



Washington Butterfly
Association

*G'nium**

The newsletter of the Washington Butterfly Association

P.O. Box 31317 Seattle WA 98103
www.naba.org/chapters/nabaws

*G'nium 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 / Events

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.

April 1

“How to Run a Butterfly Big Year?” by Dr. Robert Pyle

Recently back from his historic and adventurous first run at a Butterfly Big Year (seeing as many U.S. butterflies in one year as possible), Bob will share stories, experiences, discoveries, afterthoughts, and second-guesses about his year on the road with (and without) butterflies. He will leave plenty of time for questions, and hopes to have a spirited discussion with the group about this caper & what we can learn from such exercises. This will be a fun and informal program.

May 6

“Monarch Journeys South, Mexican Wintering Grounds”
by Denny Granstrand

Highly respected birding enthusiast and wildlife photographer from Yakima, Denny Granstrand, developed a new respect for butterflies when he traveled to Mexico to see and photograph wintering Monarchs. His superb photographs will give us a new appreciation of what the Monarch butterflies experience during winter and make us all want to sign up for a trip to see it for ourselves. Idie Ulsh will give a quick summary of the U.S. part of the Monarch trip prior to Denny's part of the program.

June 3

“Understanding behavioral responses to landscape change to enhance success of conservation programs: Mardon Skipper Research”

Dr. Cheryl Schultz is an Assistant Professor at WSU Vancouver and a conservation biologist. Included in her research are ways of restoring habitat to meet the life history needs of endangered species and what key attributes of the biology of rare butterflies influence conservation design.

July – no meeting because of annual conference

August 5

“Share the Wealth”

Plan to share some of your summer butterfly photos whether to share or to get help in identification.

September 2

David Vesely

October 7

Libby Mills

November 4

Ann Potter

WBA Mission Statement

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

On a cool "partly cloudy" April day Stewart Wechsler, Paul Doan, Al Wagar, and I headed for Johnson's Prairie. We met at 8:00 am at Krispy Kremes donut shop located at the Tacoma Mall. The April 18th morning looked promising with patches of blue sky, as we traveled south on I-5 toward Fort Lewis.

Johnson's Prairie is well known for its biodiversity of flora and fauna and its immense beauty. It is easily approached from Lacy or Yelm, and it is the most remote prairie of the Fort Lewis complex.

We met Cheryl Fimble of the Nature Conservancy at 9:00 to begin our orientation and plan our day.

Fort Lewis has been very supportive to environmental groups and researchers who are looking out for the welfare of endangered or threatened species. Our hats are off to dedicated personnel of the Nature Conservancy, who spend endless hours in maintaining the legacy of the Puget Prairies.

As we began our survey the weather began to deteriorate, and as the morning progressed a chill and heavy overcast persisted. Not a butterfly was seen that day, but with the help of Stewart, we were all given on the spot training and in some cases a review of the native plants of the prairie. We focused on the larval food plants and possible nectar sources that the species of the Puget Prairies would utilize. This would help us a great deal when follow-up visits of the prairie occurred.

May 16th was our second visit to the prairie. Stewart Wechsler and I reached the prairie shortly after 9:00 am. We were greeted with a beautiful morning, clear skies, and with temperatures in the mid to upper 70s. The prairie was divided into five sections, which we systematically surveyed, moving from a north to south direction, studying one section at a time. A map provided by the Nature Conservancy was used to plot numbers of the species seen at the locations encountered. A number was assigned to a species observed, and that number was placed at the appropriate spot on the map (example- # 1 was the Echo Blue). We found butterflies throughout the day, the meadows coming into full bloom. It was truly a beautiful sight to behold as we walked through the prairie. The May survey yielded ten species with the Silvery Blue and Common Ringlet observed most frequently.

MAY SPECIES OBSERVED

Celestrina echo echo (Echo Blue)
Glaucopsyche lygdamus columbia (Silvery Blue)
Pieris marginalis marginalis (Margined White)
Pieris rapae (Cabbage White)
Papilio zelicaon zelicaon (Anise Swallowtail)

Callophrys polios obscura (Hoary Elfin)
Callophrys augustinus iroides (Brown Elfin)
Phycioides mylitta mylitta (Mylitta Crescent)
Pyrgus ruralis ruralis (Two-banded Skipper)
Coenonympha tullia eunomia (Common Ringlet)

We were very disappointed in not seeing any Mardon Skippers or Taylor's Checkerspots, two species being carefully monitored by the Nature Conservancy and Fort Lewis naturalists. The larval food plants and nectar sources were abundant on the prairie, adding to the mystery why these two species are so restricted in distribution.

The June survey occurred on Thursday the 26th. The weather was very favorable with the temperature ranging in the low to mid-70s. The sky was partly cloudy and the prairie was blanketed with numerous wildflowers in full bloom. We used the same mapping technique of the past months to complete our study. Cheryl, Michael, and Laurel Fimble joined me on this absolutely beautiful day. Many new plants were in bloom now, and the early bloomers were waning. The exciting news was that the Puget Blue (one of the target species of the Nature Conservancy) was in abundance. Large patches of lupine (the larval food plant) were distributed throughout the prairie, and we had 122 sightings of the Puget Blue flying close to these plants. The blues seem to be at their peak at this time. Also extremely abundant was the Common ringlet, with 188 individuals observed during the day. The Silvery blue was the third species observed, but their numbers were low now, and all were warm females.

JUNE SPECIES OBSERVED

Plebejus icarioides blackmorei (Puget or Boisduval's Blue)
Glaucopsyche lygdamus columbia (Silvery Blue)
Coenonympha tullia eunomia (Common Ringlet)

On Wednesday, July 16th Cheryl Fimble, Michael Fimble and I conducted our fourth survey. Marine air greeted us as we entered the prairie, but the skies soon cleared revealing a beautiful day with temperatures in the low to mid 70s. Many of the plants in full bloom a month earlier were out of bloom now, but many other species were now coming into bloom, such as the Ox-eyed Daisies and Asters, that blanketed the prairie with white and lavender colors. Grasses were still the dominant vegetation, but now out of bloom. Along the prairie fringes Tansy, Dogbane, and St John's Wort were abundant. Six species were observed during the day, with the Common Ringlet once again being the most common butterfly. The Puget Blues were now past their prime, but were still seen in fair numbers. Male Great Spangled Fritillaries graced the prairie adding more beauty to the July prairie.

JULY SPECIES OBSERVED

Papilio zelicaon zelicaon (Anise Swallowtail)
Colias eurytheme (Orange Sulphur)
Plebejus icarioides blackmori (Puget Blue)
Argynnis cybele pegetensis (Great Spangled Fritillary)
Cercyonis pegala ariane (Common Woodnymph)
Coenonympha tullia eunomia (Common Ringlet)

The last survey of the butterfly season was conducted on August 28th. Stewart Wechsler, Al Wagar and Ian Young joined me on a cool, partly cloudy day. We formed our parallel lines of north south movement through each section of the prairie, marking each sighting on the map provided. Butterflies had to be flushed with our nets, for the cool air kept them down near the ground. The prairie was taking on a much dryer look since many of the flowering plants were now out of bloom. The only color was seen in the low damper areas of the prairie. Two species of satyrids were the most abundant: Common Ringlet and the Common Woodnymph. In one area the woodnymphs were so abundant it was difficult to count them. In addition to these two species, the Woodland Skipper, and Great Spangled Fritillaries (females only) were identified.

AUGUST SPECIES OBSERVED

Coenonympha tullia eunomia (Common Ringlet)
Cercyonis pegala ariane (Common Woodnymph)

Argynnis Cybele pegetensis (Great Spangled Fritillary)
Ochlodes sylvanoides sylvanoides (Woodland Skipper)

The transformation of Johnson's Prairie from April to the end of August was spectacular and very educational. With each species of flowering plants reaching their peak blooming period at different times, the prairie took on a magical new look every month. We were able to observe many plants passing through their yearly ritual of growth and development throughout the season. Each species of butterfly reached its peak flight time during different months as well, with the exception of the Common Ringlet that had many individuals on the wing all through the entire study period.

Those interested in visiting Johnson's Prairie, might choose June as the time you pick to walk through one of the most beautiful of our Puget prairies. Since Fort Lewis keeps a close watch on these areas, it is highly recommended that one obtain permission before visiting the area. Many research projects are currently being conducted on the prairie, including mammals and birds, thus visitors are closely monitored.

[Ed. Note: A full report on the survey can be found at: <http://www.southsoundprairies.org/documents.htm> or on our website. The report has maps showing butterfly species sighted as well as Viola adunca and Viola praemorsa distribution.]

Thoughts

from the WBA President

Why butterflying?

As we approach the field season, hopefully starting with kinder weather than last year, it's interesting to consider why we are so drawn to butterflies.

In the last issue of *American Butterflies* Jeffrey Glassberg explored various reasons for our interest. Three quotes seem apt:

"Naturally, people will warm to pursuits that kindle some internal flame, the origins of which are probably unknowable,"

as well as the

". . . many qualities of butterflies -- their metamorphosis, the ephemeral nature of their lives, their brilliant and dramatic color patterns,"

and

". . . butterflies are an ideal portal to the natural world: once interested in butterflies, one almost certainly becomes interested in other components of nature -- in the whole web of life."

But few people even realize that butterflying can be a serious interest, and when I tell folks about the Washington Butterfly Association most are astonished as well as fascinated that we exist. To acquaint more people with WBA and butterflying, we are starting to do more tabling events and developing more WBA-branded materials. Consider how you might help spread the word.

As one approach, we now offer some downloadable items on our website, including a butterfly food-plant brochure, a butterfly ID game (in PowerPoint), and butterfly flash cards. Please help yourselves and tell others where to find these.

Thanks,

Al Wagar, President
alwagar@verizon.net



Our species profile for this issue is the Arctic Blue,
Agriades glandon

The Arctic Blue is one of twenty species of blues found in Washington State, and the only one in the subgenus *Agriades* (and one of only two in America in this subgenus). *Agriades* was previously considered to be a genus level taxa. This is a small, inconspicuous blue which flies very close to the ground and is typically difficult to approach closely. This blue can be locally common or even abundant, particularly in close proximity to its saxifrage host plants.

Plebejus glandon is a holarctic species, found in northern latitudes throughout the world, with the type locality in France. In the Americas it is found throughout most of Canada but extends south into the U.S. only in the west where it occurs in the Rocky Mountain corridor south nearly to Mexico, and on the coast south through the Cascades and Sierras to southern California. In Washington *P. glandon* is found in the Olympic and Cascade Mountains. This species is common only in a very limited distribution, typically only in alpine and subalpine regions of our highest mountains. A few individuals have recently been found in the Sinlahekin area of Okanogan County at much lower elevations however. In Washington the only documented larval host plant is *Saxifraga bronchialis* (Spotted Saxifrage) although *Saxifraga tolmei* (Alpine Saxifrage) is a suspected host in the Olympic Mountains. Elsewhere in the Americas *P. glandon* uses *Dodecatheon* (Shooting Star), *Douglasia* (Douglasia) and other *Saxifraga* species, and additional plants are reported in Eurasia. The single-brooded adults have a reported flight period from late June through August.

Plebejus glandon females oviposit in summer in their high alpine habitats, laying their eggs singly on the spiny leaves of their diminutive *Saxifraga* host plants. The eggs are small but white in color, contrasting with the dark green saxifrage leaves, thus they are not too difficult to find in the wild; the females tend to tuck the eggs down into crevices and hidden places in the plants however. Wild

eggs can be heavily parasitized with less than a third hatching successfully. On hatching, the tiny larvae feed on the *Saxifraga* leaves, apparently hiding by day and feeding by night. The larvae grow to 2nd or (usually) 3rd instar before hibernating for the remainder of the summer and following winter. In captivity reared larvae occasionally develop through to 2nd brood adults, although this has not been documented in the wild. The larvae do not construct nests at any stage, instead relying on camouflage and nocturnal activity for protection from predators. Following winter diapause the larvae become active in the spring as soon as the snow is off and the food plant is available, feeding up fairly quickly to the final (4th) instar, then pupating. The late instar larvae are handsome magenta and dark brown with dorsal and lateral white stripes. Adults eclose several days after pupation to repeat the life cycle. The *Saxifraga bronchialis* food plant is also used by the fritillary *Boloria astarte* where the two species occur together.

The adults of *Plebejus glandon* are rather easily identified by their rows of blotchy white ventral wing spots set against a dark gray ground color. The markings are variable however, some individuals having dark-centered white spots and others with spots nearly lacking the dark centers. *Plebejus icarioides* and *Satyrrium semiluna* are superficially similar but are easily separated by comparison to field guide images with attention to the character and arrangement of the spots. Also *P. glandon* has orange spots along the periphery of the VHW (lacking in the other two species), although these spots may be faint in some individuals. Dorsally females are brown and males are dark blue, the males having a prominent row of black spots along the hindwing periphery. During the flight period adult males perch on rocks and low plants, flying out to challenge all passers-by in search of mates. Adults are fairly difficult to catch in nets because they are readily flushed, and dart away rapidly extremely close to the ground. Females interested in nectar or oviposition are more easily caught.

3-16-09 DN

2009 General Membership Field Trips



Umtanum Canyon

Non-consumptive appreciation of butterflies is central to our purpose and basic to our approach. This is the guiding principal behind general membership field trips. Collecting of adult butterflies is not allowed on general membership field trips. Collecting of eggs and larval stages for rearing is accepted on the condition that individuals raised to adult stage are to be released at their original location.



Painted Lady

Date	Destination	Trip Leader
Sat-April 4	3 - Schnebly between Ellensburg and Vantage	Dave Nunnallee
Sat-April 18	3 - Lower Umtanum Canyon near Ellensburg	Dave Nunnallee
Sun-May 3	1 - Cowiche Canyon near Yakima	
Sat-May 23	Manastash Ridge near Ellensburg	
Sat-May 30	1 - Tahuya Peninsula near Belfair	Idie Ulsh / Carolyn Heberlein
Sun-June 14	Discovery Park - 1:30 - 4:30 pm - Rain or shine - Beginners Trip	David Droppers/Al Wagar
Sat-June 20	2 - Reecer Big Day near Ellensburg	Richard Youel
Sun-June 28	1 - Chumstick Fourth of July Count near Wenatchee (NABA trip)	Wagar/Doan/Youel
July 17-19	1-3 WBA Annual Conference, Yakima	See Registration Form
Sat-Aug 1	2-3 Monte Cristo - Snohomish County near Granite Falls	David Droppers
Sat-Aug 8	5 - Mount Townsend - in Olympics - meet at Quilcene	Bob Hardwick
Sat-Aug 15	4 - Sauk Mountain on North Cascades Highway 20 (if Monte Cristo is cancelled)	Al Wagar
Sat-Aug 22	3 - Quartz Mountain near Ellensburg	Maureen Traxler

HOW TO SIGN UP: Anyone can sign up for field trips at a WBA monthly meeting or by contacting WBA Vice-President: Donna Shaeffer at donut@u.washington.edu or 206-525-5328.

DIFFICULTY RATINGS:

- 1 Easy, mostly by car, minor walking along roads
- 2 Fairly limited walking, some slopes involved.
- 3 Moderate, up to 1.5 miles walking with moderate slopes
- 4 Difficult, hiking on trails or terrain are steep in places.
- 5 Very difficult, extended hiking on trails or steep terrain.

WHERE & WHEN TO MEET:

Trips will depart from the Ravenna Park & Ride at 7:00 a.m. unless expressly stated otherwise. The park & ride is located under I-5 at Ravenna Blvd between NE 50th & NE 65th St. We meet in the north half of the park & ride.

On request will also stop at the Issaquah Park & Ride at 7:30 a.m. To reach the Issaquah Park & Ride, take I-90 east to Issaquah, exit to the south via Exit 15, and go 3 blocks. The Park & Ride is on the left next to Tibbetts baseball field.

If you live in another part of the state, contact the trip coordinator to make arrangements to meet the field trip group.

Tend to any personal matters, such as getting breakfast, coffee or lunch food, before the departure time so others are not delayed.

All field trips are conducted by carpool. Without the volunteer participation of drivers, the trips are not possible. If

you have a car that you are willing to drive, please have the gas tank full and ready to go.

All WBA-sponsored field trips are fully insured through our parent organization, NABA.

COSTS

Passengers are expected to share gasoline expenses. Typically this is \$8-10 each. It is suggested that each rider also pay the driver a share of any park entry fees, ferry fares, etc.

The trip leader will collect a voluntary donation of \$5 per person (children under 12 are free) for each field trip to help offset expenses of the organization.

SCHEDULING & WEATHER:

Weather is always a major factor for planning butterfly trips in Washington, particularly March through June. The key to dealing with weather is flexibility; our leaders reserve the right to make last-minute itinerary changes in order to provide you with the best possible butterfly experience.

On occasion it may be necessary to cancel or postpone an outing if the weather does not permit a viable alternative. The flow of the season is also important, and it may be necessary to adjust some trips to earlier or later dates to best match the seasonal weather patterns. WBA will make every effort to keep you informed of any changes.

CANCELLATIONS:

If you need to cancel, please contact the trip coordinator as soon as you can so the group does not wait for you at the park & ride.

Join us as we explore the rocky and rugged wilderness west of Yakima, a first-time location for the WBA Annual Conference. Depending on weather and blooming season, we may be in dry shrub-steppe, moist meadows, or cool sub-alpine habitats. Target locations might include Bear Canyon, the Rimrock area, and/or Bear Creek Mountain.

Possible highlights of butterfly species we may see include the Halfmoon Hairstreak (*Satyrrium semiluna*), Arctic Blue (*Agriades glandon*), Arrowhead Blue (*Glaucopsyche piasus*), Blue Copper (*Lycaena heteronea*), Mariposa Copper (*Lycaena mariposa*), Sonoran Skipper (*Polites sonora*), Clodius Parnassian (*Parnassius clodius*), and Two-banded Checkered Skipper (*Pyrgus ruralis*).

The area also has the “true” Dotted Blue (*Euphilotes enoptes*) found nowhere else in the state, and small colonies of the endangered Mardon Skipper (*Polites mardon*); with good timing and some luck we could see these.

If the weather is right, we could see several of the Greater and Lesser Fritillaries – *zerene*, *coronis*, *callippe*, *hydaspe*, *mormonia*, *chariclea*, and *epithore*. We may even look for a “mystery *Pontia*” – that could be a new species – related to the Western White (*Pontia occidentalis*) and Becker’s White (*Pontia beckerii*).



Blue Copper



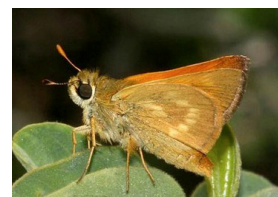
Bear Canyon



Dayton Conference



Bear Canyon



Sonoran Skipper



Dotted Blue



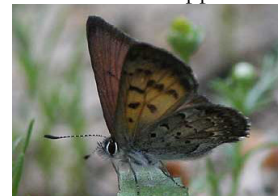
Becker's White



Halfmoon Hairstreak



Zerene Fritillary



Mariposa Copper

Conference program

Friday, July 17

6:30–7:30pm

Check-in, registration, and refreshments

7:30–8:30pm



Butterflies of the Yakima Region presented by Dr. David James. David is Associate Professor, Department of Entomology at Washington State University. He will review butterfly species we are likely to see on Saturday and Sunday field trips, and will go over the type of habitat we will explore. David is an excellent photographer and is collaborating with Dave Nunnallee to research and photograph immature stages of butterflies of Cascadia for their upcoming book.

Saturday, July 18

8:30

Meet for an all-day field trip

8:30am–4:00pm

All-day field trip

6:30pm

Dinner for those who signed up.

7:30pm

Short business meeting, including election of officers.

7:45pm

Saturday evening keynote speaker

will be Dr. Robert Michael Pyle who is a lepidopterist and professional writer who has published twelve books and hundreds of papers, essays, stories and poems.



Sunday, July 19

8:30

Meet for a half-day field trip

8:30am–1:00pm

Half-day field trip

1:00pm

Leave for home

Yakima Lodging

Please note that you are responsible for making your own lodging arrangements.

Meetings on Friday and Saturday evenings, and meetings Saturday and Sunday mornings for field trips will be held at the Oxford Suites Yakima Hotel, 1701 E. Yakima Avenue.

The Oxford Suites Yakima Hotel offers us a special rate for rooms holding one or two persons - \$105.00 (\$117.51 w/tax) for rooms with either a king bed and sofa sleeper, or with two queen beds. This includes a complimentary full hot breakfast buffet, 7 – 10 a.m. in the reception area, and a complimentary evening reception (except Sundays), 5:30 – 9:30 p.m. in the reception area, with appetizers and choice of wine, beer, or soda. Also included: access to an exercise room and indoor pool & spa. Rooms have small refrigerators, microwaves, coffee makers, irons & boards, hairdryers, and cable TV.

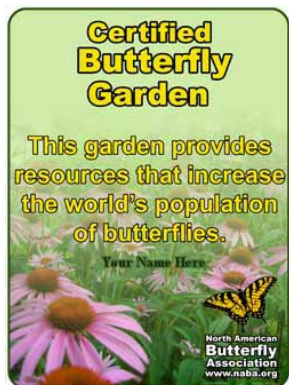
Make your reservations early; July is a busy tourist season in Yakima, and rooms are not being held for WBA without personal reservations. Tell the reservation desk that you're with the Washington Butterfly Association to receive the rate cited above. Our block of rooms with the special rate cover the nights of July 16 – 18, so you can go a day early if you wish. If you guarantee your room with a credit card, you can cancel reservations up to 24 hr. in advance without incurring a charge. You may check in after 3 p.m.; checkout time is noon.

Oxford Suites Yakima Hotel
1701 East Yakima Avenue
Yakima, Washington 98901
800-404-7848 or 509-457-9000
<http://www.oxfordsuitesyakima.com/>

There are many other lodging options in Yakima which you can review at <http://www.visityakima.com/>.

NABA's Butterfly Garden Certification

**NABA offers butterfly gardeners a way to promote
the creation and conservation of butterfly habitats through the use of native plants.**



To join NABA Butterfly Garden Certification Program, you need to create or modify your existing garden to meet the following requirements:

- At least three different native caterpillar food plants must be grown, preferably more than one plant of each selected species
- At least three different native butterfly nectar sources must be grown, preferably more than one plant of each selected species
- The use of pesticides is discouraged. Pesticides can kill butterflies as well as other important pollinators.



Once certified, you will also be eligible to purchase a weatherproof Garden Certification sign to display in your garden, pictured to the left. NABA's outdoor weatherproof sign measures 7 inches tall by 10 inches wide. Constructed of rigid plastic with two holes centered top and bottom for attaching to a stake or fence (stake and mounting hardware not included).

More information and an application can be found at: <http://www.nababutterfly.com/>

Board Members

Al Wagar	President
Robin Lewis	Vice President
Donna Schaeffer	Secretary
Jennifer Kauffman	Treasurer
Maureen Traxler	Past-President
Jon Pelham	Science Advisor
Richard Youel	At-Large
David Droppers	At-Large
Paul Doan	At-Large
Carolyn Heberlein	Newsletter/Website

Committees

Marty Hanson	Membership
Joyce Bergen	Annual Conference
David & Jo Nunnallee	Field Trips
Idie Ulsh	Programs

Membership Application

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