



Washington Butterfly
Association

*G'nun**

The newsletter of the Washington Butterfly Association

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



Mima Mounds field trip in May. (R. Johnson)

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Upcoming Programs by Zoom
First Wednesday at 6 PM

Sept. 6: Share the Wealth! Share your photos and stories from the 2023 butterfly season. You may send photos to Paulette for uploading to Zoom, or just be prepared to jump in and share your screen during the meeting.

Oct. 4 TBA

Nov. 1 TBA

President's Message from Jim Reed

Hello again! This is the ninth President's Message that I have written. Wow! Time flies like a butterfly. The question is, which butterfly? Is it fluttering like a Wood Nymph or darting like a Green Hairstreak? Is it the noble gliding of a Two Tailed Swallowtail or is it the fast and furious flight of a Fritillary or Sulphur that is bound and determined to evade identification?

It is time to think about wrapping up another year of butterflying and start dreaming of next year and how glorious it is going to be. Well, let us take a moment to remember that this is still prime butterfly season for many of our Northwest Lepidoptera; many of the over-wintering adult butterflies such as Mourning Cloaks and commas are just beginning to eclose and seek their territory for the fall and into the winter. It is time for a fan favorite, the Mormon Metalmark to emerge and search for fall-blooming flowers upon which to nectar.

It is with these thoughts that I would like to reflect back a couple of weeks to our study weekend. We had about 40 excited folks in the field with nets, cameras, and close-focus binoculars all prepared to deal with the bright July sunshine. As the Board President, both past and again for 2024, it was a great source of pride that watching the study weekend unfold. All the folks who contributed worry, sweat, time, and energy put on a great event.

The group gathered at the visitors center in Metaline Falls and enjoyed once again seeing those familiar faces all charged up and ready to go. It was wonderful hearing how summers were going, and what new species people saw this spring. The gathering continued into the evening - at least until the city's sprinklers came on! Some stayed to watch David Droppers put on a Moth 101 clinic.

The next day was great with David James and Dave Nunnallee leading the way down to tiny Ione and up the Smackout Pass Road. Good butterflying was found both under the power lines and up the Jim Creek Road. When we headed to beautiful Big Meadows Lake area was when we noticed, not all cars made it there. I am not casting doubt on David and Dave's field leadership abilities but rather on the dusty roads which led to "dust out" conditions, and varying levels of driver comfort. On Sunday morning, we were to meet at Tiger Meadows and go from there.

Not everybody made it, and several of us did not get to the next stop at all but after an hour of looking we ended up opting for a trip up to Bunchgrass Meadows. We saw some great new species like the Northern Blue and Western Meadow Fritillary. (see story on page [11](#))

My point is, are there changes that we should make to avoid such confusion and help David and Dave out? Yes, they had walkie-talkies, but only a paired set. Our Board has been careful with our funds and perhaps we should consider purchasing a much larger set that could be more widely distributed.

We might also want to consider a more organized splitting up on Sunday; we certainly have other capable leaders and to help take some of the burden off David and Dave. Of course, who wants to miss out on David and Dave's expertise? It is something to think about and kick around for the future. Talk to a Board member and let them know what you think.

Jim

Editor's 2 cents worth: Butterflies live on unpaved roads. Unpaved roads are dusty, potholed, rocky, and washboarded. If your car can't handle that, try to ride with someone else. If your car can, please plan on giving someone else a ride. Keep the car in front of you in sight, and wait for everyone to catch up at all intersections.



Lotta cars on a dusty road. (M. Weiss)

Trip Reports

WBA field trip May 18, 2023 to Mima Mounds by Richard Youel

On Thursday, May 18th, the WBA field trip to Mima Mounds Natural Area Preserve enjoyed a beautiful sunny day exploring the mysterious mounds set in a Western Washington prairie just south of Olympia. The trip was led by Regina, WBA Treasurer and Gnum editor, who is the Assistant Natural Areas Ecologist for Western WA. She was assisted by Renee Mitchell, who is the Natural Areas Manager for Mima Mounds Natural Area Preserve. Both are with the Dept. of Natural Resources and both work on restoration of native prairie habitat at Mima, controlling invasive plants, using prescribed fire to restore natural processes, and planting native prairie vegetation particularly things that support prairie-dependent butterflies.

Regina and Renee presented a discussion of the prairies of Western Washington, and the Mima Mounds Preserve in particular as an important part of that. They explained the evolution of the prairies, indigenous people's use, subsequent white settlement and use and present efforts to preserve them. They discussed the flora on the Preserve and the relationship of fauna and butterflies. Of course, the mysterious mounds which dominate the landscape were also discussed to everyone's fascination. We walked throughout the Preserve noting plants and butterflies. Early emerging butterflies were the subject and the star of the show was the Hoary Elfin which was seen in great numbers. What a treat to see this species in the small area of W. WA where it is common. Kinnikinnick abounded on the mounds and the Elfin was all over it. The Two Banded Checkered Skipper with its much greater range by comparison was also regularly spotted. Other species seen less or in the distance or in single individuals were Ochre Ringlet, Western Tiger Swallowtail, Echo Azure, Julia's Orange-tip, and Cinabar Moth.

The field trip was well attended. Part of the enjoyment was being out on what for many was an initial field trip of the year and also seeing many of our friends in person face to face for the first time after a long time of Covid separation.



Hoary Elfin on its host plant,
Kinnikinnick. (E. Kuehn)



Wilson's Warblers in the forested area
delighted the birders in the group.
(E. Kuehn)



Two-banded Checkered Skipper. (M. Weiss)

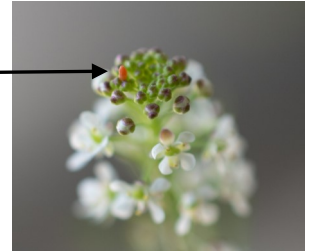
Paulette points out elfins on the kinnikinnick. (R. Johnson)



Island Marble Butterfly, WBA Field Trip, May 31

Melanie Weiss

WBA members visited San Juan Island for a two day field trip and were treated to educational, observational and experiential adventures on May 31 & June 1. The Island Marble Butterfly, *Euchloe ausonides insulanus*, is currently known to live only on San Juan Island. It was placed on the Endangered Species List in 2020. Known host plants include the common Field Mustard, *Brassica rapa*, Tumble Mustard, *Sisymbrium altissimum*, and the native Menzies' Pepperweed, *Lepidium virginicum menziesii*. All three grow on San Juan Island.



IMB egg in the lab. (E. Kuehn)

The intention of our visit was to learn more about the Island Marble Butterfly (IMB) and the concerted effort being made for its conservation. We met with Claire Crawbuck, biologist at San Juan Island National Historical Park, on the first day of our visit for a tour of the small Island Marble Butterfly Rearing Lab at American Camp. To prepare us for the tour, she first discussed in detail the life history of the IMB and shared photos. Then in the tour of the lab we were able to observe the five instars, chrysalises and the minuscule eggs which turn orangish-red color prior to hatching. Initially it's coloring blends perfectly with the mustard flower buds, and many of us were unable to see it even when she pointed it out! The egg is laid on the flower buds where the first instar with its small mouth is able to eat the tender flower petals. Through the progression of instars the larva moves down the plant, eating the leaves and stems. Claire noted that the IMB remains in the chrysalis stage for about 10 months. It is called the Island Marble Chrysalis by some of those working for its conservation. She then took us to a location where the IMB was flying in good numbers. The small, sandy, south facing hillside by the beach was covered in mustard. Initially we saw very few butterflies flying. As time passed more were seen and our excitement grew. Cabbage Whites were also flying which made ID a little tricky. We also saw Western Tailed Blue and Milbert's Tortoiseshell. Young Hill in English Camp was our last stop of the day. A probable Propertius Duskywing was seen in the Garry Oaks. A few butterflies were seen along the trail in addition to the larva of the Garden Tiger Moth, *Arctia caja*...the first moth raised by David James at age 8! Of note was an apparent Tent Caterpillar irruption resulting in thousands around the island and particularly abundant in this area.



Island Marble. (E. Kuehn)

Day 2 began with walks on trails around the Cattle Point Lighthouse. A few butterflies were flying, but the big excitement were two foxes. A black one with white frosting and a white tipped tail seemed pretty comfortable with all of us, at a respectable distance, taking photos and viewing with binoculars. As we watched, he then curled up and slept for a bit. The second was light orange walking along a fence hunting for lunch in the grasses below. Apparently the fox population has become quite large and attracts photographers from all around. We ventured next to Fourth of July Beach where we had been told the IMB was flying. This was a bonus for everyone after seeing them for the first time the day before. We were also surprised to have Claire and the intern Sauni arrive to release two IMB. They had hoped an eclosure would occur the prior day for us to observe, but this was even better. Menzies' Peppergrass, *Lepidium virginicum menziesii*, was the native host plant on which they were released at this location.

After lunching on the beach we left for our planned volunteer time, bringing along gardening gloves as directed. We were met by Kathleen Foley, Special Projects Director for the San Juan Preservation Trust (SJPT), and Sarah Hanson and Walt Andrews of On Sacred Ground Land Trust. Sarah and



IMB habitat. (M. Weiss)

(Continued from page 4)



Release. (E. Kuehn)

Walt gave a zoom presentation to our group earlier this year. We were led to SJPT's Phelps Preserve by Kathleen and Walt to weed an area fenced off from deer for future IMB habitat. Kathleen shared the good news that on an inland preserve closer to American Camp, two of the butterflies found their way to the habitat that had been prepared for the species earlier. Our group did a bit of sweating as we worked for several hours clearing ground around the annual mustard plants to allow for next year's seeds to germinate. Some of us kneeled at plant bases, some used hoes and shovels, and some sat to weed...a great crew. After all we had been given over our two day visit, performing service for the conservation of the IMB felt rewarding. One anecdote by Kathleen was that the butterfly seems to use Field Chickweed, *Cerastium arvense*, for mating which she humorously called the 'bedroom' plant, and Tumble Mustard for egg-laying which she called the 'nursery'.



Participants at work. (M. Weiss)

After our weeding, we all dispersed for our final evening on the island. Ferry rides awaited us the next day. In addition to beautiful scenery and butterflies, we had been delighted with sightings of foxes, seals, sea lions, deer, orcas, birds, crabs and sea life during our stay. We departed feeling fortunate for the excellent weather, and the rich experiences we shared in learning about the Island Marble Butterfly.

The Gold Hunter and The River. (It sounds like the title of a Fairy Tale.) By Jim Reed.

On June 1, 2023, a small group gathered on a sandy beach below a rocky outcrop along the Klickitat River in South Central Washington hoping to catch a glimpse of Washington's newest resident. Like so many newly arrived Washingtonians, its home territory was in California. Somehow the tiny Gold-hunter's Hairstreak has established a colony among the oak trees of Klickitat. The three butterfly watchers, with cameras at the ready, were hoping to see if the colony made it through the winter once again. Sure enough, first one and then other came to the damp sand to join the swallowtails, blues, sulfurs and a Lorquin's Admiral all getting some liquid nutrients from the damp sand. We watched a total of four *Satyrium auretoreum* for an hour before moving on to watch Propertius Duskywings and Western Tiger Swallowtails puddling en mass in their separate muddy areas left by the receding high water. Yes, they survived another winter.



Gold-hunter's Hairstreak at Yuba Pass. (M Weiss)



Bethel Ridge. (D. James) A lotta cars on a dusty road. Just how we roll.

WBA Field trip: Bethel Ridge June 24 2023 Trip Leader: David James

Bethel Ridge, west of Yakima along Hwy 12, is always a good place to find butterflies during the summer. And it lived up to its reputation on our late June field trip. We saw 20 species in the sunshine from swallowtails, to

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whites, sulfurs, checkerspots, blues and duskywings. We also saw a few Julia Orange Tips, testament to the fact that it was still spring at 5,000 feet. The snow had only thawed a few weeks previously and the normally riotous flower show was only just beginning. We did see a gorgeous Painted Lady, one of the pioneers that have since set up a very good Painted Lady summer in Washington. Later in the day, the clouds came over and slowed the butterflies down. The silver lining from these particular clouds was the fact that butterflies with sub-optimal body temperatures paused long enough on fingers and hands to provide excellent photographic opportunities. We were also able to see close up just how hairy mountain butterfly bodies can be to provide insulation from mountain cold.



A hirsute checkerspot. (D. James)

First Creek. (D. James)



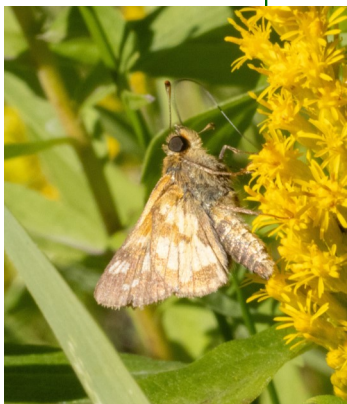
First Creek, Table Mountain July 15 2023 Trip Leader: David James

About a dozen butterflyers joined me on a sunny July Saturday for this first-time field trip to three locations spanning 2,000 ft elevation along First Creek off Reecer Creek Road, near Ellensburg, WA. All three locations had an abundance of flowers and butterflies and we ended up seeing 36 species, an excellent total for a single day. The mid-elevation (5000 ft) site was the most productive in terms of species and numbers of butterflies largely because of a large area of wet mud alongside the creek which was full of butterflies sipping for salt and minerals. The upper elevation (6000 ft) site also had a mudding area with plenty of action. Highlights of the day included immaculate newly-eclosed Hoary Anglewings and an abundance of Snowberry and Anicia checkerspots. Four greater Fritillaries (Coronis, Callippe, Northwestern, Hydaspe) also graced our day with their presence



Hoary Comma. (D. James)

2023 Study Weekend, Metaline Falls



Peck's Skipper. (E. Kuehn)



Story Time at the Lone Library with Jim Reed. (C Bellin)



Friday Night meeting in the Metaline Falls city park. (C. Bellin)



The Mothing setup. (M. Weiss)



(R. Johnson)



Hailey mothing. (M. Schu)



Experts “discussing”. (K. Kendall)



Clodius Parnassian. (C. Bellin)



More “discussion”. (K. Kendall)



Sylvan Hairstreak. (R. Johnson)



Jasmine with Great Spangled Fritillary. (D. Nunnallee)



(E. Kuehn)



Atlantis Fritillary. (M. Weiss)



Edith's Copper. (M. Weiss)



Blue Copper. (R. Johnson)



Atlantis Fritillary. (R. Johnson)



Western White. (R. Johnson)



Green Comma. (E. Kuehn)



Silver-bordered Fritillary. (R. Johnson)

Hello everyone,

We did it - we held an auction for the first time, post-pandemic, at the Metaline Falls Study Weekend. A certain "at-large" member of the board with a cast and crew of appointed and self-appointed volunteers dazzled the crowd with potential take home treasures, many butterfly themed. Approaching showtime, several chaotic plans were hatched and rapidly discarded for how to hold the auction: silent? load the picnic tables and have people bid?...time's up! - we're going live! With Liz organizing the wares from the picnic tables to show to the crowd, our MVP stars (is that redundant?) of the night were the incomparable Jasmine, Rhiannon and Annabella James who were pressed into service for the formal delivery and presentation of each item. Shout out to those young ladies for graciously stepping up into those roles - well done! Going over the notes from the festivities we auctioned off 39 items amongst 14 bidders and brought in a tad over \$300 for the association. A few items did generate some bidding competition: Dave Nunnallee's buckwheat guide, a copy of Bob Pyle's 1974 publication, "Watching Washington Butterflies" and notecard packages drawn and painted by Cathy Clark. Thanks to all who participated and helped out including Liz (auction item organizer), Maureen (scribe) and once again the James girls.



The not-so-silent Auction in action. (R. Johnson)



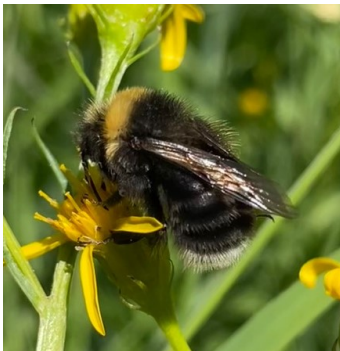
The auctioned butterfly shirt. (K Kendall)

Detours and Add-Ons by Cheryl Bellin

Study weekend provides opportunities for friends living at a distance to see each other while enjoying butterflying at its best. As Sunday morning came to a close, some departed early to head home and in saying goodbye a few of us missed the caravan to the next stop. While heading up the road we anticipated finding the group, we found a WBA member that missed the morning start and was butterflying solo. Instead of wandering further looking for the group, we drove to Bunchgrass Meadow, our afternoon destination.



Scouler's Woollyweed. (R. Johnson)



Western Bumblebee. (C. Bellin)



Police Car Moth. (R. Johnson)

The gravel road conditions were good and we made it to the meadow about 1:30. Upon arrival we first put out an abandoned, smoldering campfire and then headed down the uneven moose trodden trail into one of the flowery fingers of the meadow. Fritillaries were a highlight, seeing Atlantis, Northwestern (probable), Hydaspe, Mormon, Great Spangled, Silver Bordered, and Western Meadow (first of the weekend) Fritillaries. Dave Nunnallee mentioned that this meadow was the first location in the state where Atlantis Fritillary was documented. The colony seemed to be doing well; the most abundant species we saw that afternoon. Time was spent contemplating Sulphurs, identifying Eriphyle (aka smudge for those in attendance), Orange, and Pink-Edge. A few Northern Blues (first of the weekend), Sylvan Hairstreak, and Mariposa and Blue Copper were seen along the roadside. Woodland Skippers, Lorquin's Admiral, Northern Checkerspot and Mylitta Crescent were seen enroute.

Not to be missed was the Western Bumblebee at the meadow and another along the roadside. Western Bumblebees are not readily seen throughout the state. We documented 4 on our weekend in the Selkirks. The local Forest Service Wildlife Biologist was thrilled to have photos and the specific locations. Thanks to Chris Loggers for putting us in touch.

While no official Monday field trip was planned, three of us and our 4-legged companion hiked from Pass Creek Pass to Grassy Top at ~ 6150'. Pale Tiger Swallowtail, Purplish and Mariposa Copper, Field Crescent, Dark

Wood Nymph and Lorquin's Admiral crossed our path lower on the trail. *Eriogonum heracleoides* was interspersed amongst the lower lush grassy slopes which progressed to Scoulers woollyweed (*Hieracium scouleri*) and Asters, where Orange and Christina's Sulphurs flew by with occasional nectaring Northern Blues, Painted Ladies and Dark Wood Nymphs. At the not so grassy top, Hydaspe Fritillaries dominated the scene with more Blue Coppers and Northern Blues nectaring on asters. Clodius Parnassian, first for the weekend, was seen as we sat down for lunch. One added sighting was an arctic blue that 3 of us saw with binoculars; it's a species I see every year on our local field trips but come to find out there's not a record for Pend Oreille County. The host plant, *Saxifraga austromontana*, is found growing nearby which highly suggests that is what we saw. Looks like next year we will have to make another trip to NE WA to see about taking a photo of that blue.



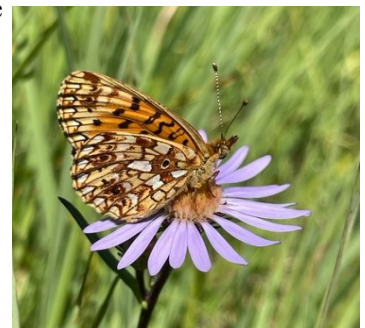
Bunchgrass Meadows. (C. Bellin)



Northern Blue. (C. Bellin)



The trail to Grassy Top, through a meadow of Scouler's Woollyweed. (R. Johnson)



Silver-bordered Fritillary. (C. Bellin)



At Chinook Pass one day.
Cascade Frog gobbles an
Anna's Blue. (M. Weiss)

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