



G'n^um*

The newsletter of the Washington Butterfly Association

P.O. Box 31317 Seattle WA 98103
<http://wabutterflyassoc.org>

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

Dusky-blue Groundstreak (*Calycopis isobeon*) in Mission, TX. (M. Weiss)



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Upcoming Programs

November 16, Spokane: Bob Hardwick's "Lesser Fritillaries and Crescents of Washington" video

December 7, Seattle: Patrick Tobin, "The Impact of Invasive Insects on Butterflies"

January 18, Spokane: Dave Nunnallee's "Buckwheats and the Butterflies They Host" video

January 21, Seattle: Winter Party

February 1, Seattle: David Jennings on Bumble bees

February 15, Spokane: Jeanne Dammarell and her photos

March 1, Seattle: Dave Nunnallee on South Pacific Islands

April 5, Seattle: Jon Pelham

Watching Washington Butterflies with Bob Pyle

Number Twenty-seven

A Brief History of Washington Butterfly Books

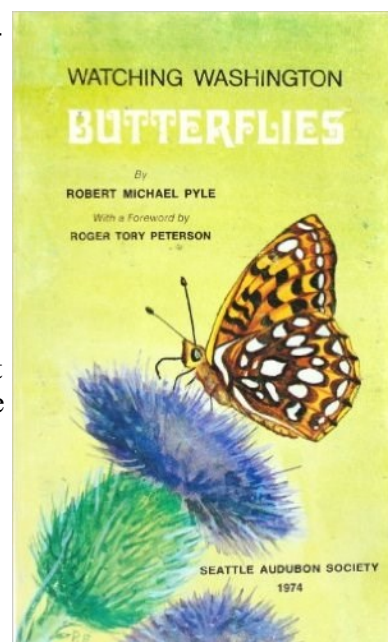
Nowadays, when most people reach first for a mouse or a touch-screen to seek information about anything, when apps substitute for paper pages and a Google search for a bookshelf search, we run the risk of forgetting about the rich legacy of written works that have gotten us where we are in our understanding of Washington butterflies. We may also miss the power of the deeper texts to illuminate our fauna beyond the basic facts, and the charm and fun of reading the individual author's take on the creatures for whom we all share a mutual love. Fortunately, books last, and remain faithfully available when their fickle owners tire of digital blandishments and long to read the actual printed lines, and between them too. And still more happily, good books continue to appear, their medium refusing to bow or be cowed by mere electrons. Which is not to criticize all the on-line resources—where would we be without butterfliesofamerica.com? But just to say that our world as butterflyers is richer and better served by using our libraries as well as our terminals, telephones, and tablets. With that in mind, I thought it might be fun and perhaps instructive to take a field trip through the titles that have comprised our library of Washington butterflies over the years.

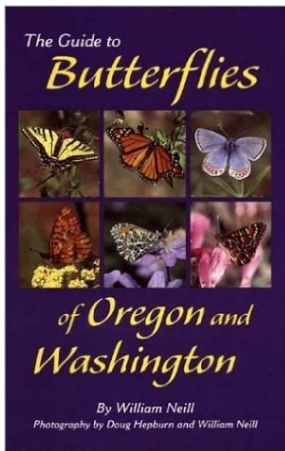
Of course there were various expeditionary reports—the Hayden, the Transcontinental Survey, and so on—that touched upon first encounters with the state's butterflies, as well as mentions in some of the early continental or western volumes (Edwards, Wright, et cetera). But it is not my point here to survey the complete bibliography. The earliest actual treatment of the state's whole fauna was *The Butterflies of Washington* by Lucia Eola Edson, her thesis submitted for a Master of Arts degree at the University of Washington in 1913. (My grandmother and great aunt were at the university then too, and I have to wonder whether they knew Lucia.) I have only the title page and introduction, so I do not know how many species Edson attributed to the state at that time. Her work was based largely on the specimens in O. B. Johnson's collection, which Jonathan Pelham still curates at the Burke Museum. The full thesis needs to be found and copied. Through the wonders of Google (of course), I learned that Lucia Eola Edson was born in 1887 at Rutland, Vermont, attended Amherst and Mt. Holyoke colleges, and after her UW Masters, took her Ph.D. at Columbia University, had a career as a chemist, and lived until 1980!

The next entry on the scene was also called *The Butterflies of Washington* and was also a Masters thesis at the UW, in Biology. It was written by Ben V. Leighton, of Shelton, working under Melville Hatch, and awarded in 1946. The booklet, published as *UW Publications in Biology* Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 47-63, by UW Press, became the basis for all of our subsequent studies. Leighton included records from seven major collections (including those of Hopfinger, Clarke, and Frechin) and conducted extensive field collecting himself. His story is long and complicated, and may be read in the essay "Ben Leighton and the Shelton Elfin" in *The Butterflies of Cascadia*.

The papers of E. J. Newcomer published in the *Journal of the Lepidopterists' Society* mostly through the 60s and 70s, recounting his studies in and beyond Yakima County, virtually constitute a book, and should be bound that way someday. But there was no additional actual book for almost thirty years after Leighton's work.

In the late 60s, Pelham and Pyle met with Don Frechin, Dan Carney, Michio Kimura, Mike VanBuskirk, and other Washington collectors to discuss a book-length treatment of the state's butterflies. Later I went to UC Berkeley to obtain Jon Shepard's extensive data. The result became yet a third UW Master of Science (in Nature Interpretation, College of Forest Resources), as well as my first book: *Watching Washington Butterflies*, published by the Seattle Audubon Society in 1974. It was the first American field guide to take an interpretive approach, to encourage butterfly watching alongside (not instead of) careful collecting, and to employ photographs from life (although these were very simple compared to today's digital bounty). *WWB* served as the only available Northwest field guide at the time, and for some years to come.

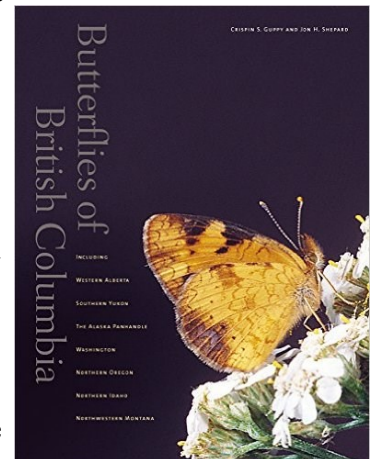




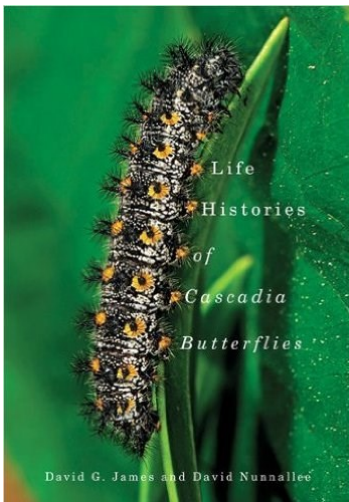
This situation was relieved and augmented first by William A. Neill's selective but handsome and useful *Butterflies Afield in the Pacific Northwest* (Pacific Search) in 1976, using Doug Hepburn's excellent color photos from nature. Ernst J. Dornfeld's inclusive and encyclopedic *Butterflies of Oregon* came along from Timber Press in 1980, furnishing much more information for many of our species, presented in Ernst's fine style, along with many halftone photos of specimens and habitats. This was soon followed by James R. Christensen's *Field Guide to the Butterflies of the Pacific Northwest* (U. Idaho Press, 1981). This was the first to attempt description and figures of the entire region's butterfly fauna, illustrated by photos of live individuals in the field as well as pinned specimens from Shepard's collection. These books gave us excellent tools for advancement of butterfly study in the state, but none more than John Hinchliff's essential *Atlas of Washington Butterflies* (Oregon State U., 1996), showing the results of our first century of butterfly sampling in the form of his painstaking dot-distribution maps.

It would be twenty years until the next major field guide project came to fruition in *The Butterflies of Cascadia* (Seattle Audubon Society, 2002). First envisioned as a somewhat expanded and updated replacement for *Watching Washington Butterflies*, it became much more than that. With help from Jon Pelham, Paul Hammond, Andy Warren, Jon Shepard, and Dave McCorkle, among many others, and major roles played by Idie Ulsh, Dave Nunallee, Richard Youel, and others of WBA, *Cascadia* emerged as one of the most ambitious regional field guides ever published. In addition to field photos by 33 photographers, specimen photos, and exquisite specimen paintings by Denise Takahashi, it contained personal essays on every species as well as the strictly factual, detailed species accounts. All named subspecies were described. One partly revised edition appeared in 2007. SAS allowed the book to go out of print in the 20-teens.

Meanwhile, Bill Neill's book was beautifully expanded, revised, and redesigned twice, as *The Guide to Butterflies of Oregon and Washington* (Westcliffe Pub., 2001) and *Butterflies of the Pacific Northwest* (Mountain Press, 2007). Between those and *Cascadia*, many new converts to butterflying had a sudden wealth of references to work from. Soon came another, in the imposing form of Robert E. Hardwick's big *Butterflies of Washington* (2001). Enriched by Bob's extensive and enthusiastic field research, elegantly illustrated from his meticulous collection and rearings, this was a real labor of love. Self-published, it is a fine reference for those who own it, but sadly never found its way into an affordable edition available to a much wider audience.

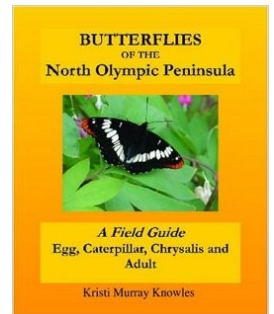


Though extra-limital, two magnum opuses must be included here. Crispin S. Guppy and Jon H. Shepard's *Butterflies of British Columbia* (UBC Press, 2001) and Andrew D. Warren's *Butterflies of Oregon: Their Taxonomy, Distribution, and Biology* (Gillette Museum, 2005) are so thorough, megalithic, and deep that they have transformed our regional butterfly scene. The BC book is the more elaborate and sophisticated publication in terms of design, while the Oregon volume has seldom been approached for its level of detail and insight—especially when it is noted that Andy Warren compiled this book in his spare time while performing doctoral studies in skipper evolution at OSU. Seldom has the variation within a region's butterflies, and their biological and geographical foundations, been so meticulously parsed as here. Between these two books, our northern and southern faunas are far better defined and illuminated than before.



A third, more recent magnum opus covers the whole region, but is especially strong in Washington. *Life Histories of Cascadian Butterflies* (OSU Press, 2011) is an almost unbelievably fine and exhaustive account of all life stages, described, photographed, and placed in biological and ecological context, for virtually every species of butterfly in the region. Quoting from my own blurb on the back of the book, "The publication of James and Nunallee, or "the Daves," as we know them, is a matter for unreserved celebration, not only for lepidopterists and nature lovers of all stripes, but for anyone who cares about our butterflies' lives, futures, conservation management, and the plants with which they have co-evolved." We are extremely fortunate to have these two beloved lepidists among us, and their joint production. I don't know a better treatment of any region's immature butterflies, anywhere in the world.

While all these bigger books were coming along, a steady stream of little books, booklets, and pamphlets have been written and distributed, treating of the butterflies to be found in various parts of our state and adjacent areas. Each of these has proven more than useful to local naturalists, and has no doubt snagged additional devotees for butterfly study and appreciation. Here are some of them (I'm sure I will miss others): *Butterflies of Lowland King County* (Sharon J. Collman et al, WSU/King Co. Coop. Extension, 1986); *Butterflies of the North Cascades* (Denis Knopp & Lee Larkin, BC Wildlife Watch, 1998); *Pictorial Guides to Butterflies of Chumstick Mountain and Butterflies of Fort Lewis and Puget Trough* (Don Rolfs, 2000, 2001); *North Coast Butterflies & Day-flying Moths: Life-size Photo Guide* (David Lee Myers, N. Coast Land Conservancy, 2002); *Mima Mounds Natural Area Preserve Butterfly Guide* (Colleen O'Shea, DNR/TNC, undated); *Common Butterflies of the Puget Sound Region and Their Food Plants* (David Droppers, WBA, undated); *Butterflies of the San Juan Islands Checklist* (Susan Vernon, Archipelago Press, 2005); *Butterflies of the North Olympic Peninsula* (Kristi Murray Knowles, Trafford Publishing, 2005); *Vancouver Island Butterflies* (Mike Yip & James Miskelly, Publ. Mike Yip, 2014); *A Region Specific Guide to Butterflies of the South Puget Sound, Washington* (Rod Gilbert & Ann Potter, Cascadia Prairie-Oak Partnership, 2014); and *Field Guide to Okanogan County Butterflies* (Caitlin C. LaBar, 2014, 2015).



And that is a good place to transition into the final category: butterfly books to come!

The next one will be Caitlin LaBar's elaborate book on the butterflies of the Sinlahekin Valley, in Okanogan County, based on several years of intensive field study. Cait brings great skills in photography, mapping, text design, and field work to bear in what by all accounts will be a magnificent book, a model for any other regional faunist to aspire toward. In 2017, the *Timber Press Field Guide to Butterflies of the Pacific Northwest* will appear. Co-authored by Cait and myself, it will replace *The Butterflies of Cascadia* without trying to be the same book—up to date taxonomically and in many recent findings, and still rich in stories, but more compact and concise. We hope it will be a field guide useful for the next twenty years. Finally, now that his invaluable *Catalogue* is well in hand (though updating it will always be a work in progress); we all hope that Jonathan P. Pelham will forge ahead with his envisioned comprehensive monograph on Washington butterflies. This definitive work-to-come brings us full circle, since Jon, in curating the collection at the Burke Museum, works among the very specimens that supported Lucia Eola Edson's very first effort, more than 100 years ago. And what books will there be another 100 years hence?

(book cover photos from Amazon.com)

2017 Conference and Young Naturalist Scholarships

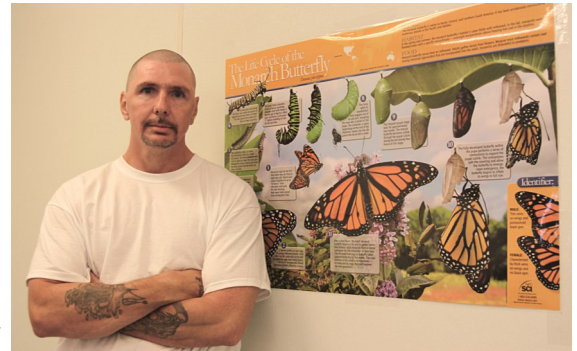
Get Out the Word!

The annual conference of the Washington Butterfly Association for 2017 will be based in Ellensburg the weekend of July 21st thru 23rd, with an optional 1 day extended visit on Monday July 24th. WBA continues its partnership with our founder's family by again offering Idie Ulsh Young Naturalist scholarships for young people, ages 10 through 17, who show a love for natural history and especially for the study of butterflies. The scholarship will pay all expenses, meals, lodging, travel and registration, for both the young people who are awarded this scholarship, and one parent or guardian who accompanies each of the winning applicants. Please watch our website at <http://wabutterflyassoc.org/>, and stay tuned for the February issue of this newsletter, where we will provide details about the scholarships and application forms. The applications will be accepted from February through April, 2017, with winners to be announced in May.

Murderers touched by the magic of Monarchs

By David James

I last seriously worked on Monarch butterflies back in the last century when a billion of the glorious creatures roamed the eastern US. Ironically though, in the late 1970s and 1980s I was working on a seriously declining population of (introduced) Monarchs in eastern Australia. Further back in the 1960s overwintering populations in the Sydney area numbered in the tens of thousands at each of a dozen or so sites but by the time I began my research in 1978 each of these sites barely hosted 2-3,000 monarchs. During 1978-85 I studied Australian Monarchs which resulted in my PhD and 14 scientific papers, all summarized in a review paper on Monarch migration biology presented to the second MONCON conference held in Los Angeles in 1986 (James 1993). The upshot of my work was that the Australian Monarch had subtly adapted to Australian conditions in its little more than a century of occupying the land Down Under. Most notable was the absence of a true reproductive diapause and the existence of more flexible reproductive strategies compared to North American Monarchs. This made good sense because nowhere in Australia is the need to escape winter as desperate as it is in say Minnesota or Chicago. Monarchs can survive in most parts of Australia during winter but flying to the coast could make things a little more comfortable. So a more flexible 'decision-making' process evolved whereby Australian Monarchs literally check the weather after eclosion and make their decision to migrate or not on whether its warm or cold! Daylength seems to have little to do with the decision.



Inmate Gilbert London, a Butterfly Wrangler.

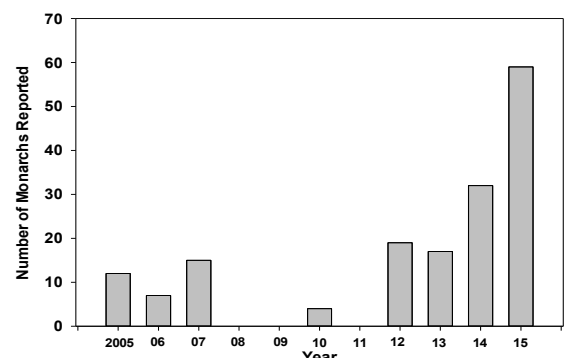
Fast-forward to 1999 and I exchange the land Down Under for the 'outback' of Washington State, that is, the arid part east of the Cascades. This 'outback' unlike the Australian version is not an acceptable home for Monarchs during winter with temperatures commonly remaining below freezing for weeks at a time. Washington is part of the summer range of North American Monarchs though and I was happy to see a few in the height of summer each year but disappointed not to see them 'everywhere' as I thought they might be. 'Old-timers' told me they did used to be 'everywhere' in the old days.....

As I wrestled with the problems of solving insect and mite problems in eastern Washington irrigated agriculture by using less pesticide and more biocontrol (my day job), I pondered on the possibilities of working with Monarchs again. I was surprised to learn that in contrast to the thousands of Monarchs that had been tagged for decades in the eastern US to work out migration routes, virtually none had been tagged in the Pacific Northwest! Yet the idea that PNW Monarchs migrate to coastal California for overwintering was very much an accepted 'fact'. It was easy to see why wild Monarchs had not been tagged in the PNW.. there were hardly any that you could tag.. just one or two each year on your Buddleia bush if you were lucky! And of course there are fewer human beings per square mile in the PNW than just about anywhere else in the lower 48 states. Clearly there was a need to tag Monarchs in the PNW and get some data to support the notion that they all spend their winter vacation in California!

Bob Pyle was the first lepidopterist to welcome me to Washington and it wasn't long before I was reading his book "Chasing Monarchs" (Pyle 1999) which entertainingly documents his autumn of 1996 following Monarchs from British Columbia to Mexico. One of the discoveries he made was that not all apparently migrating Monarchs in the PNW head towards the California coast. Many of his observations indicated that a significant number flew southeast, putting them on a different track entirely, one that could end up with them arriving in Mexico. So we really did need to tag PNW Monarchs to determine their overwintering grounds!

Monarch tagging was not a priority for me from 2000-2012 but I did monitor the incidence and abundance of Monarchs in the PNW. I solicited and gathered online reports of Monarchs in the PNW from 2005-15 and until 2014 the number of reports did not exceed 20 per season. No Monarchs were reported in 2008, 2009 and 2011 (Fig. 1).

Figure 1. Number of Monarchs seen in the PNW during 2005-2015 as reported through internet email Lepidoptera listserves and personal communications.



Clearly these kinds of numbers are unlikely to support a significant tagging program. With considerable effort I could probably find and tag maybe 25 Monarchs during July-August. If I established a network of ten like-minded citizen scientists then maybe we could tag up to 200? If we did this for a decade, perhaps we would get 10 recovery data points?

As I pondered this mildly depressing scenario I received an email from Dr. Tamara Russell, Clinical Director of the Residential Mental Health Unit at Washington State Penitentiary in Walla Walla, who wondered if I had a project that could involve inmates in rearing butterflies? The Sustainability in Prisons Project (<http://sustainabilityinprisons.org/>), a collaboration between The Evergreen State College and the state Dept. of Corrections, was already successful at connecting prisons with nature through rearing captive-bred endangered Oregon Spotted Frogs and Taylor's Checkerspot butterflies, and I immediately saw that prison rearing of Monarchs could be the answer to my problem of getting sufficient numbers of Monarchs tagged to yield worthwhile data! Incarcerated Citizen Scientists indeed!



David James explaining Monarchs to inmates at Washington State Penitentiary at Walla Walla. (Nella Letizia)

Thus was born the Washington State University-Washington State Penitentiary partnership that has seen almost 10,000 Monarchs reared, tagged and released by prison inmates during the past four years (<https://news.wsu.edu/2012/07/03/stateprisoners-give-monarch-project-wings/>). It is important to note that all of these reared Monarchs originated from locally caught wild Washington female Monarchs, so in effect the prisoners simply ensured that the substantial natural mortality which occurs in wild populations did not occur in protective custody caterpillars. It is a cliché but the prisoners had 'time on their hands' which they invested in providing the best care possible for their caterpillars and chrysalids. In 2012, they produced an astonishing 85% survival rate in Monarch caterpillars given to them as first instars! The inmates spent every moment they could with their caterpillars: feeding them, removing frass as it fell and generally making sure that every individual had the best chance of making it to an adult Monarch.

So who are these inmates and why do they do such a great job of rearing Monarchs? Most of these guys are the worst of the worst. They are the highest risk prisoners and are held in close and protective custody. Many are murderers, life prisoners with no chance of release. You might think that these poor examples of human beings deserve nothing except misery and contempt and we should not give them a second thought. However, the reality is that they are living human beings that we as a society have chosen to maintain and look after, if not care for. So we have a responsibility to help them get through their lives in a way that is humane. These guys awaken everyday to an existence with rarely anything to look forward to and consequently the angst they feel frequently results in problems which impacts everyone around them, prisoners and warders alike. The Monarch program changes that, it gives them something to look forward to. Monarchs literally weave their magic on the mental health of these inmates, helping alleviate depression. Monarchs give them focus and a purpose to their lives, they are involved in something bigger than themselves that has meaning. Rearing Monarchs makes these guys think about themselves. Many of them look at the metamorphosis they see the Monarchs undergoing as something they can do...shedding the past to become something new. At least one of the original 'butterfly wranglers' as they call themselves, has actually improved his life a little. Not a 'lifer', he has transferred to a lower security prison where he is taking tertiary studies and he credits the Monarch rearing experience as the motivating factor!



Inmates releasing the Monarchs they reared at Washington State Penitentiary, Walla Walla. (Nella Letizia)

So the Penitentiary Monarch rearing program clearly has substantial mental health benefits for the participants as well as having a major impact on prison harmony. There is a waiting list to get on the Monarch program and you need to be a well-behaved prisoner to be considered for the program. The benefits to Monarch science are also accumulating. Six penitentiary-reared Monarchs have now been recovered after having flown distances of 432 to 830 miles from the prison! I can imagine inmates traveling every one of these miles in their minds..... Five of these Monarchs turned up on the California coast in overwintering colonies at Santa Barbara, Morro Bay and Santa Cruz. Another was found in a very small colony in some trees adjacent to a shopping mall south of San Francisco! The most intriguing recovery was one that traveled to Brigham City, Utah, this Monarch was clearly not interested in the delights of California..... The inmates love hearing about these recoveries!



A Monarch reared, tagged and released by inmates at Washington State Penitentiary, Walla Walla on September 7 2015 pictured at an overwintering site at Santa Cruz, CA on February 5 2016 (Photo: John Dayton).

Together with additional recoveries of other citizen-scientist tagged Monarchs in the PNW, the penitentiary recoveries are rapidly helping to improve our understanding of Monarch migration in the PNW. The jury is still out as to whether some PNW Monarchs go to Mexico instead of California but the penitentiary-tagged Monarch that turned up in Utah is tantalizing evidence that some indeed do take this route. Our ongoing partnership with the inmates at Walla Walla is destined to ultimately provide the scientific data that will confirm or refute the Mexico hypothesis. And thanks to all of the citizen scientists involved in this project, incarcerated or not, this is a self-sustaining research project, operating without a cent of external grant funding! This is a remarkable achievement for this day and age.

I have known for a long time the magical effect Monarchs have on children when they are able to hold them and see them in all their close-up glory. I had no idea though that this magic extends to the other end of the human spectrum! Just more evidence I guess of the calming influence of nature's colorful ambassadors on our restless human souls.

For more information on the 'Monarch butterflies in the Pacific Northwest' program visit our Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/MonarchButterfliesInThePacificNorthwest/?ref=aymt_homepage_panel

James, D.G. (1993). Migration Biology of the Monarch butterfly in Australia. In Biology and Conservation of the Monarch butterfly pp. 189-200 Eds. S. Malcolm and M. Zalucki. Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County.

Pyle, R.M.P. 1999. Chasing Monarchs: Migrating with the butterflies of passage. Houghton Mifflin Co. New York.

Urban Meadow Project at Bellevue Botanical Garden

Bellevue Botanical Garden, a regional horticultural hub and national leader in visitor education, welcoming over 300,000 visitors per year, is developing a new pollinator-friendly garden over the winter of 2016/2017! This Urban Meadow project will replace approximately 13,000 square feet of turf with plants requiring less water and fewer chemicals, and aims to educate the gardening public about using native and nonnative plants to provide habitat for pollinating insects and other wildlife in an increasingly developed environment.

As part of this project, we'd like to know your experience with pollinator-friendly plants: Which plants attract the most pollinators? Which attract the most diversity? Which are best in winter/early spring/etc.? Which offer wildlife benefits beyond their flowers? Are there commonly-recommended pollinator plants that just don't work?

Please send your recommendations and comments to Alex Wright at awright@bellevuewa.gov or Nancy Kartes at nkartes@bellevuewa.gov.

Information about which plants were chosen, as well as their use to pollinators, will be shared with visitors both through interpretive materials, as well as through interactive plant lists available to mobile devices while in the garden.

If you would like to help with planting and maintaining this new and exciting project, we are always looking for new volunteers! Please visit the "Volunteer" tab at www.bellevuebotanical.org and fill out the "New Volunteer Application" after January 1, 2017, or contact us for assistance.

Mission, Texas Butterfly Festival, Travel Log

by Melanie Weiss

If you would like to treat yourself to a butterfly bonanza, the Lower Rio Grande Valley is the place to go. I recently visited this area with two butterfly friends from Florida. We attended the Mission, Texas Butterfly Festival hosted by the National Butterfly Center. We also visited a few nearby sites on our own and on festival field trips. There are few locations in Washington where you can be as amazed by the sheer number of butterflies and species present as you can in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. What I saw in the LRGV truly had my head spinning. The high number of species at all the sites, and the large number of butterflies in general had me gazing in awe when I first arrived.

The Lower Rio Grande Valley has around 300 species of butterflies and 11 distinct biotic communities. There are many state parks, preserves, refuges, private estates, etc. throughout the area that have varying butterfly species. 200 species have been detected at the National Butterfly Center with 75 species present during the time of our visit. This preserve has 100 acres, a few of which border the Rio Grande. Occasionally a border patrol helicopter would fly overhead just to make things exciting.

The most common species in many of the sites was the Queen butterfly, *Danaus gilippus*. This butterfly is usually the first flying in the morning and the last in the evening. They are most often found on the purple mist flower (*Eupatorium coelestinum*, a wild ageratum) in large numbers. Occasionally, a Soldier, *Danaus eresimus*, or a Monarch, *Danaus plexippus*, might be seen among the Queens. These three orange and black butterflies are easily confused. They all rest with their wings folded upright. The Monarch is generally the largest and most familiar to us northwesterners. It is the only one of the three to have a black bar crossing the dorsal apex, and a cream colored base area on the ventral hind wing. The Soldier has what are called “water marks” between the veins in the post median area of the ventral hind wing.



Queen



Soldier



Monarch

The American Snout, *Libytheana carinenta*, was also congregating in large number in the hackberry trees while we were there. The hackberry is its larval host plant. Long palpi form the snout. It creates quite a unique silhouette.

There are several Emperor butterflies in the LRGV, and also an Empress. The Tawny Emperor, *Asterocampa clyton*, was quite abundant, hanging in bushes in the early morning covered in dew and congregating on the feeding sites along the trails. They seemed to like my tripod and landed on the poles at times.

Skippers are numerous in this area. One third of the book I purchased on LRGV butterflies are skipper species. The Longtails are one of my favorites but are also very active and difficult to capture on film. I managed to photograph the striking White-striped Longtail Skipper *Chionides catillus*. It draws comments whenever it appears due to the distinct white stripe on its hind wing.

There were so many species that were colorful, large, remarkable and new to me, that I found myself wanting to capture many on film. I've pared my photo file down to 450 photos and am still deleting. I chased a Southern Dogface, *Zerene cesonia*, on numerous days, but never was able to photograph it. Interesting spiders, beetles and biting creatures abound in this area, also. In walking off trail in pursuit of some of these beauties, I managed to get 50 plus nasty chigger bites, something I won't do on my next visit! I now have a file on preventative measures.

Some butterfly species are specific to the LRGV. A few that I was fortunate to see are: Mexican Bluewing *Myscelia ethusa*, Pale-banded Crescent *Phyciodes tulcis*, Red-bordered Pixie *Melanis pixie*, Blue Metalmark *Emesis emesia*, Red-bordered Metalmark *Caria ino*, Rounded Metalmark *Calephelis perditilis*. Many of the Metalmarks were small, about the size of our blues. But their metallic markings make up for their small size.

We had an adventure searching for the Blue Metalmark on our own. We were given specific directions and headed down several dirt roads, took a final left, counted three telephone poles and looked for a single bush on the west side of the road. Amazingly, we arrived, and there was the bush with a few other butterflyers at the site, too! The Blue Metalmarks were in residence, but only two could be found at the time. That was good enough for us. I thought of Dave Nunnallee when we were on this quest and some of the places we have gone with him...in particular, our Hair-streak Blitz.

There were a few butterflies from home, Gray Hairstreaks and Red Admirals were present. Also, a few butterflyers...Jim and MJ Flynn were at the festival, too! The Lower Rio Grande Valley is definitely a hot spot for butterflies whether you go to the festival, or go on your own. It is well worth the visit.

President's Message: WBA Overwintering Phase, 2016-2017

Since I joined this group in 2008, I have been deeply impressed that even in the shortest, coldest days of the year, when Cascadian butterflies are in hiding in their various life stages, we WBA members continue a wide range of activities almost without ceasing. We might in fact be glad for the forced retreat to indoor work, where we can focus on reorganizing and labeling photos, planning trips or sharing information with colleagues. I hardly know how I would survive a life of butterfly chasing in the tropics, though I often idealize what that might be like. When do Costa Ricans make time for their spread sheets, or Brazilians for their web posts? Surely it would be overwhelming.

In this regard, I think of our WBA Board members, who have come off a retreat this past October 8th, rededicated to consolidating our group as a free standing, statewide entity. I want to thank *all eight* of our board members for meeting all day with me out in Ellensburg to help delineate our areas of focus for the next year. With your member feedback from our visioning process at the 2015 conference in Omak still in mind, we came up with a list of five priorities: 1) become a statewide group, and continue revising our leadership and communication structures to be effective over this broad area. 2) Increase membership. 3) Develop leadership and increase volunteerism! (Yes, Dave Nunnallee is still the best field trip leader, but he does not have to be on the hook to lead them all! You could probably lead one yourself!) 4) Fund raising and how to spend what we have. 5) Promote conservation of butterflies and their habitats.

You all will notice some interesting changes, some frustrating, some quite exciting. It was undoubtedly frustrating to watch while my digital link with the membership meeting winked on and off last week as I tried to provide a summary of eight years' worth of our Eastern Washington field highlights, "Coloring Outside the Lines". Bugs abounded, not all of them butterflies, but we made it through the slides and had some fun in the process. What an advantage it will be when we can get a reliable remote webcast sent to Seattle, Spokane or anywhere else in the state! If you know good speakers on butterfly related things *anywhere*, send us their names. We are quite close to having the technical capability

to hear from folks at the McGuire Center in Florida, the Butterfly Center at Mission, TX, or from our friends closer to home at Oregon State, or wherever.

We began to sketch out plans for more advanced learning opportunities in order to promote broader knowledge of the harder to find, harder to identify butterfly species. A weekend workshop on greater fritillaries or sulphurs perhaps? A smaller overnight field conference that meets at a special area? We are also interested in formalizing the 15-plus years worth of institutional knowledge put together by our predecessors, so that in the future key volunteer positions will be more easily taught and learned, and so that our leadership will generally become more transparent. In this regard, I especially want to thank Al Wagar for his pioneering work organizing our written archives and videos into searchable thumb drives or other records that each of us Boardies now can use.

Conservation gained our attention as an explicitly higher priority than in the past. We will have some new efforts to which we can each make important contributions: we might help in restoring Moxee Bog as a far flung scabland home for the now absent Silver Bordered Fritillary. We might work with David James and the Xerces Society in tracking western Monarchs, which have plunged into a precipitous population decline over the past 20 years. We can help by monitoring butterfly species at our area DNR lands, wildlife refuges or other important wildlife habitats. We on the board remain open to hearing what all of our members have to say about these topics.

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