



G'num*

The newsletter of the Washington Butterfly Association

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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*.



Tanzanian milkweed, host to the African Monarch butterfly, *Danaus chrysippus*. (C. Heberlein)

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Upcoming Programs by Zoom First Wednesday at 6 PM

December 6: Dr. Royce Bitzer on the astonishing migrations of Painted Ladies and Red Admirals.

January 20: Winter Party on Zoom

February 7: Dr. David James on his new book .

President's Message from Jim Reed

This past weekend, I was fortunate enough to spend a couple of days at the Pacific Northwest Lepidopterans conference in Corvallis Oregon. This is another outstanding group of people who share our love of Butterflies and Moths. Indeed many members belong to both groups and it is a natural fit for them to do so. It also provided us a chance to see the OSAC (Oregon State Arthropod Collection) which held an open house containing about 3 million arthropod specimens. This brand new, eye-popping facility proudly showcased over 100 years of specimens and records from all over the world.

As the meeting progressed and the group convened to discuss all that has happened since the COVID 19 pandemic hit, a portion of the discussion centered around the passing of a great but relatively quiet legend that was Don Rolfs. Many of us have known Don on different levels for many years and we all will miss him. It was mentioned by a number of our members that, as a group, our work was built upon the Giants of our field. Those who came before laid a solid foundation of knowledge, ethics, and concern for our beloved insect neighbors.

I felt that this was indeed high praise coming from this group. WBA founding members Bob Pyle and Jon Pelham, also founding members of the Pacific Northwest Lepidopterans, spoke most reverently of those who had contributed to our knowledge base and had passed. I looked about the room, mainly made up of gray, white-haired or balding folks and I thought "On the Shoulders of Giants indeed." These folks are known both Nationally and Internationally as experts in the field. I was encouraged that while the years they have spent in the field investigating Butterfly behaviors has physically taken a toll on their health and vitality, their minds and souls were very much still as sharp and full of life as could be.

I think we need to express to these gentlemen our thanks and appreciation for what they have achieved. With Don's passing, we were reminded that ours is a finite time upon the planet. Not only had our Giants dedicated so much of their time to learning, they were equally glad to share their knowledge with the rest of us. They have given countless hours of their time to help us rookies and advanced amateurs identify and appreciate the complexity of the lives of these creatures. Thank you, gentlemen!

And who are these greats? I am mentioning WBA associates but our neighbors to the south have an equally amazing set of Giants. Bob Pyle, Jon Pelham, and David Nunnallee all come to mind. And those that have passed, whom we all miss so much such as Idie Ulsh, Thea Pyle, Bob Hardwick, and Don Rolfs. We thank them all deeply and most respectfully.

It was said this past weekend that each of these Giants needed to recruit a new generation to carry forth their work. For a while we were in fear of losing that connection, that we needed younger folks to pick up the torch and carry on the traditions. We need to appreciate those who have stepped up and done so. The new set of Giants include David James, David Droppers, Caitlin LaBar, Melanie Weiss, Ben Mous, and undoubtedly several others that my mind was not able to come up with.

To the new generation of Giants, I, for one, thank you and we are already in your debt for your contributions. Jim



Don Rolfs May 28, 1941 – October 13, 2023

I was saddened to learn this weekend that Don Rolfs passed away two weeks ago.

He was a large part of the Washington butterfly community for many years, until switching his focus over to native bees between 2007 and 2010.

His obituary can be read here:

https://www.wenatcheeworld.com/tributes/in_memoriam/donald-a-rolfs/article_49d28246-7098-50e1-aa75-b031abb0879f.html

He was an integral part of my own path, willing to teach me whatever he could about photography, photo editing techniques, book printing, and leading butterfly field trips. Something I didn't put together until a few years later, is that the insect collection I curated during my undergraduate years at Central Washington University contains many specimens collected by Don Rolfs and Jon Shepard, who attended college together in Yakima. Little did I know when I was organizing all the specimens that I would later meet both men.

I first learned about the Washington Butterfly Association (WBA) in the summer of 2004, while I was interning at the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area. Their annual field meeting was held in nearby Omak that year, and Dale Swedberg (then-manager of the SWA) had heard about it and brought me to the Friday evening gathering. That was the day I met Jonathan Pelham, Bob Hardwick, Dave Nunnallee, and several others. In 2005 and for the next few years, I attended the annual Chumstick Mountain butterfly count, which was usually jointly led by Don Rolfs (taking the Swakane Canyon side) and Dave Nunnallee (Derby Canyon side). On the trip in 2007, when I was riding with Don and expressed an interest in learning digital photography with a SLR camera, he lent me his expensive Canon with a huge macro lens to use for a couple hours, which cemented my desire to dive into macro photography. Later, when I started my multi-year effort to produce the Butterflies of the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area book (published in 2017), Don invited me to spend the day at his home to photograph all the specimens I needed for the book (anything I didn't already have in my own collection), using my camera and his equipment. It was a very long day; I was under a deadline because Don was in the process of donating his butterfly collection to WSU to make room for his rapidly growing bee collection, but he was a gracious and patient host, and during breaks he taught me several things about photoshop, knowledge I still draw on to this day.

Even though he had almost completely withdrawn from the butterfly community by 2010 (becoming well known in the bee community), he stood by his promise to help lead field trips for the 2010 Lepidopterists' Society conference in Leavenworth, the first time it had been held in Washington. He led a group to the Chumstick area (east of Leavenworth) while I led a group south over Blewett Pass and up to Red Top Mountain. It was my first time leading a large group like that, but Don guided me through the logistics and we both had very successful days (I think my group beat Don's by one species).

Another anecdote that people may not be aware of, is that all of the specimen plates in Bob Pyle's Butterflies of Cascadia (2002) were photographed and created by Don along with David Lee Myers. When Bob and I put together Butterflies of the Pacific Northwest (2018), I created new specimen plates with "new and improved" techniques that I developed from what Don taught me, and used several of his specimens that I photographed on that day back in 2014.

Don may not have been as widely known as some of our Northwest Lepidopterists, but he was an important part of our history, and I'm thankful to have known him.

This photo is one I took with his own camera (the day he let me borrow it) on top of Chumstick Mountain, June 24, 2007.

Caitlin LaBar

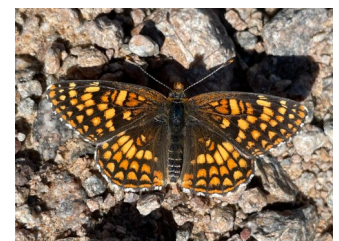
Trip Reports

Two carloads of butterflyers headed out **June 3, 2023 for the Boulder and Cub Creek** field trip. Sunny skies, 65-80 degrees, and good company made for a wonderful day. Two low elevation seeps provided roadside viewing along Boulder Creek of 16 species including three species duskywings and swallowtails in abundance. Julia's Orangetips, Large Marbles, Field Crescents, Common Alpine and Ochre Ringlet flew amongst them. Higher up towards boggy Roger Lake environs (~6000', FS-39) Juba Skipper, Silvery Blue, Western Pine Elfin, Thicket Hairstreak, Milbert's Tortoiseshell, Green Anglewing, Chryxus Arctic and a handful Freija Fritillaries basked along the roadside. Reg seemed to have a calming effect on several species that day, providing good photo opportunities.



After lunch and getting our Freija fill, we headed for Cub Creek where buckwheat, sagebrush and bitterbrush laden hillslopes, willow and violet lined creek-sides and ponderosa pine and Douglas Fir forests converge. We found Hoffman's and Sagebrush Checkerspot puddling side by side. Seeing Sagebrush Checkerspots at this location was highlight for me having not seen them there previously; as well as seeing the two Checkerspot species from different habitats together. Gray Hairstreaks, Western Tailed and Cascadia Blues also puddled nearby, while Clodius Parnassians flew along the hillslopes where Steers Head had likely already senesced. Common Roadside Skipper, Two-Tailed Swallowtail, and Western Meadow Fritillary made their appearance along the creek. For the field trip recap, we stopped by our residence for a cool drink. Western Green, Halfmoon and Behrs Hairstreak were seen as we headed to the patio, ending the day with 37 species.

Freija Fritillary. (C. Bellin)



Sagebrush Checkerspot.
(C. Bellin)

WBA Prairie Survey at Wolf Haven

Melanie Weiss

This summer WBA volunteers performed three butterfly surveys at Wolf Haven's Patrick Dunn Prairie in Thurston County. The last survey for the 2023 season was on August 12, when most flowering plants had senesced. We hope to return once or twice earlier in the spring of 2024 when additional butterfly species and flowering plants are present as our first survey was in late May. The 50 acre mima mound prairie is comprised of prairie grasslands, Garry Oak savanna, and wetlands. It provides habitat for a variety of prairie fauna and flora, including Golden Paintbrush (*Castilleja levisecta*), rare and endangered in WA. Mary McCallum, our flora queen, created a list of flowering plants seen on each visit. Our volunteers were focused on the task at hand, and all enthusiastically shared their sightings and knowledge on each visit. As a result, in addition to butterflies and plants, we were able to give Wolf Haven the IDs of a few bees and moths that were detected. We were respectfully limited in the number of volunteers who could move about in this critical habitat, and only netted when ID was not possible. On our May visit, the Puget Blue, a subspecies of Boisduval's Blue, *Icaricia icarioides blackmorei*, were flying. This was a new taxon for most present. We also explored an area bordering nearby Rocky Prairie where we found two additional species not seen at Wolf Haven, but probably fly there. Surveyors participating were Melanie Weiss, Mary McCallum, Cathy Clark, Liz Kuehn, David

Droppers, Tanna Knouse, Paulette Murphy. As some of us had not previously visited a South Sound prairie, surveying was enjoyable and informative. Thanks to Regina Johnson, who works at the Mima Mounds Natural Area Preserve, for her updates on what was flying in planning our visits.

Species seen:

Western Tiger Swallowtail, Pale Swallowtail, Cabbage White, Hoary Elfin, Silvery Blue, Echo Azure, Cabbage White, Puget Blue, Lorquin's Admiral, Mourning Cloak, Common Wood Nymph, Woodland Skipper.

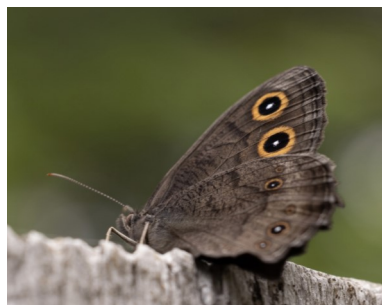


Harvest Brodiaea, *B. coronaria*. (M. Weiss)

Additional species seen nearby along the border of Rocky Prairie:

Anise Swallowtail, Ochre Ringlet.

A few species on the wing could not be positively identified.



Common Wood Nymph. (L. Kuehn)



Puget Blue female. (M. Weiss)



Hoary Elfin. (T. Knouse)

Big Four Ice Caves, Snohomish County, July 5

The Big Four Ice Caves trail is a short trail located along the Mountain Loop Highway in Snohomish County. It's one of the ten trails I've been investigating for my Mountain Loop Highway butterfly project, now in its seventh year! The highlight of the trail is that the climate of the avalanche zone on the north side of the mountain mimics the conditions found several thousand feet higher. Subalpine plant life can be found here too.

I thought it would be a great idea to get WBA members involved, so those that are interested can see one of my research areas, as well as selfishly get more skills and eyes out there, hoping for new records. About 13 people in total showed up for this trip. Of course, many would point out that it could have been far more if I had held the trip on the conventional weekday. But as many of the participants found out, this is why I perform most of my research surveys on weekdays – crowds, crowds, crowds. It was a challenge to show trip participants the butterflies held in forceps or jars, trying best to balance everyone seeing things, but also allowing for other hikers to pass. Other hikers were constantly present, and one could imagine the conga line of hikers that a Saturday would bring – next to impossible to enjoy a WBA trip.

All in all, it was a time of transition at Big Four. Not many individual butterflies were seen. The spring species are bowing out for the year, while the summer species have yet to fully take the stage. 12 species of butterflies were flying



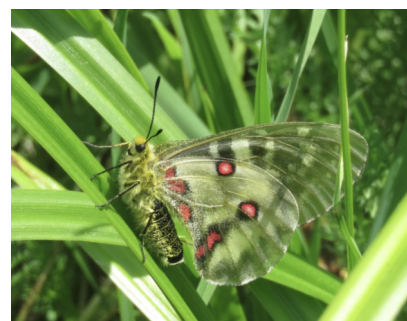
Along the trail. (M. Weiss)



The view from the trail. (M. Weiss)

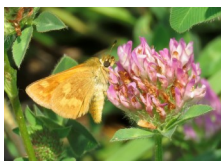
(anything over 10 in Snohomish County is a good day!), and we found Satyr Anglewing larvae on the nettles leading just prior to the bridge crossing the Stillaguamish River. We also made a point to look at any moths that made themselves available for admiration. Anna's Blues, normally seen much later at higher elevations, were common and fresh this day! Despite the special climate of this area, the blues still respond with the earlier melting of the snow.

The hot day was concluded in the picnic area with cold watermelon and the usual species count. The area is beautiful and you should visit – it's a big payoff for little effort... just stay out of the ice caves.



Clodius Parnassian. (M. Weiss)

WBA Butterfly Survey at Evan's Creek Preserve Melanie Weiss

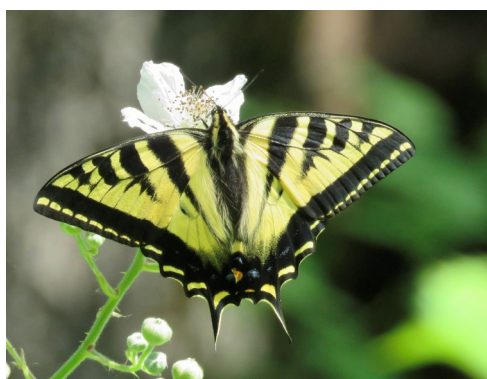


Woodland Skipper: (M. Weiss)

Seven enthusiastic WBA volunteers conducted nine butterfly surveys throughout the 2023 spring and summer season at Evan's Creek Preserve in Sammamish, WA.. This 213 acre preserve offers areas of lush forest with abundant mosses and lichens, several wetlands, and large meadows. Surveys were conducted two to four weeks apart from April through September. Visits were on sunny days to provide optimal conditions for sightings. Three to four volunteers were present on most visits, with individuals surveying different areas of the preserve. Several participants surveyed the same areas on return visits. A comment was made that they enjoyed observing how the flora and fauna changed as the season progressed. A mother bear and cub were seen in a large skunk cabbage area early in the season. We enjoyed the spectacular Big Leaf Lupine, *Lupinus polyphyllus*, blooming in May. Nine species of butterflies and three moths were detected:

Western Tiger Swallowtail, Pale Tiger Swallowtail, Cabbage White, Margined White, Echo Azure, Lorquin's Admiral, Mourning Cloak, *Polygonia* species, Woodland Skipper.

The Western Tiger Swallowtail was a common presence for about six weeks and delighted everyone. Habitat restoration is underway to replace invasive species with native plants. Blackberry brambles are extensive. As native plants are added to this beautiful preserve, butterfly diversity and abundance should increase. We hope to participate at their Earth Day Celebration next spring with a WBA table and information. A suggestion of possible pollinator signage at the preserve was made.



Western Tiger Swallowtail. (M. Weiss)



Margined White. (M. Weiss)

A big thank you to the WBA volunteers who participated: Melanie Weiss, Vicki and Mike Elledge, Carolyn Heberlein, Liz Kuehn, Paulette Murphy, Kim Kendall.

Chatbot AI Writes Poetry

Chatbot AI - Melanie's request:

I want you to pretend to be Mary Oliver and write a poem about *Speyeria coronis*.

And here it is:

In meadows bathed in golden hue,
Where wildflowers dance, kissed by dew,
I spy a flutter, a delicate flight,
A *Speyeria coronis*, a beacon of light.

Oh, wings adorned with vibrant grace,
A tapestry of hues, nature's embrace,
Orange and black, a stunning display,
As if the sun and night intertwined that day.

In dappled sunlight, she takes to the air,
With a gentle flutter, free from worldly care,
A dancer of meadows, a marvel to see,
Speyeria coronis, a creature so free.

She glides through the breezes, a whispered song,
A symphony of beauty, where she belongs,
Her presence a blessing, a gift from above,
An ambassador of wonder, an embodiment of love.

Oh, *Speyeria coronis*, in your delicate flight,
You inspire awe, filling hearts with delight,
May your wings always carry you high and far,
A symbol of grace, beneath the eternal star.

Coronis Fritillary photos by David James and Melanie Weiss.



**WBA Treasurer's Report FY 22/23 11/1/2022
through 10/31/2023 - available upon request**

INCOME

Conference Auction
Conference Registration
Donations to WBA
Interest Inc
Member Dues
Refund from CUH in Seattle
TOTAL INCOME

Refund is for the meeting room rental
paid just before the pandemic closed the
UW campus.

EXPENSES

Conference Cost Speaker
Conference cost food
Conference Cost, Planet Reg
Insurance
Meetup
Newsletter
Outreach
PO Box
Postage
Quicken
Speaker Fees
State Registration and Filing
Fees
Website
Zoom
TOTAL EXPENSES

OVERALL TOTAL

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President	Jim Reed	
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Secretary	Liz Kuehn	
Treasurer	Regina Johnson	
At-Large	David James	
At-Large	Carolyn Heberlein	
At-Large	Paulette Murphy	
At-Large	Sylvia Sheets	
At-Large	Melanie Weiss	

Science Advisor	Jon Pelham		
Membership	Reg Reisenbichler		
Annual Conference	Mary Schu and Lora Langford		
Field Trips	Melanie Weiss and Jim Reed		
Programs	Paulette Murphy		
Publicity/Website	Carolyn Heberlein		
Newsletter	Regina Johnson		

The views expressed in articles in this newsletter are those of the authors, and not necessarily those of the WBA.