thought
What wealth to me the show had brought
For oft when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood
They flash upon the inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude.

My favorite Mexican butterfly is a Garamus or Avocado Swallowtail, a black and light-yellow beauty, at first glance rather like our Lorquin's Admiral. I have seen this friendly

swallowtail during each of three winter visits to friends who have a wonderful Mexican garden. During my most recent visit one seemed like an old buddy coming over to greet me in that sun-soaked garden.

My favorite Puget Sound butterfly, which I bet I share with many WBAs, is another swallowtail, our own Western Tiger. No matter how often I am greeted by this flitting black-and-yellow friend, it never fails to lift my spirits, like a pal yelling across a street, "Howdy, Tom!"

Let the winter sun cut across back yards if it must, memories of last summer's yellow and black butterfly dancing in those same yards flash upon my own inward eye.

Tom O'Connell

Winter Party

What: Potluck and Gift Exchange
When: Saturday, January 15 5pm-10pm
Where: Home of Jon Pelham

Hope you are ready for a great party!
Bring a main dish, salad, or dessert and your favorite beverage.
Also bring a white elephant gift of around \$5 value ... something silly or butterfly related.

Dress is casual.

Directions to Jon Pelham's home:
5106 238th Place SW
Mountlake Terrace, WA

Heading north on I-5:
Take exit #178 (236th SW). Turn right on 236th SW and continue straight to 52nd Ave West. Turn right and go two and one half blocks to 238th Place SW. Turn left on 238th Place SW. Jon's house is the third on the right.

Heading south on I-5
Take exit #179 (220th SW). Turn left on 220th SW and go to 56th Ave W. Turn right on 56th Ave W and continue straight until 236th SW. Turn left on 236th SW and continue straight to 52nd Ave West. Turn right and go two and one half blocks to 238th Place SW. Turn left on 238th Place SW. Jon's house is the third on the right.

From 405 N:
Turn south on I-5 and follow directions for south I-5.

For more information, email wabutterflyassoc@earthlink.net or call 206-364-4935.

Those of us who love WBA believe it is a unique organization. The main reason it is special is the people. Lots of people contribute to WBA, and we appreciate everything you do. I want to use this G'Num to thank some people whose roles are changing this year.

Dave Nunnallee.

Dave was WBA's first vice-president, but that's not his only contribution. It is impossible to decide which of Dave's contributions is most important. Dave is responsible, with Jon Pelham, Richard Lindstrom and others, for making WBA field trips not only good for seeing butterflies, but for learning about plants, seeing places you otherwise wouldn't visit, and for making new friends. Dave is also responsible for teaching us about butterflies, caterpillars, and butterfly eggs. He has written a species profile for almost every issue of the WBA newsletter, and for most of our member meetings. He not only has vast knowledge of butterflies, but he shares his beautiful photographs with us. He compiled the Checklist of Washington Butterflies, and the Washington Butterflies Field Information booklet. Dave has agreed to continue his WBA contributions, but has stepped down from the Board.

Jo Nunnallee

Jo is another of WBA's founders. WBA prides itself on being a friendly, welcoming organization. We have Jo to thank for that. She and Dave arrive at the Center for Urban Horticulture early every month to open the doors for the rest of the members. Jo greets new members and makes sure they are introduced to others

and feel welcome. For several years, she provided refreshments at the member meetings. Like Dave, Jo has agreed to continue her WBA activities, but has stepped down from the Board.

Mary Maxwell-Young

Mary was a Board member for more than 2 years, and served as WBA vice-president for one year. Mary organized WBA's social events, including the holiday party, the fall picnic, and the winter outings such as last year's trip to the Pacific Science Center butterfly exhibit. Mary also used her artistic talent to design WBA's logo and patch. Mary stepped down from the Board last spring.

Roberta Roberts

For the last two years, Roberta has handled WBA's membership records. NABA went through a membership records transition during Roberta's tenure and it made her job a challenging task. Roberta managed to keep all the loose ends together through the frustrations. It's been a challenging task, and we appreciate the effort, patience and humor Roberta devoted to WBA.

Member Noticeline

Member Noticeline: This is an "opt in" service for WBA members in which announcements, butterfly related articles, and other WBA information will be sent to you via e-mail. We are very careful to not overuse this method but some very interesting and timely information has been sent.

Just send your e-mail address to: wabutterflyassoc@earthlink.net and in the subject slot put: WBA Noticeline. You may "opt out" at any time by sending a message to that effect to this same address.

WBA Mission Statement

**The Washington Butterfly Association is devoted to
scientific understanding and enjoyment of butterflies and their ecology
through conservation and education.**

Board Members

Maureen Traxler	President
David Williams	Vice President
Gwen Warren	Secretary
Marty Hanson	Treasurer
Richard Youel	Past-President
Idie Ulsh	Programs
Jon Pelham	Science Advisor
Bill Yake	At-Large
Marjorie Kittel	Hospitality
Carolyn Heberlein	Publicity/Newsletter/Website

Committees

Joyce Bergen	Annual Conference
Tom Boucher	Membership
Bob Hardwick	WBA Research
David & Jo Nunnallee	Field Trips

Membership Application

Washington Butterfly Association

The Washington State Chapter of the
North American Butterfly Association (NABA)

Yes! I want to join WBA/NABA and receive *American Butterflies*, *Butterfly Garden News* and *WBA Newsletter*, as well as other member privileges.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone: _____ Email Address: _____

Special Interest (circle): Listing, Gardening, Observation, Photography, Conservation, and Other _____

Dues enclosed (circle): Regular \$30 (\$60 outside U.S., Canada, Mexico)

Family \$40 (\$80 outside U.S., Canada, Mexico)

Payment must be in U.S. dollars.

Mail application form to: NABA, 4 Delaware Rd., Morristown, NJ 07960 .