



Washington Butterfly
Association

*G'nium**

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)
iNaturalist: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/washington-state-butterflies>



WBA at Snow Mountain Ranch, on the Summer Solstice. Note the winter coats and rain jackets. We're not deterred by a little bit of rain! We live in Washington! And we even found some butterflies. They live in Washington too after all. (Karen Holtrop)

Upcoming Programs by Zoom First Wednesday at 6 PM

In the coming program year some of the planned presentations include a recent study on declining butterfly populations (Dr. Cheryl Schultz); a new butterfly species *Satyrrium curiosolus* sp. nov., previously recognized as the Half-moon Hairstreak *Satyrrium semiluna* (Zac MacDonald); the reintroduction of Silvery Blues to the Presidio--with a long-term hope of something like the extinct Xerces blue arising in the restored habitat (Stu Weiss); and a report on Bob Pyle's search for the Silver Satyr in Chile.

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President's Message from Liz Kuehn

Hello fellow butterfly admirers,

As we begin to turn our attention in the waning days of summer with thoughts of hot apple cider and hot chocolate, I hope you had some wonderful encounters with butterflies and moths during this past WBA field season! Our first-rate trip leaders provided a variety of amazing locations, from mountain meadows to valley floors, where we sought the treasured butterflies of Washington State. A big thank you to Melanie Weiss, David James, John Baumann, Hailey Armstrong, David Droppers, and Karen Holtrop for their support in our WBA field experiences. In an era saturated with digital interactions, we are lucky to have people like them who foster a more genuine personal encounter with nature and each other.

WBA loves its volunteers as they are the backbone of the organization. As President of the Board, I can attest to the dedication of each of the Board members and the few individuals who respond when called to action. Their support has kept us going, and with additional help, we can achieve even more. This year's outreach events were well received and fun, but we had more requests than we were able to handle and, unfortunately, had to turn down many opportunities due to a lack of volunteers. If you are interested in participating in informational tabling at Nature Fests or hosting one in your area, send us a note at wabutterflyassoc@gmail.com. We would love to have your support!

Sharing the WBA mission to help attract new members and highlighting the conservation efforts for butterfly habitats is a fun and rewarding endeavor. This year, we were able to attend several events in support of the mission to promote the enjoyment, conservation, and understanding of butterflies and their ecology through education and science. Some highlights:



David leads a butterfly walk for the Cowiche Canyon Conservancy. (E. Kuehn)

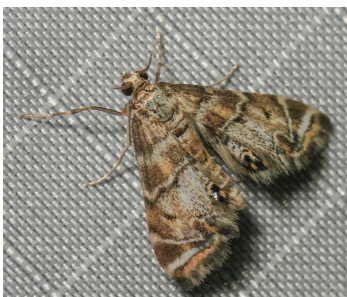
The Grand Cinema movie night (David Droppers, Dan Dunphy, Melanie Weiss, and Liz Kuehn),

David James' Cowiche Canyon Conservancy walk (David, Melanie Weiss, Pam Gunther, and Liz Kuehn),

Kittitas Environmental Education Network/Get Intimate with the Shrub-Steppe (KEEN/GISS) tabling in Ellensburg (Dan Dunphy and Liz Kuehn),

Our first Big Butterfly Month (all the participants! Melanie Weiss, Karen Holtrop, Regina Johnson and David James).

One of our most recent endeavors was the 2nd Seattle Magnuson Park Butterfly Garden (MPBG) work party. The restoration work continued, and we met again on August 2nd with several of our members ready with pitchforks in hand to transfer a small mountain of woodchips to two new berms and to a path along the Nootka Roses (after cutting them back) to a restful spot with a garden bench. With the help of our members and MESA friends, we accomplished the day's goals in three hours. My thanks to Richard Youel, Paulette Murphy, Dan Dunphy, Julie O'Donald, Lynn Furguson, Mary Bicknell, and Thomas Kelly for pitching in, so to speak, for our 2nd MPBG work party. As we were admiring our effort and saying our goodbyes, a Lorquin's Admiral circled over our heads and landed at our feet! A good omen if ever there was one! As noted from our 1st work party, we had an Echo Azure and a Margined White fly past as we finished for the day. I think our effort is butterfly approved!



Petrophila confusa. (Lisa Hill)

Our annual Study Weekend this year in Yakima had a no-frills approach, even then there is a lot that goes into organizing and managing the events. This year's event did not disappoint, and I am grateful to the WBA Board for making the weekend a success!

The festivities began Friday night at the Yakima Arboretum with registration, socializing and the grand finale of the night, Mothing with David Droppers. Another great evening with David! He was surprised by the number of moths attracted to the light even in a manicured setting like the Yakima Arboretum. The big hit, at least for me, was the *Petrophila* moth, it must have been those shiny silver spots along the outer margin of the

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hind wing! The larval stage is aquatic, and David indicated it found the light due to our proximity to the Yakima river. It was a very cool moth with shiny spots, scintillae of the moth world, maybe. We appreciate that David provided another year of his valuable insights into the fascinating world of moths.

With predictions of snow at Bear Creek Mountain and more favorable condition at Ahtanum on Sunday we made a few changes to our field trip itinerary. Saturday's destination was switched to Snow Mountain Ranch. The day began in a drizzle of rain, but that did not dampen our enthusiasm and with rain-coats on we began our butterfly quest. The first sighting was a pair of Becker's Whites, which David had seen the day before—in the same spot. So, cold and rain have some advantages when out butterflying. The pair posed nicely for everyone to get a view and a lot of pictures. A Great Basin Wood Nymph also made an appearance but wasn't quite as cooperative as a photographic subject, but many got great views, and some identification help from David Droppers. Another surprising find was running into Zac MacDonald. Zac is an Assistant Professor of Conservation Genomics and Biodiversity at University of California, Riverside. He was at Snow Mountain Ranch looking for the Half-moon Hairstreak, the origin species of one in Canada that he and his colleague described that was isolated so long it became genetically distinct. We may have an opportunity to meet him again as a speaker for one of program nights next year. The rain soon let up and although there were some clouds, the temps rose, and we saw several more butterfly species. The dampness and cloud cover kept the species count low but the great thing about our members is their diverse interest in the natural world and many were able to "geek out" on the other flora and fauna found at Snow Mountain Ranch.

We gathered again at the Yakima Arboretum for our evening program. David James reviewed the short species list, the Pizza arrived, and the program began. David presented his latest research paper, a collaborative effort with the Cowiche Canyon Conservancy, on the ecology and migration of the Coronis Fritillary, *Speyeria coronis*. He was introduced by the former Director of the Cowiche Canyon Conservancy and colleague on the project, Betsy Bloomfield, who reminded us of how fortunate we are to have David James as one of our expert members. If you'd like to hear his presentation it is available on our YouTube channel, linked below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7x83tWlgPs>

Sunday at Ahtanum made up for the Saturday's lackluster butterfly show. Ahtanum had sun, warm temps and so many butterflies! It was jaw dropping for many of us who don't get to experience the east side and the abundance of butterflies.

Although attendance for the weekend was low by historical standards it was full of great camaraderie, new faces, great butterflying and genuine personal encounters with nature and each other. Another great WBA Study Weekend and excellent scouting by David James! I hope you will join us next year wherever we may be.

The WBA Board elections are on the horizon, with all of our current members ready to serve another term. Consider joining the Board; there is a spot for you! The Candidates for the September 2025-September 2026 term. President - Liz Kuehn, Vice President - Dan Dunphy, Secretary - Karen Holtrop, Treasurer - Regina Johnson, At Large - Alex Corsten, Carolyn Heberlein, David James, Paulette Murphy, Jim Reed, Melanie Weiss, (your name here).



Great Basin Wood Nymph. (E. Kuehn)

And finally, all our efforts would be even more challenging without the vital legacy knowledge passed down from prior WBA Boards and volunteers. The insights from the founders and members provide a wealth of information and a set of operating principles that we continue to reference today. The Washington Butterfly Association is built on a solid foundation of expertise, dedication, and a passion for butterflies. Looking forward we are optimistic about our ability to continue advocating for these beautiful creatures with your support.

I hope you can get out to enjoy the last butterflies of summer,

Liz Kuehn



Snow Mtn. Ranch: David James, Zac, Paulette, David Droppers, and Caitlin. (R. Johnson)



Eleodes obscurus, a Darkling Ground Beetle, at Snow Mtn. (E. Kuehn)

Trip Reports 2025

May 18-June 5

WBA Field Trip, May 18, 2025 Douglas Creek BLM Area **John Baumann, Trip Organizer**

Twelve hardy, waterproof WBA members risked constantly shifting spring weather to gather from all parts of the state at Douglas Creek BLM area on May 18th for a truly joyful reunion. Though it was brightly sunny, temps were chilly, at 55 to 63, and winds gusted to 15-20 miles per hour. Adding to our hazards at this event, streams issuing from several springs above the creek seemed to block entry further into the canyon, yet, our local man on the scene, Tom Wysham, led our charge as we drove higher clearance vehicles all safely through waters 20 ft wide and perhaps 8 inches deep! At the farther reaches of the canyon, Danny Dunphy found first a single Viceroy, then Mark Schuller, a mating pair, for a new record for that locale and one of few Viceroy records for Douglas County. Fresh Two Tailed Swallowtails, Lorquin's Admirals and Milbert's Tortoiseshells dazzled the eye, and tiny Columbian Blues swirled over their host and nectar source, Northern Buckwheat. Alas, our many netted whites were all Cabbage Whites...In all, we recorded 12 species, adding two newbies to a growing species list for a very intriguing area, not only for butterflies, but for birds, plants and other creatures any naturalist might enjoy. I would hope we meet there again next spring!



Viceroy. (Lisa Hill)

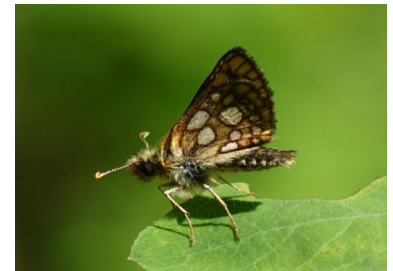
Horseshoe Lake, Pend Oreille Co., Field Trip May 31, 2025 **John Baumann, Trip Organizer**

When our group of seven WBA members had concluded our search of the "Rustler's Gulch Trails" near Horseshoe Lake, my first thoughts focused on gratitude for the unique fellowship that WBA creates for us. I'd expect that, like myself, most of us find the experience of solitude in the diverse natural habitats where our Washington state butterflies live to be deeply nourishing, yet I saw that our sense of community is also vital. I looked over our list of sightings that day at the end of the trip, twenty-some species, while high-fiving our other group members, and thought, "We are really much stronger and better together".

I'd like to think that I can manage my perimeter with my net deftly enough to catch many a cool bug that dares approach me, but I never would've expected to see Cheryl bounding like a gazelle down dusty tire ruts fast enough to track and capture the single, high-flying Christina's Sulphur we saw that day. Nor would I have expected Hailey to return to her hidden niche along our trails to fetch one of the Two Banded Checkered Skippers she'd seen earlier, so that the sighting of this little sprite, in a jar, could be shared by all of us. Us East-siders do not get to see *P. ruralis* often at all. No doubt many others also saw and learned much that was new through the sharing that spontaneously arises when we walk together.



Two-banded Checkered Skipper.
(J. Baumann)



Arctic Skipper. (R. Johnson)



Horseshoe Lake (PO Co) (H. Armstrong)

This damp, streamside habitat was just turning from spring towards summer season, an ideal time, so that we got to enjoy some of the loveliest insects of the season, including a brilliant, large Northern Checkerspot, several Western Arctic Skippers, a few Lorquin's Admirals, and some elusive swallowtails, along with a host of fresh Blues, and several worn Elfin species, some of indeterminate identity. We were disappointed to learn that seeming Eastern Tailed Blues that we'd netted were in fact more heavily marked variants of the abundant Western Tailed Blues that must have been there to feast on all the legumes we were finding here. All in all, though, a wonderful experience, all the better to have shared it with friends.

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Spiva Butte Nature Preserve, post fire visit, June 5 2025 Melanie Weiss

WBA members returned for a third visit to Spiva Butte Nature Preserve on June 5. Butterfly surveys had been conducted at the preserve in 2018 and 2019. Sadly, the 2020 wildfires burned almost 100% of this pristine area. Extensive restoration work has taken place since then. We acquired a permit to visit from the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust (CDLT), owners of the preserve, and we provided them with a report of our observations for comparison to the earlier visits. The big question was butterfly survival after the fire, especially for a few of the less common species including the Silver-bordered Fritillary, a Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). We returned to the same areas visited on our earlier visits. The day was very warm, and butterflies were present in good numbers. Species were identified either by visual observation, or by netting and briefly placing them in jars for closer examination. A few species were new to some of the participants. A noteworthy 21 butterfly species and two moth species were observed.



Silver-bordered Fritillary. (M. Weiss)

Cascadia Blue were common on the abundant as we made our way down to the Iris Meadow. Ruddy Copper and Melissa's Blue were also in the area. We were glad to find that the Silver-bordered Fritillary was flying in strong numbers throughout the meadow. One of our participants, a retired WDFW conservation biologist, estimated 100 individuals were observed, with the actual number likely higher. This was our most exciting find of the survey. The Garita Skipperling, another less commonly seen species, was also present. The Arrowhead Blue was observed in good numbers. It was noted after our visit in 2019, that the population we observed was one of the largest documented in the state. At the top of the butte, which reaches 2,283 feet, hilltopping behavior was observed among several butterfly species including Callippe Fritillary, Anise Swallowtail, Western White, Milbert's Tortoiseshell. The key finding on the butte was the Nevada Skipper, a new record for Douglas County!



Ruddy Copper. (R. Johnson)

Also present was the Pygmy Short-horned Lizard, another SGCN.

The recovery of the preserve was a marvel to see and a testament to the work that CDLT and many devoted volunteers performed. The retired WDFW conservation biologist commented that resilience after fire is evidence of a healthy ecosystem. The evidence was apparent to all of us participating in the survey that day.

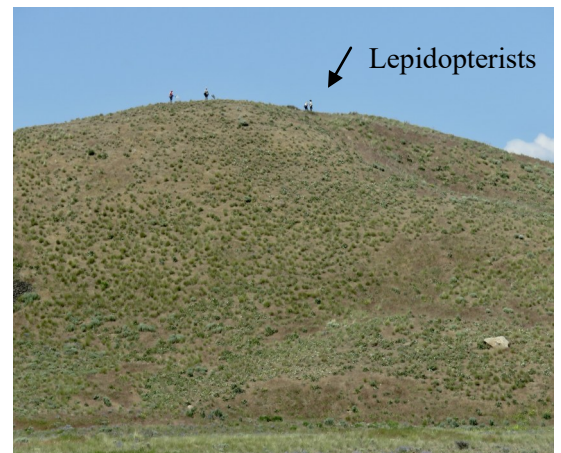


Melissa's Blues. (C. Clark)



Horseshoe Lake. (C. Bellin)

Spiva Butte. (M. Weiss)



WBA Big Butterfly Month 2025

Regina Johnson

Our inaugural Big Butterfly Month is now concluded. Of course, any photos you post that were taken in the right date range will still go in the project, but I'm doing the analysis on observations uploaded by July 26. What, you don't know what that was? We made a Project on iNaturalist for people to post butterfly observations throughout Washington State from June 21 to July 21. It was an opportunity to see how many butterflies you could photograph in that time period – how many individual observations, and how many species. According to Caitlin LaBar's newest guide, there are 156 species of butterflies in Washington. We got 112. Go us!

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/big-butterfly-month-washington-state>

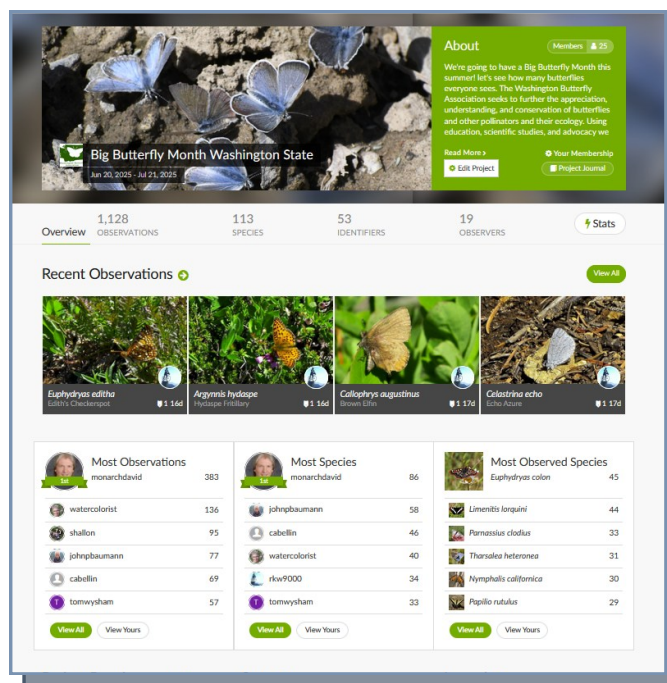
I don't know about you, but I can *see* way more butterflies than I can *photograph*. I swear they can feel when I've just about got them in the viewfinder – and they're off. Skippers, of course, are really uncooperative, being tiny to start with and skipping all over the place. Getting what shots I did of Dun Skippers was especially challenging, since they're so dark, I could barely see them as they skipped all over the ground, and the slightest movement on my part sent them skipping off again. Margined Whites are also difficult to photograph, at least for me. They're unnaturally bright! And they totally wash out in my photographs, a little patch of burning white that may or may not be a butterfly.

No surprise to anyone who knows him, but David James blew everyone else out of the water in this Project. He had the highest number of observations (383) and the highest number of species (86). And, of the 6 different Species of Greatest Conservation Need that were recorded, he had 4 of them – Monarch, Great Arctic, Sonora Skipper, and Propertius Duskywing. In fact, the only recorded SGCN he *didn't* get are both Westside taxa, and most of David's travels are east of, or in, the Cascades. You can see the advantage he gets from living in Central Washington, with easy access to great butterflying.

On that note, Karen Holtrop did a very impressive job considering that she lives in the North Olympics, about as remote from butterfly diversity as one can get in Washington, second only to the San Juan Islands I would say, or Forks. There's decent butterfly diversity in the eastern Olympic meadows, given good weather (a crapshoot in that part of the world), and you don't need a ferry to go somewhere else, just a very long drive. Karen got 3 species with only one observation, and 2 SGCN. She ranked 7th for number of observations and 9th for number of species – great job!

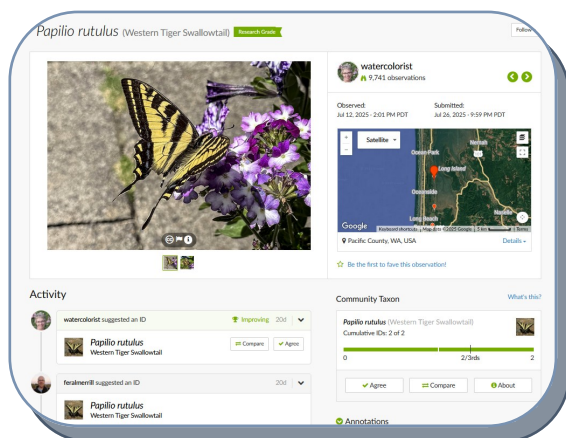
The Westside SGCN, that David didn't get, were the Puget Blue, for Karen, and the Valley Silverspot, for me (Regina Johnson). The Puget Blue is a subspecies of the Boisduval's, and the Valley Silverspot is a subspecies of the Zerene Fritillary.

The top place for number of species with only one observation, though, goes to Cheryl Bellin, with 6 species only recorded once: Common Alpine, Common Roadside-Skipper, Green Comma, Mourning Cloak, Vidler's Alpine and Western Arctic Skipper. The first two, despite their names, are not common. Mourning Cloaks are, but they were pretty much out of season for our time period. The Vidler's Alpine is one of those butterflies I could *see* but not



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photograph. They taunted me, dancing back and forth but never slowing. Cheryl is the better Butterfly Whisperer.

The four corners of our rectangular state can be pretty hard to get to. No one went to Cape Flattery, big surprise. Or to Met-aline Falls, site of our 2023 Study Weekend; that would have been productive I'm sure, but a long drive from anywhere. Two people went to the Blue Mountains, site of our 2022 Study Weekend. One hardy soul went to Long Beach, though not specifically for butterflies. Good thing, since she says she only saw one butterfly

the entire week she was there. But that one butterfly, a Western Tiger Swallowtail, is now immortalized on iNaturalist.

Top 10 Species # Observations

Snowberry Checkerspot	45
Lorquin's Admiral	44
Clodius Parnassian	33
Blue Copper	31
California Tortoiseshell	30
Cabbage White	29
Western Tiger Swallowtail	29
Boisduval's Blue	28
Common Wood-Nymph	27
Hydaspe Fritillary	26
Western Branded Skipper	26
Small Wood-Nymph	22
Sylvan Hairstreak	22

Species with just One Observation

American Lady	1
Arctic Blue	1
Brown Elfin	1
Common Alpine	1
Common Roadside Skipper	1
Green Comma	1
Julia Orangetip	1
Mourning Cloak	1
Pacuvius Duskywing	1
Peck's Skipper	1
Puget Blue	1
Sandhill Skipper	1
Thicket Hairstreak	1
Valley Silverspot	1
Vidler's Alpine	1
Western Arctic Skipper	1
Western Pine Elfin	1

Top 10 Observers:

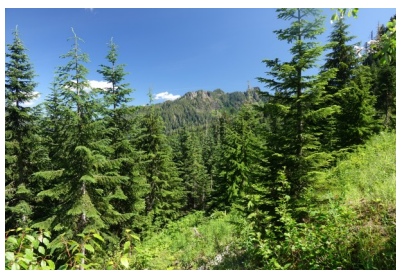
David James	383
Lisa Hill	136
Regina Johnson	95
John Baumann	77
Cheryl Bellin	69
Tom Wysham	57
Karen Holtrop	56
Melanie Weiss	49
Bob Williams	49
Nancy LaFramboise	47

Top 10 # of Species:

David James	86
John Baumann	58
Cheryl Bellin	46
Lisa Hill	40
Regina Johnson	33
Tom Wysham	33
Bob Williams	31
Nancy LaFramboise	30
Karen Holtrop	30
Melanie Weiss	27
Autumnmeadowhawk	21
Mike Clarke	19



Cheryl's Vidler's Alpine, Stiletto Peak Trail. Nice!



Regina's Vidler's Alpine, Three Peaks area. Yeah, prove there isn't one in there.

Eastern Tailed Blue Discovered in the Willapa Hills

By Robert Michael Pyle

Butterfly survey in the Willapa Hills of Southwest Washington has largely been shut down because they are almost all privately owned forest land, and the timber companies have gated nearly all their roads in recent years. The companies used to invite the public onto their lands and even published a recreation map for their use. Thea and I explored those logging roads and the remaining habitats they accessed for many years, so their gating has been more than frustrating. Recently, our wonderful Cathlamet town librarian, Miss Vicki (Vicki Franklin), tipped me off to a logging road that still runs ungated deep into the hills. My friend Andrew Emlen, a fine naturalist who lives at the end of Skamokawa's Middle Valley, confirmed that the old Alger Truck Trail, crossing mostly DNR land, is not gated for quite a way. I was delighted to hear it.

So on August first and again on the second, I plumbed that route for the first time in many years. At the point where the only guardrail in the whole of the Willapas used to be, the route splits. I went right, steeply down to the South Fork of the Grays River. The old green steel bridge we used to cross to drive along a beautiful stretch of the South Fork is now closed and tank-trapped. From a path up the berm, one can still see the river. A little before there is a marsh with some standing water, a rarity in these hills with very few water features besides creeks, rivers, and *rain*. Reed canary grass has come in, but there are also lots of sedges and rushes, and I'll just bet a colony of Dun Skippers (also known as the Sedge Witch) lives in there. Cedar Waxwings were delightfully flycatching over the marsh, and a Pygmy Owl called for a few minutes on the far side—the only owl I've heard around here for years, aside from Barred Owls. Also, a Pileated Woodpecker. The woods around the marsh have some age to them, and there were several patches of maturish forest on the way, among recent plantations and clearcuts. Much as we struggle with them over legacy forests, DNR goes a *little* lighter on the land than the corporations that control (and gate) all the rest.



Eastern Tailed Blue at Ridgefield.
(Keith Brady)

After that, I wound back up to the high spine of the hills and followed the Grays River Divide to the west. At the high point there was a far view south. Andrew says you can see Tillamook Head from there, but I'll have to take his word—there was a marine layer over the coast. But what I could see was Nicolai Mountain



Western Tailed Blue, Ahtanum.
(Brenda McCracken)

across the river in Clatsop County, which is significant because Mike Patterson has found Eastern Tailed Blues (*Cupido comyntas*) there, among other localities in Clatsop. I have long wondered why this species should occur south of the Columbia, but not on the Washington side of the river. Now, up there on the Divide, along with Hydaspe Fritillaries, Margined Whites, and Mylitta Crescents, I spotted a really eensy butterfly and managed to net it: a female tailed blue! A little way along, I caught three more.



California Tortoiseshell, White Pass.
(R. Johnson)

Our usual ones are Western Tailed Blues, *Cupido amyntula*. But these occur at low elevation on Giant Vetch and American Vetch, flying in the spring to early summer. These tailed blues, all females, were flying later, were tinier and spottier

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than the Westerns, and had multiple aurorae, the minute orange patches beside their tiny tails (yet they work—all were bird-struck at the tails!). They were apparently subsisting on the White Clover that underlay the Pearly Everlasting and Goldenrod of the clearcut verge. (In Colorado, I found that White Clover is a well accepted host of *C. comyntas*.) So these appeared to be the second western Washington location record of which I was aware for the Eastern Tailed Blue, and both a Wahkiakum County and Willapa Hills first record. They might be introduced, as might the entire species in the West, although Andy Warren doubts it. But then, much of the flora here is exotic too.



Hydaspe Fritillary, Jefferson Pass. (R. Johnson)

It seems you can't have a great day out without a flaw, and today's was dropping the fourth specimen—the freshest—as I tried to paper her. I know I will never have the patience for CSI, as I only searched for half an hour on my knees (with the help of two sticks to get down and especially up) and a pillow for my knees. Her folded mole-gray wings were the same color as the gravel. Pride doth goeth...! So she is for the ants Still, as I dropped back down to the valley, the highway, and home, I felt replete with an exciting find and a decent day's list for Willapa: *sylvanoides*, *rutulus*, *marginalis*, *echo*, *comyntas*, *hydaspe*, *mylitta*, *pegala*, and an honorary butterfly, the orange underwing moth *Dasyfidonia avuncularia*, The Uncle. Ten species: not bad for these always subtle hills.



Woodland Skipper on Red Clover, Anderson Island. (R. Johnson)

The next day, August 2, I went up again, determined to ascertain the record and to try to find males. Cloudy at first, but just as Weather Underground said it would, the day brightened into the afternoon and was clear by three. I reached the discovery site just as some sunshine and warmth arrived as well, and quickly collected the three males I'd come for, across the road from where the females were taken the day before. Seeing the males as well, I was quite sure these were indeed Eastern Tailed Blues, an exciting find. I saw more of each, but didn't want to further tax this tiny population. A nice little voucher series of three pairs will suffice for documentation. Though I expect they are tough, for such teensy and delicate butterflies: the photos on GoogleEarth and Google Maps show logging equipment parked on the very habitat where I found them, one year ago! Other butterflies today, cooler and breezier than yesterday, were much the same, plus one nice little California Tortoiseshell basking in the road.



Dun Skipper, Elma. (R. Johnson)

Before heading out the way I came, I explored the road all the way down, down, down almost to the main branch of Gray's River at the Fossil Creek Road. I knew it would be gated and I'd have to climb all the way back up, but I wanted to see how far I could go. When I finally hit the gate, I was only about three miles from my house! Then I got gated out again on another deep dive down a steep little road I thought might actually come out, very near KM Pass, a few miles east of here. But that's okay; it's all about exploring the hills, which I haven't been able to do for years—so thanks again Miss Vicki & Andrew! Vicki had gone up in search of Red Huckleberries. Speaking of berries I got into some excellent ripe Thimbleberries up there, and also Black-caps—the rarest of our local *Rubus* species, and my favorite. I scarfed quite a few of each. Red Elderberries beautifully backdropped the roadsides. Oh, and I should include that the number of people I encountered both days, after I left the pavement, was zero. Another good thing about our crapped out, shaggy little hills.

So what about the status of the Eastern Tailed Blue in Western Washington? It was first discovered by Dan Nelson in the Shillapoo Wildlife Area by Vancouver Lake, Clark County, on June 3rd, 2018, where I joined Dan to spot it on June 7th. I've since learned that, operating on a tip from birder Dave Hayden, Keith Brady found and photographed it on Au-

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2025 Study Weekend: Wings over Yakima

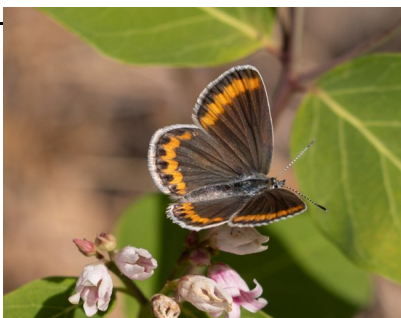


Photographing the famous Becker's Whites at Snow Mtn.
(R. Johnson)



The famous Becker's Whites. (C. Clark)

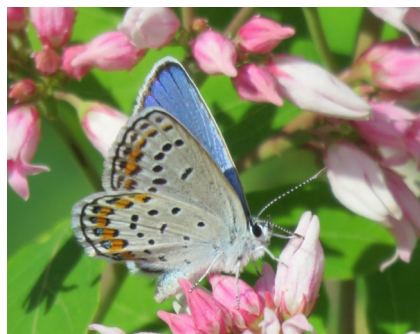
Melissa's Blue. (E. Kuehn)



Lilac-bordered Copper.
(R. Johnson)



Behr's Hairstreaks. (R. Johnson)



Melissa's Blue. (C. Clark)



Pale Tiger Swallowtail. (R. Johnson)



Mothing at the Yakima Arboretum. (E. Kuehn)



Propertius Duskywing. (Lisa Hill)



Western Branded Skipper. (Lisa Hill)



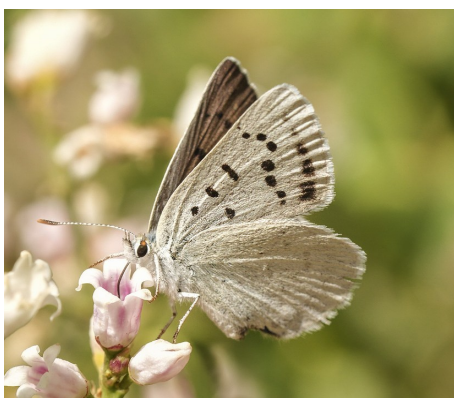
Mary L. photographing the duskywing. Some people can just get right on top of them. (R. Johnson)



Greenish Blue. (Lisa Hill)



Sonora Skipper. (Lisa Hill)



Blue Copper. Yes, really. (Lisa Hill)



Consulting Caitlin's new Pocket Guide. (K. Holtrop)



Western Sulphur. (Lisa Hill)



Alex waiting for his subject to return. (E. Kuehn)



John along Ahtanum Creek. (E. Kuehn)

Tales and Outtakes from the Big Butterfly Month 2025.

Ants Marching; or, Fun with Continual Exposure.

(R. Johnson)

I often shoot on Continual Exposure with butterflies, since they're moving all the time; it helps to get one good shot out of, I kid you not, sometimes 147. For a Woodland Skipper. Hey, it's digital. And there were actually a number of useable shots there. Here, we get an ant crossing the bottom of the frame while a Field Crescent prances around on an oxeye daisy—82 shots of that. This was on an abandoned, south-facing road in the Olympics. I took along a friend who feels he's getting too old for serious hiking, and no longer has a car that can manage Olympic roads, but he was happy to amble along and watch me trying to photograph butterflies on a beautiful day in the yellow-cedar zone in the mountains, a place he'd introduced me to in the first place. This is the same place where the Vidler's Alpines taunted me mercilessly, and an Anise Swallowtail veered off into another dimension when it saw me waiting for it.



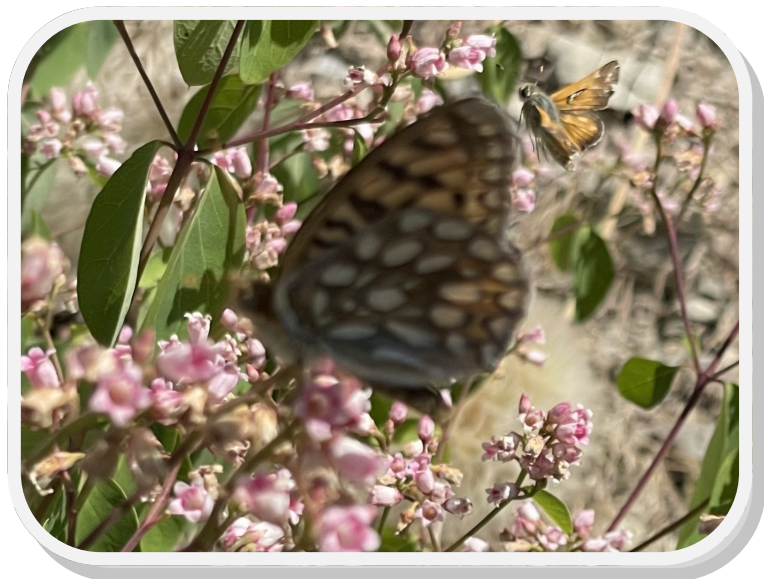
Tales and Outtakes from the Big Butterfly Month 2025.



California Tortoiseshell chrysalises. (C. Bellin)



Nice shot of Dogbane! What's the yellow thing though?
(M. Weiss)



Western Branded Skipper photo bombing a Callippe Frit. (C. Bellin)

California Tortoiseshell Irruption, June 28

A highlight of BBM was observing an irruption of California Tortoiseshells on Falls Creek Road in Okanogan County. We occasionally see California Tortoiseshells, but in one ravine we estimated hundreds, more likely thousands of individuals flying downslope towards the creek. Several clusters of adults, 10+ on piles of scat, and singletons were lined up side by side on fallen logs burned in a 2021 fire. Once heavily forested, shrubs and herbaceous plants are recovering. Looking closer at its host plant, Snowbrush Ceanothus, we noticed adults clinging to their chrysalis. Some bushes were totally defoliated, many had 10-15 chrysalises, hanging like ornaments from the branches. Branches on bushes nearby and across the ravine were actually shaking from chrysalises wiggling, twirling about. Maybe a defense mechanism as we talked excitedly or an indication they were nearing eclosure. All in all an amazing encounter.

Cheryl Bellin and Jim Rauh

(Continued from page 9)

Eastern Tailed Blue (Continued)

gust 1, 2021, on the Kiwa trail, Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, Clark County, and for the succeeding two years. With this in mind, on August 9 I sought suitable habitat for the butterfly around the Woodland town dike, just three miles north of the Ridgefield locality but in Cowlitz County. I had no luck, but did spot some White Clover stands that call for additional searching.

Then two days later, in a run of very hot days, I drove to the gate at the end of the Elochomon Valley Road out of Cathlamet, seeking Leto Fritillaries on this-tles. Everything had dried out and there was very little nectar, and just a Woodland Skipper and Margined White or two in evidence for butterflies. But there was a patch of Birdsfoot Trefoil still in bloom, underlain by a little Red and White Clover. I poked about, and soon spotted the flash of minute blue wings. Of course it was the Eastern Tailed Blue. After a couple of misses I netted one male. I spotted a few more, but the one voucher was adequate to the purpose. Now we had *Cupido comyntas* confirmed from both major drainages of Wahkiakum County, the Grays and the Elochomon, on both sides of the Grays River Divide. This site is very near Pacific, Lewis, and Cowlitz counties, so the butterfly seems highly likely to occur in each of them as well as Wahkiakum.

So we now have a nice little archipelago of SW WA records, resolving the longtime mystery of the species' apparent absence from this side of the Columbia. And what larval resources do they use? I found it over White Clover (*Trifolium repens*) and near Red Clover (*T. pratense*) and Birdsfoot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), which Acmon Blues use as a larval host as well as several British blues, where the plant is native. Keith Brady's Ridgefield photos show White Clover and the *Lotus*, and nectaring on knotweed and mint, and he says it darts out of and retreats into Reed Canary Grass. So watchers in SW Washington should check out all these plants where they co-occur. Clearly, the Eastern Tailed Blue is good at adapting to disturbed conditions. I think it likely that it has followed the logging roads, and logging, into the hills.

We will learn more about this bright blue mite in years to come. Meanwhile, it's good to know that we have another Western Washington butterfly to watch for.



Mylitta Crescent, Kamilche.

(R. Johnson)



White clover. (Vinayaraj)



Birdsfoot Trefoil. (Amada44)



California Tortoiseshell eclosing. (C. Bellin)

Tales and Outtakes from the Big Butterfly Month 2025.



Great shot! But what is it? (what, you can't tell it's a Coronis Frit??)

(R. Johnson)

On this BBM trip to the White Pass section of the PCT, we were apparently the only possible food source for millions of mosquitoes. And when all three of us gathered around a butterfly in a jar—hoo boy! The mosquitoes were in heaven then. We got to where we could not stop to look at the butterflies. Lori actually spritzed me continually with repellent while I was photographing a butterfly because there were dozens on me and they were not giving up.



Interdimensional Monarch. (M. Weiss)



Margined White masquerading as a glowing white thing. (R. Johnson)

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