



Washington Butterfly

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 19

Winter Potluck Party including a white elephant gift exchange. Lots of fun and a chance to “re-gift!”

February 6

“Elusive Butterflies of Washington, Part 2” by Bob Hardwick

Last September Bob presented the WBA program on Elusive Butterflies of Washington. It was so interesting and there were so many questions that he only got half way through his presentation. By popular request, Bob will be back to finish his program. Bob will give identification tips on the species and identify their habitats.

March 5

“Identification and Biology of the Immature Stages of Greater Fritillaries”

Dr. David James, from the WSU Dept. of Entomology, will take us through the fascinating development of greater fritillaries. This complex process had for many years been a mystery to scientists. He will present images of eggs, larvae, and pupae of Washington's *Speyeria* spp. and also information on rearing and their defensive secretions. Much of this information will also be included in the book which he and Dave Nunnallee are co-authoring.

April 2

“Creating and Maintaining a Successful Butterfly Garden” by David Droppers

Want to create a habitat for many of the declining urban and suburban butterflies? Want to help offset the destruction of our remaining habitat? Learn some of the tricks to gardening for butterflies in a region that is not quite like any other in the U.S. Have your garden shimmering with Azures in the spring, graced by Swallowtails in the summer, and dancing with Skippers in the fall. Presentation will focus on west of the Cascades but will address the east as well.

Late March

Field trips begin. Watch the web site.

June 27-29

Save the date. We will be visiting the Blue Mountains at the Annual Conference in Dayton Washington. Much more in the next issue of G'Num.

To net or not, collect or not.

As I get back into butterflying, after over 65 years of little involvement, I'm struck by its many dimensions as well as the bits of dogma that have grown up around it. As a youngster back when virtually no one challenged catching, killing, and sticking pins through the beasts, I was driven by a primitive *desire to possess* and fascination and, in the spirit of "listing" and "collecting," was always delighted to add a new species or a more perfect specimen for one I already had.

From this background, I'm now struck by controversy over whether to net or not to net as well as widespread discomfort with "collecting." Butterflying has an obvious spectrum or gradient from awe, emotion, and aesthetic delight at one end through "listing" and collecting trophy photographs toward the middle and on to serious collecting and scientific study at the other end, with legitimacy along most points in between.

At least from my perspective, some of the choices along the gradient seem to be based on shaky assumptions. Arguments against netting seem to assume, usually incorrectly, that it is quite disruptive to populations and conservation. I'm more comfortable with arguments that foregoing the net is more sporting and requires more skill, or that photos make better "trophies," or even a straightforward emotional/aesthetic preference for minimal harassment. Most of us share a revulsion against causing unnecessary harm or suffering to any living thing. But, given the huge array of things that cause butterfly mortality, the occasional damage to one that is netted, examined, and released is tiny. Unless one is taking multiple specimens from a small or threatened population, the same can usually be said even for collecting, especially for occasional voucher specimens for study or verification of species distributions.

While foregoing the net or collecting makes a nice statement of our concern, in truth we impact butterflies and other species far more by our collective destruction of habitat--for housing, farms, freeways, shopping malls, energy production, etc., etc.--than by any direct harassing or collecting. The way our society is organized, it's extremely difficult to remove ourselves from these collective impacts, especially with growth and rate of growth having become the standard measures of what is claimed as "good." Yet growth is the very thing that is swallowing and disrupting habitats. On the brighter side, involving ourselves with butterflies, birds, flowers, salmon, or other species helps us understand what we are doing, to ourselves as well as the other species with whom we share the planet.

As always,

Al Wagar
President

WBA Noticeline

It is time to re-signup for the WBA Noticeline. The WBA Noticeline is a free "opt-in" service for members of the Butterfly Association. Selected scientific butterfly articles, general information and announcements are E-mailed to those who wish to receive it. Members often contribute articles to this service. We are careful not to share your addresses, send non-WBA information or to overuse this service.

WBA Mission Statement

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

Swallowtail Seasons: The First Butterfly Big Year



Bob Pyle begins the first Butterfly Big Year.
left to right: Al Wagar, David Droppers, Robert Michael Pyle

On January 1, our own award-winning author and lepidopterist Robert Michael Pyle, Bob to most of us, began a grand adventure--to find, experience, and identify as many of the 800 species of butterflies in the United States and Canada as he can in one calendar year. Houghton Mifflin will publish his encounters with butterflies, people, and landscape as a book to be entitled *Swallowtail Seasons: The First Butterfly Big Year*.

In wishing him godspeed, WBA bought the first tank of gas for the 1982 Honda Civic in which Bob expects to travel approximately 75,000 miles during the year. You can track his progress on http://www.xerces.org/Butterfly_Conservation/butterflyathon.html and at <http://www.orionmagazine.org>.

Support butterfly conservation by pledging to the 2008 Butterfly-A-Thon. All proceeds will go to the Xerces Society's projects in rare butterfly conservation.

In addition to founding The Xerces Society in 1971, Bob has published fifteen books, including the Audubon Society *Field Guide to North American Butterflies*, *The Handbook for Butterfly Watchers*, and *The Butterflies of Cascadia*, as well as award-winning literary works such as *Wintergreen*, *The Thunder Tree*, *Where Bigfoot Walks*, *Walking the High Ridge*, and *Sky Time in Gray's River* which just won the National Outdoor Book Award for Natural History Literature.

Bob sees the butterfly big year as a chance to aid butterfly conservation while gaining a broad perspective on the state of butterfly habitats across the continent and their response to climate change. Above all, it should be a grand, extended field trip, and he looks forward to sharing it with WBA as well as all friends of butterflies and the natural world.

Stewart Wechsler's Camp Long Programs for Winter 2008

Camp Long www.ci.seattle.wa.us/parks/environment/camplong.htm

5200 35th Ave SW

Seattle, WA 98126

Please register by the day before the program.

Winter Woodland Walks at Camp Long 1/19/08 and 2/9/08

Learn the stories of the native and alien plants and how to identify them in winter. Visit with our winter birds from siskins to possible Pileated Woodpeckers and maybe a Merlin. Check under logs for salamanders, spiders, slugs and centipedes. A quick poke in the pond might produce a Northwestern Salamander or a juvenile dragonfly. Audiences of all ages and levels will find it fascinating and learn without getting lost. All Ages

Fees: Adult Fee \$8, Child Fee \$6

Program #24164 Saturday, January 19th 2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Program #24165 Saturday, February 9th 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Nighttime at the Beach at Mee Kwa Mooks Park (West Seattle) Saturday, 1/19/08

Both kids and adults always love to see sea creatures when the tidal blankets are removed. See sea stars and maybe their cucumber cousins, crabs and chitons. We might see naked nudi-branches and if we are lucky maybe a little giant octopus. Enjoy a low -2.7' low tide! Dress warmly and bring a flashlight. Call Camp Long at (206) 684-7434 for directions. All ages welcome, but must be able to walk on slippery seaweed.

Fee: \$8 per person

Program #24159 Saturday, January 19th 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Owl Hoots in Seattle Parks at Camp Long 2/9/08, 2/16/08, 3/15/08

Join us for a dusk-to-dark owl prowl through Camp Long's woodland. Early winter is courtship time! Giving a hoot might get a holler or scream response. Dress for the weather and bring a flashlight. **Please register early to reserve a space - owl walks are popular.** All ages welcome.

Fees: \$8 for adults and \$6 for children.

Program #24155 Saturday February 9th 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Program #24156 Saturday February 16th 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

Program #24220 Saturday March 15th 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Salamander Love Night - Camp Long 2/16/08

Did you know that our two local mole salamander species mate and lay eggs right around Valentine's Day? Come with us to look for these long-toed lovers, their Northwest friends, and the eggs in their watery bedrooms. Dress for the weather and bring a flashlight. A short hike in the woods may produce plethodon (lungless) salamanders - Red-backed and Ensatina. Ages 6 and older

Fee: \$8 per person

Program #24162 Saturday, February 16th 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Early Bird Walk - Camp Long Sat, 3/15/08

Learn birding strategies and tips from an expert birder. Yellow-rumped Warblers are now migrating. Will the Winter Wrens be singing their intricate spring songs? Beginners especially welcome, but all levels are invited. Adult oriented, but kids welcome.

Program #24157 Saturday, March 15th 8:30 – 10:30 am

Early Spring Native Plant Walk Camp Long Sat, March 15, 2008 (O.K., Technically Late Winter)

Learn plant stories and identification tips from a local wild plant expert. The first spring wildflowers should be blooming and others sprouting. Adult oriented, but kids welcome! Ages 6 and older

Fee: \$8 per person

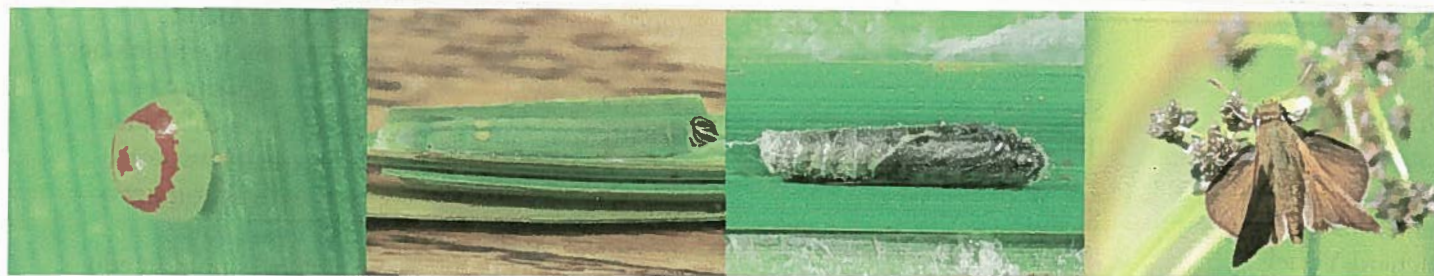
Program #24158 Saturday March 15th 10:30 am - 12:30 pm.

Salamander Search - Camp Long - Saturday, March, 15, 2008

Join us for a search in the pond and under logs in the woods for both our Long-toed and Northwestern Salamanders and Red-backed and Ensatina salamanders. Beetles, slugs and other critters will be found too! All ages

Fee: \$8 per person

Program #24163 Saturday, March 15th 1:30 - 3:00 pm



The Dun 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 Pyrgine or "spreadwing" skippers, and the Hesperine or "grass" skippers. In Washington there are 29 species of skippers, 17 of which are grass (monocot) skippers. The grass skippers include the genus *Euphyes*, which is represented by only a single species in Washington, the Dun Skipper.

Like all grass skippers the Dun Skipper often holds its 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 side visible. *Euphyes vestris* is a relatively uncommon skipper, found across a significant range but generally only in isolated small pockets. The larval food plants of the Dun Skipper include various species of sedges, thus this butterfly is typically found in damp ditch or marsh-edge habitats where sedges thrive. The Dun Skipper is arguably our drabest butterfly, with wings toned in dull golden brown with diffused grayish borders. Ventrally the wings are virtually unmarked, while dorsally on the forewing the female has a few small white spots and the male bears a dark stigma streak. *Euphyes vestris* is single-brooded and flies in midsummer, with flight records restricted to the months of June and July.

In Washington State the Dun Skipper is found mostly west of the Cascade Mountains, but also occurs in small isolated pockets in Kittitas and Pend Oreille Counties. Beyond Washington State a similar pattern continues along the west coast from BC to California, with most populations west of the mountains, however the species also occurs widely across the US east of the Rocky Mountains.

Euphyes vestris overwinters in the chrysalis stage. Adults eclose beginning in early June, and they apparently mate fairly soon after eclosure. In captivity a female from Kittitas County oviposited about June 27, and the eggs

began hatching around July 6th. Large, stark white, dome-shaped eggs are laid singly on the contrasting dark green sedge leaves. After hatching and no later than the second instar the larvae create tied nests by pulling together the edges of a sedge leaf and stitching them together with silk threads. The larva lives in such nests throughout development, venturing out to feed apparently at night, and creating new nests as needed for its increasing size. The nests are constructed with one end open for easy access, but just prior to pupation both ends of the nest are silked closed, and the larva surrounds itself with large amounts of a white waxy secretion. Pupation occurs within the waxy material. In captivity the entire larval development from egg hatch to pupation was accomplished in 43 days, which is moderately rapid for a monocot-feeder. The chrysalis remains enclosed in its nest until the following spring when the next generation adult will hatch.

In the wild, larvae can occasionally be found by diligently searching sedges where populations of *Euphyes* are known to occur. The larvae may occur somewhat later in the season than indicated in the captive rearing notes above; late August and perhaps even early September might be the best time to find late instar wild larvae. The larvae can be found near the base of the sedge leaves where adjacent sedges are nearly touching, providing cover and protection; also one could search for constructed shelters.

Dun Skippers are readily attracted to nectar sources, such as blooming milkweed in eastern Washington habitats. The flight is generally inconspicuous and very low to the ground, and movements can be rapid and darting. As adults rarely venture far from their sedge host plants, look for *Euphyes* where sedges grow in close proximity to a good nectar source; roadside ditches often provide such habitats. While adults are indeed drably colored these perky little skippers are always a welcome find for butterflyers.

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Membership Application

<https://wabutterflyassoc.org/membership/>