



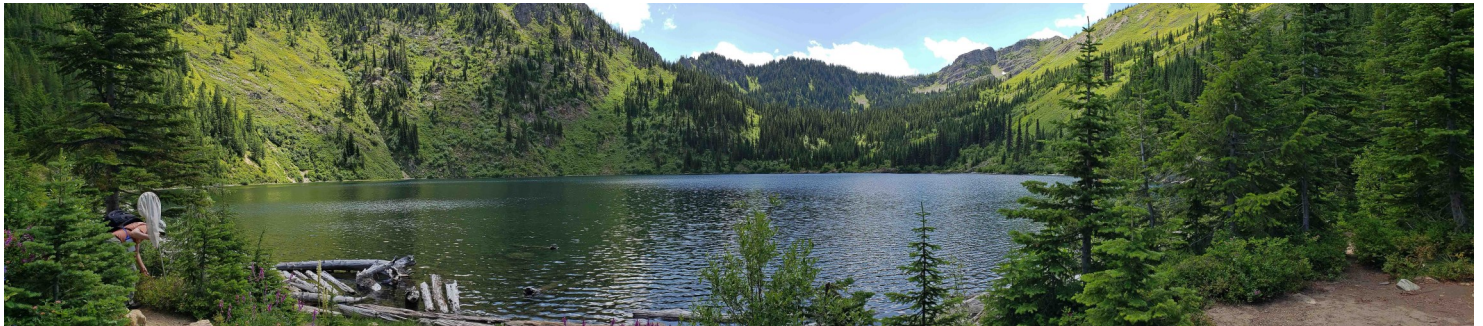
G'num*

The newsletter of the Washington Butterfly Association

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

Facebook: Washington Butterfly Association. Instagram: #washingtonbutterflies (anyone can use this hashtag)

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



Lower Stevens Lake, near Lookout Pass, Idaho. Three WBA members went in search of Gillett's Checkerspot. (Hailey Armstrong)

Upcoming Programs

Dec. 4, Seattle: TBA
Dec. 18, Spokane: No Meeting
Jan. 1, Seattle: No Meeting
Jan. 15, Spokane: Annual Potluck, and Dragonflies by Rick Moore
Feb. 5, Seattle: TBA
Feb. 19, Spokane: Carabid Beetles by James Bergdahl
Mar. 4, Seattle: TBA
Mar. 18, Spokane: 40 Years of Butterflies by James Dillman
Apr. 1, Seattle: TBA
Apr. 15, Spokane: Butterflies and Roadsides by Kelly McAllister

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Hemileuca moth caterpillar on huckleberry, south of Randle. (R. Johnson)

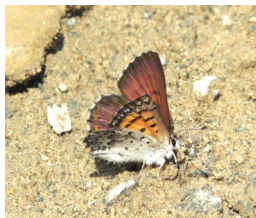
Trip Reports

Field Trip to French Cabin Creek (aka “Salmon la Sac Vicinity”)

On July 13, eleven of us, including three youngsters, had a great day, with great weather and a nice variety of butterflies (15 butterfly species and 2 moth species, listed below). The kids, with their energy and enthusiasm, were a delight and made the day special for all of us. Each caught several butterflies, unassisted, had a great time, and even understood why some of the Greenish Blue butterflies were actually brown. We spent most of our time at 3,000' in the patches of meadow near the creek. David Droppers had originated this trip for use with his students.



Kids with Swallowtails. (M. Weiss)



Purplish Copper. (Al Wagar)

When we first arrived at the meadow area, we heard rifle shots from across the creek. I went across to explore and talked with a young man camping there to let him know we were butterflying nearby. He was glad to know where we were and was quite safely shooting at a target in a direction well away from where our group would be.

Since we drove part way to our field sites on the Salmon la Sac road, our list of 2019 field trips showed this as “Salmon la Sac Vicinity.” But we actually went nowhere near Salmon la Sac itself. So, “French Cabin Creek” is a better name.



Male Great Spangled Fritillary. (M. Weiss)

Here's the list of species seen (Thank you Melanie Weiss): Clodius Parnassian, Western Tiger Swallowtail, Pale Swallowtail, Purplish Copper, Mariposa Copper, Thicket Hairstreak, Western-tailed Blue, Greenish Blue (many), Great Spangled Fritillary, Coronis Fritillary, Hydaspe Fritillary, Snowberry Checkerspot, Painted Lady, Green Comma, Common Wood Nymph, Elegant Sheep Moth, Forester Moth

Al Wagar



Examining a butterfly. (Al Wagar)



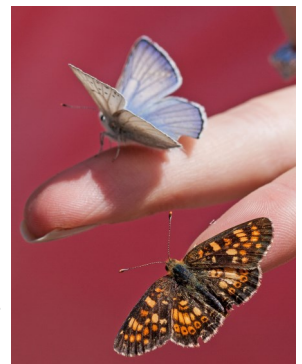
Aberrant Coronis Fritillary. (Mike Elledge)

Final 2019 Spokane Area Field Trip: Target Species, Gillett's Checkerspot

Only three intrepid souls appeared for the final field trip of the Spokane area's WBA group. Brenda McCracken, Hailey Armstrong and John Baumann managed a steep trail climb up along Willow Creek to reach Lower Stevens Lake, right in the neighborhood of Lookout Pass, Idaho, on July 20th, hoping to find the always elusive Gillett's Checker where naturalist Tom Rogers might have found it over 50 years ago.

The weather was perfect, the hike, very rewarding, and the esprit de corps was strong, but we did not find our target species. We did find numerous crescents, arctics and blues near the lake, and passed through a lovely sloping meadow and a rushing waterfall on the way up!

John Baumann



Blue Copper and Field Crescent. (J. Baumann)

Watching Washington Butterflies with Bob Pyle

Number Thirty-eight

The Old Pro-Am Scam

We often overhear butterflyers discussing their fellow adherents in terms of their presumed status or stature, and the terms frequently employed include “professional” and “amateur.” Sometimes a simple distinction is intended between those who spend a lot of time on their butterfly work, and really know their stuff, vs. those who ply the activity as a simple hobby or pleasant pastime. And other times we’ll hear the terms applied as either a compliment or derogation: “She’s really a pro!” vs. “Oh, he’s just an amateur.” I’d like to take on those terms to ask what they really mean, and to suggest that our tradition draws deeply from and continues to depend upon both a few professional lepidopterists and a big happy band of amateurs.



Melanie Weiss explains the citizen-science powered Cascade Butterfly Project to passing hikers. (R. Johnson)

First, the terms themselves. “Professional” implies that one actually makes his or her livelihood from a given activity. There used to be a few dozen or scores of professional lepidopterists around the country, mostly working in universities, museums, government agencies and departments, or institutions such as the Smithsonian. Today, because of the decline of traditional systematics (the study of relationships among organisms), there are far fewer scientists who are actually paid to build and maintain collections and work with them for research publications. A number of professionals remain employed in colleges, genetics and genomics labs, agricultural departments, and conservation organizations and agencies. But the present-day total of professional butterfly experts in the strict sense is quite small.



Monarch tagging along Eagle Creek, CA. (R. Johnson)

“Amateur,” on the other hand, is often construed as a pejorative, one who has only middling ambitions to understand or advance a field, and who lacks both the acumen and resources of the professionals. The resources part is usually true, but not necessarily the rest. After all, the word “amateur” means “one who loves”—and by extension, one who engages in a given activity out of love for it—a labor of love. Far from a put-down, “amateur” actually denotes a person deeply engaged in a given pursuit strictly out of his or her own choice, and therefore often rising to a position of expertise and respect in a given field out of sheer enthusiasm and talent. The pros do it out of love too—certainly not for the money!

What might surprise you is the fact that a great deal of the most valuable butterfly science (and it is true for every other branch as well) has always come from the labors of the amateurs, often mentored by the few professionals. Charles Darwin was an amateur, for instance! So were Gregor Mendel, Bates, Wallace, Rothschild & Jordan, Miriam Rothschild, and many other names with whom we are familiar in early and later butterfly studies. Or if they were paid for their work, it was as professional collectors for others, doing their own science on the side. Or they were wealthy and able to subsidize their own studies, like the Rothschilds. William H. Edwards ran a coal mine, and many of the other pioneers had other jobs or professions. Boisduval in Paris was one of the few who actually were paid to pursue Lepidoptera studies, as was Vladimir Nabokov at Harvard before his literary career really took off. But the fact is, our collective gathering of butterfly knowledge is the product of a great mix of pro-am cooperation.

Not that this ideal is universal, or came about accidentally. I was shocked, when pursuing studies in butterfly conservation in Britain in 1971-72, to find there was quite a gulf between the professional entomologists and the amateurs. They had their own organizations, meetings, and journals. There is no question that class played a part in this, and education, and accent. I found myself having to broker between the two groups in order to achieve certain conservation goals.

The outright silliness of the pro-am scam in the U.K. was well illustrated by my mentor at Monks Wood Experimental Station and godfather of the Xerces Society, John Heath. He



WBA members documenting species distribution. (R. Johnson)

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was arguably one of the main professional lepidopterists in Great Britain, founding and running the British Butterfly Recording Scheme, the oldest and by far largest such butterfly records bank in the world. Yet he had no letters after his name, had never attended university, and came into the government ecology agency right out of nowhere but his amateur devotion. John utterly confounded the prevailing prejudices. This schism in Britain has since eroded to a large extent, if not completely. But I also discovered that it was even more pronounced in Spain and in Mexico, where there really were two almost separate Lepidoptera wings, those associated with the universities and those who were not. Eventually both sides found that they depended on one another when it came to conservation, but it isn't easy breaking down old divisions and snobberies. And the snobbery can cut both ways: some amateurs resent the pros, calling them a privileged elite just in it for the job; and that's just as silly.



WBA member Ben Mous documented a range extension for Queen Alexandra's Sulphur on this field trip. (R. Johnson)

Happily, the picture has been quite different in the United States. Less class-ridden from the get-go, American field science always drew upon the country nature-study tradition as well as that of the academy. I recommend reading William Leach's *Butterfly People* (Pantheon, 2013) to get a good sense of the origins of American butterfly studies in the nineteenth century. So there was never a great barrier to break down, not to say there weren't academic snobs here too. But the most salient point is the overt ethic that went into founding the Lepidopterist's Society in 1947. The co-founders, Charles Lee Remington and Harry Clench, were card-carrying professionals, from Yale University and the Carnegie Institute respectively. Yet they both realized profoundly that butterfly and moth science had derived much of its strength and vitality, not to mention outright work and results, from amateurs. They made it clear in the founding charter that the Society was intended for equal access and participation of both scientists and field naturalists—or, professionals and amateurs, if you will. They made sure the Society's *Journal* catered to both, with refereed papers and a section entitled "Especially for Field Collectors." This marvelous precedent made sure that the Lep Soc (as it is often dubbed) has never become riven over false issues of inclusiveness, and that butterfly and moth study has been as robust as possible, drawing from all kinds of experience and expertise, professional and amateur, working together. To see this idea in action, visit the annual autumn gathering of the very informal Northwest Lepidopterists' Association in Corvallis.

In the modern era of butterfly watching and photography alongside traditional collecting and lab science, the role of the "one who loves" has grown only more powerful. Forgive me, but we can date this era roughly from *Watching Washington Butterflies* in 1974 (Seattle Audubon Society). My hope with that book was to draw lots of people who find butterflies intriguing into observing, photographing, and otherwise studying and enjoying them, alongside the small existing cadres of collectors and scientists. Well, we all know where that has gone! Spurred on further by a succession of field guides, NABA, the internet, and digital photography, the ranks of butterfly and moth lovers has grown beyond all expected bounds, and continues to mushroom. WBA is their natural habitat.



Wildlife biologist Mary Linders surveying butterfly habitat on an artillery range. Some things you just can't ask volunteers to do. (R. Johnson)

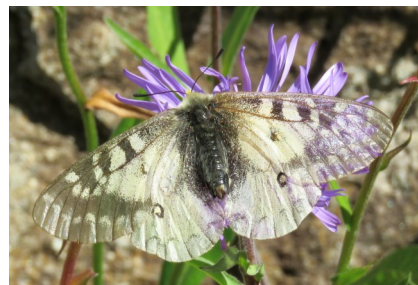
One of the most exciting developments in town-gown cooperation has been in the growth of citizen science. The volunteers, or "citizen scientists," do not generally perform science as such, which involves controlled experiments and statistical analysis. But they do undertake a vast amount of data-gathering that feeds into the actual science, and in many cases makes it possible. Who could count the number of 'Pollard Walks'—disciplined counting of butterflies along repeated transects with a precise protocol—that have been taken? These transects have enabled and informed any number of conservation, restoration, and management projects, as well as basic population biology of rare species. They are named, by the way, for a colleague of John Heath's at Monks Wood, Ernie Pollard, who came up with the methodology. I saw him recently at a fellow colleague's memorial at Ely Cathedral. Ernie had no idea that his name would become attached to so many butterfly transects walked all over the world by devoted amateurs—almost a synonym for citizen science.

So what is our pro-am profile among lepidopterists in the Pacific Northwest? We have maybe a dozen lepidopterists in Washington and Oregon who make their living in whole or in part by researching, curating, managing, teaching about, or otherwise dealing with Lepidoptera. We rely on them all for their trained insight, experience, knowledge, and findings. And all the rest of us are some flavor or other of amateurs. I include myself: I have been a pro, in New Guinea and elsewhere. But now butterflies are my avocation, not my vocation. And I consider myself to be in very good company.

Crystal Mountain and Parnassians by Melanie Weiss

Regina Johnson and I scouted a site for a possible WBA field trip along the summit of Crystal Mountain near Mt. Rainier, at 6,800 ft., and butterflies were abundant on this Labor Day weekend. We took the gondola up through the fog to the summit arriving at 10:00am. The temperature was in the high 50s. Just as we arrived the fog briefly opened to show a stunning view of Mt. Rainier nestled in the cloud bank. We walked the ridgetop trail north for a little over a mile seeing a few butterflies and nice flowers along the way. Yarrow, subalpine daisy, aster and pearly everlasting were the primary nectar sources, but other flowers put in an occasional appearances. After 1:00 or so the fog lifted to full sun and the butterflies emerged in large numbers. The temperature was in the low 60s when we left.

Clodius Parnassian. (M. Weiss)



Mountain Parnassian. (M. Weiss)

We were surprised to find both the Mountain Parnassian and Clodius Parnassian on opposite sides of the trail at the same moment. It was a great opportunity to view the differences between these two species in the field. The Mountain is chalky white to slightly transparent, has "barbershop pole" black and white antennae, bold black bars (often rounded) in the fore wing cells, and may have red spots on both the fore and hind wings. The Clodius is more translucent like rice paper along the outer edge of the fore wings, has solid black antennae, gray rectangular bars in the fore wing cells, and will only have red spots on the hind wings. The red spotting was not very apparent on either of these late season individuals. We were fortunate that both of these species decided to nectar at just that point in time to create a teaching moment for us.

An additional note of interest is that a waxy pouch, or "chastity belt", is deposited by the males of this species during mating. In most cases this prevents other males from passing their sperm to the females and guarantees that only the male's genes from the first mating will be passed on to the eggs.



Sphragis. (M. Weiss)

WBA Outreach Events



Beau Fong of Molbak's and WBA members Carolyn and Paulette at Molbak's Nursery. (Al Wagar)

Members of WBA have participated in 5 tabling events in the Seattle area since the beginning of the year:

1. 'For the Love of Pollinators' in February sponsored by American Association of Zoo Keepers Puget Sound Chapter. It was held at a brewery in the Ballard district of Seattle
2. The opening of the Molbak's sponsored Butterfly House at the Woodland Park Zoo in May in Seattle. Molbak's is a nursery in Woodinville.
3. A second time at the Woodland Park Zoo at the Butterfly House in June in Seattle.
4. Molbak's Nursery in Woodinville for their 'What's the Buzz: The Importance of Pollinators' event in July.
5. Software company Adobe asked us to come to their employee family picnic in the Fremont district of Seattle in August.

These events are very rewarding. People young and old are very curious to know more about butterflies. We get many more requests for events than we can staff. There are often elementary schools asking us to come to their Science Nights.

Many thanks to Paulette Murphy, Al Wagar, Julie O'Donald, and Carolyn Heberlein for helping with these events.

(Continued
from page 2)

More Trip Reports

Mount Townsend, Olympic National Forest, July 26.

This trip was scheduled for August 2 but was rained out. I previewed the trip the week before, on Friday July 26th, and was treated to beautiful butterfly weather and a relatively uncrowded trail, just a smattering of friendly curious hikers. Of course going so slowly, checking out butterflies, wildflowers, birds, and mushrooms, to say nothing of the views, people passed me on their way up and then again on their way down while I was still going up, even though I only went half way up. One such group on their way down asked me what I was doing while I was stopped looking at puddling butterflies and when I told them, they said, ‘Oh we’re from Yakima, we’re Cowiche Canyon Conservancy members, do you know David James?’ Yes I do. Small world! I took no net with me so was limited in what I could identify, but this is the list: Mtn. Parnassian, Hydaspe Fritillary, Field Crescent, Boisduval's Blues, Milbert's Tortoiseshell, Julia Orangetip, Snowberry/Colon Checkerspot, Painted Lady (surprise!), Vidler's Alpine, Hoary Comma and Anise Swallowtail. I topped out at 4800 ft elevation, there would have been more species continuing above that. Views were great and the wildflowers were spectacular.

Regina Johnson

Sheep Lake “Flash” Field Trip, Aug. 20, 2019

Sheep Lake is along the Pacific Crest Trail just outside of Mount Rainier NP. A small group of WBA members hiked to the lake through flower meadows and forest for this “flash” field trip at the end of the season. The forecast was for rain the next day, but we were greeted with sun and warm temperatures upon arrival. There were Hydaspe and Mormon Fritillaries, Anna’s and Boisduval Blues, and Purplish and Mariposa Coppers along the long stretch of trail before we entered forest and climbed to the lake. Parnassians greeted us in the meadows that opened in the forest. After lunch in the lake basin, we fanned out into the surrounding meadows. Blues were puddling. There is an odd and even year population of the biennial Great Arctic. Although worn, they were still flying. Of special note were a Persius Duskywing, a beautiful Milbert’s Tortoiseshell and many Arctic Fritillaries, always a treat to see. We left as the

Great Arctic. (M. Weiss)

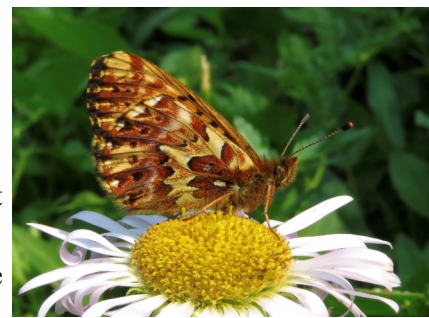


wind was picking up and rain clouds were moving in, but feeling quite satisfied with our day. A California Tortoiseshell bid us goodbye at the toilets in the parking lot, bringing our species count up to 19!

Melanie Weiss



Trailside meadow. (R. Johnson)



Arctic Fritillary. (M. Weiss)

Sheep Lake's meadows on a Sept. 2012 WBA trip. (R. Johnson)



Species Profile: Red Admirable (*Vanessa atalanta*) by Melanie Weiss



Sheep Lake at Chinook Pass, 5,700 feet in elevation, was where I saw my first Red Admirable, and I was mesmerized. Both its size and the striking diagonal orange bars on the dorsal forewings and along the marginal edges of the hindwings amazed me. I have since seen it in many locations, the shrub steppe of central WA, at mid-elevations and in my yard in Bellevue, to name a few. In fact, this butterfly can be found throughout North America outside the arctic zone and in Eurasia. In researching this admirable butterfly after my first encounter, I learned that it winters over as an adult, but rarely in our area unless it finds an extremely sheltered place or when we have a mild winter. Typically we see Admirables moving into our area as the season progresses, some years in larger numbers than others. The host plants are mainly in the nettle family, stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*) being the favored, but other plants are also used, see James and Nunnallee. A variety of nectar sources are used in the varied habitats they fly, but they also can be found on dung, rotting fruit, and carrion. On a field trip in central WA our group was surprised by an elk carcass with a half a dozen Red Admirables on it.



I was able to rear two found larvae, one from nettles near my home and the other from further away, also taken from nettles. The larva uses silk to close a leaf around itself as it eats and also when it molts. Although providing protection from both the elements and predation, I have peeked into one in the wild and seen a spider instead of a larva. With the early instars, the larva folds the leaf into what looks like a taco. As it molts and gets larger, the leaf folding and stitching can become more complex. My

two were hidden most of the time until ready for the final molt. Then each one chose the ceiling of the cage to suspend itself for its final molt. The pupa is beautiful with shimmering spots of gold. It darkens prior to eclosure. Sometimes a larva may create a leaf enclosure for the final molt, also.



Our experts suggest that we may see more wintering over of this species in the northwest as time goes on. I was surprised two years ago when one of the families I work with professionally saw a Red Admirable in Issaquah when sitting in front of a store after shopping. This was in January of 2017, and it had been a cold winter. They excitedly brought in several photos to show me from their iPhone. It had been a sunny day, sunny enough to warm up the butterfly for flight and a hunt for nectar. It had landed on the mom's leg, possibly for warmth. There may be only one other record for a Red Admirable in our state at this time of year. Global warming is changing much on our planet.



When this 2017 event occurred, David James shared the following: "Interestingly there is a UK precedent for this Admirable behavior. Last century, even up to the 1990s, *Vanessa atalanta* rarely if ever was able to survive British winters. But now it is a routine hibernator along with other vanessids! As well as climate warming I feel that the species may have changed its thermal tolerances somewhat. Maybe the two things are linked in some way?"

So keep an eye out for surprises flying around on sunny days in January, 2020. A Red Admirable may land on your leg for a bit of extra warmth...or maybe another species will surprise you!

BAMONA; BugGuide; Butterflies of the Pacific Northwest, Robert Pyle & Caitlin, LaBar; Life Histories of Cascadia Butterflies, David James, Dave Nunnallee .
All photos this page by Melanie Weiss.



Melanie Weiss at Crystal Mountain.
(R. Johnson)



Snowberry Checkerspot. (R. Johnson)



The Mount Townsend Trail. (R. Johnson)

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