



Washington Butterfly
Association

*G'nun**

The newsletter of the Washington Butterfly Association

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<http://wabutterflyassoc.org>

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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*.



Clouded Sulphur on November 15. Yes you
read that right. Topenish NWR. (D. James)

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Upcoming Programs by Zoom First Wednesday at 6 PM

Saturday, November 22, 10:00 to 12:30. Magnuson Park (Seattle) Butterfly Garden Restoration work party.

December 3: 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)

January 10: Winter Party on Zoom January 10, 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);

President's Message from Liz Kuehn

All photos by Liz

Greetings, butterfly supporters,

I hope you are enjoying the butterfly offseason and keeping busy until the 2026 WBA field season begins! I'm organizing photos from this past season. People often ask which butterfly is my favorite, which is difficult to answer, but it is usually the one I'm seeing in the moment.



The WBA Board Election results are final, and the Board is set for the 2025-2026 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.

Thank you to all who participated and helped us meet the membership quorum for this year's election.

Bring back the butterflies! An enthusiastic group of WBA members went to work on our Butterfly Garden Restoration in Seattle. Wood chips and Himalayan Blackberries

were no match for this group. Many thanks to Dan Dunphy, Mike and Vicki Elledge, Pam Gunther, Carolyn Heberlein, Paulette Murphy, Kathy O'Leary, Melanie Weiss, Thomas Kelly (our MESA Steward), and Richard Youel for joining me for our 3rd butterfly garden restoration work party. We plan to meet again on Saturday, November 22, from 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM. Look for a WBA Notice line soon with details about the Magnuson Park Butterfly Garden Restoration work party.

We appreciate our members. Your membership and donations allow WBA to educate and promote the understanding and enjoyment of butterflies through Monthly Programs and Field Trips.



Paulette Murphy, our Program Director, finds speakers from across the field of lepidoptery and connects them with our Zoom and YouTube audience. She has done an outstanding job, and this year's offerings were no exception:

February - Dr. Gary Bernard, Red Blindness, Red Vision and Far-Red Vision of Butterflies, **March** - David Droppers, Final results of his butterfly inventory project on the Mountain Loop Highway, **April** - Julie O'Donald, Native Pollinators in our Gardens, **September** - David James, Imperiled Washington Butterflies: Status, Needs and Strategies, **October** - Robert Pyle, "A Pylean Potpourri in Silver, Copper, and Blue".

Tune in for our Programs on the first Wednesday of each month, September through May.

If you missed or would like to see any program again, you can access information and YouTube links from our Blog Category [Programs – Washington Butterfly Association](#). Be sure to subscribe and get all the latest uploads.

Field trips are a hands-on, real-life "butterflying" experience. Melanie Weiss, our Field Trip coordinator, organizes each season's field trip leaders and their destinations. This year, she arranged with the trip leaders 12 successful trips and supported 4 of David James' Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) trips. I can't wait to see what they come up with next year!

To learn more about our field trips, check out the Blog Category [Trip Report – Washington Butterfly Association](#).

Thank you for your continued support and engagement!

Trip Reports



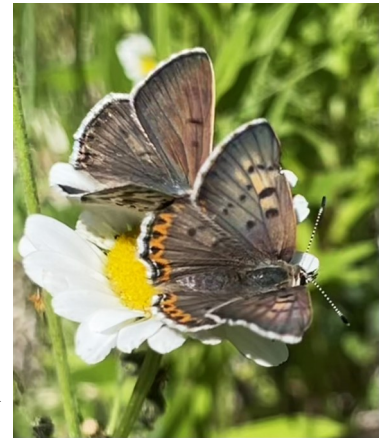
Stunningly fresh Ruddy Copper.
(D. Droppers)

Umtanum Ridge, June 14, David Droppers

Only two people dared to venture up to Umtanum Ridge on foot. While we did not definitively find the Nevada Skipper as hoped (may have had some glances, but they were great at getting out of my net once caught!), a great day was still had. In fact, lots of wildlife showed up. The area is great for birds, and we were spoiled by several flyovers of a Golden Eagle, or maybe two! The season was a bit more advanced, but that proved fruitful – fresh Ruddy Copper were common in the lower portions of the trail on the return; it was far too cool in the morning when we first ascended for them to arrive. Other surprises included a couple of Coral Hairstreaks. The butterfly of the day award had to go to the Halfmoon Hairstreaks, there were hundreds of them. Drishti, an avid hiker but new to butterflies, got in as much practice with them in one day as most people do in several years! A return trip is planned, but I will certainly try to learn the driving route up to the ridge.

Big Meadow (ID), July 12, John Baumann

Spokane area WBA field trips concluded this summer with a truly Big Bang on July 12. At my suggestion, our threesome agreed to avoid risk of drought conditions on Mt Spokane by driving north through Newport, WA, to Bonner County, Idaho, where a great green flood plain known as Big Meadow lies nestled in the Purcell Trench about 8 miles WSW of Priest Lake. This land, owned by the Kalispel Tribe and open to visitors for field trips, is being restored by the tribe from pasture, and, at its forested edges, is home to a richness of butterfly fauna hard to equal anywhere else at our latitude. We did not see the Meadow Fritillary, which I have seen here in the past at this point in the season, but we did see 22 species in all, a few of which were great finds. We saw simultaneous irruptions of European Skippers and Edith's Coppers, meaning countless numbers of each. We were also able to spark discussion of our possible Atlantis Fritillaries and Northwestern Fritillaries with carefully discerning input from Caitlin Labar, Jon Pelham and others, leading to a conclusion that we had almost certainly seen *A. atlantis*, and had also very likely seen *A. hesperis*, as certainly as one could tell from photos (photo p. 7). American Silver Bordered Fritillaries, and several of the Inland Northwest's least common skippers, such as Coras/Peck's Skippers, the Long Dash and the Dun Skipper also presented themselves that day. A really grand adventure!



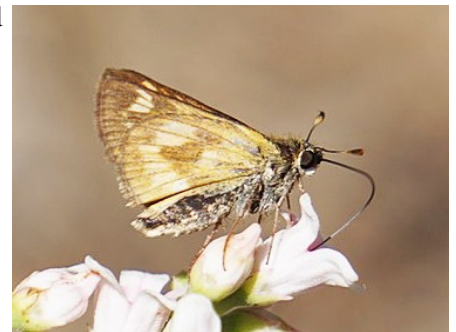
Edith's Coppers. (C. Bellin)



Peck's Skipper. (C. Bellin)

Red Top Lookout, July 13, David Droppers

Bumpy road, steep trail, but it's short, the views are good, and boy are the butterflies grand! We seemed to hit near the peak of



Long Dash. (M. Shuller)

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

abundance and diversity today, finding 29 species between the three of us. First stop was a marshy area, where Great Spangled Frits eluded us in the thickets. Hoffmann's Checkerspots and Field Crescents abounded. Higher up at the trailhead, the environment dried, and associated butterflies appeared. Mountain Parnassians, California Hairstreaks, Blue Coppers, and many others. There is so much in the short little trail and associated road, I'm feeling like I may want to make a monthly visit to this area during the flight season, solo or with others. It's a great place to practice your buckwheats and associated blues.

Bear Creek Mountain July 26 David James



Bear Creek Mountain. (D. James)

experience having been to Bear Creek Mountain almost annually since 2002. This is one of the places that Coronis Fritillaries spend their summer vacation and who can blame them? Coronis was the reason that Questen from the Yakima Herald joined us because he is planning to write a story on this butterfly and wanted to see where it spent the summer. Along with Coronis we saw four other Fritillary species including the Arctic Fritillary which is always a treat to see. The Clodius Parnassian was the butterfly of the day with more than 50 seen. Checkerspots, Tortoiseshells and blues were also common and Melanie even found a Hydaspe Fritillary caterpillar walking across the trail. I am positive I will be visiting Bear Creek Mountain again, and if you enjoy wildflowers, wild butterflies and ambiance beyond compare, I recommend you join us next time we offer a WBA field trip there!

Little Quilcene, July 29, Karen Holtrop

Seven enthusiastic WBA members embarked on the Little Quilcene for Zerene (pronounced so it rhymes with Quilcene) and More Field Trip on July 29th. The trip took place along an old road corridor at the headwaters of the Little Quilcene River in the Olympic National Forest. And yes, we did see Zerene fritillaries! All together we observed 15 butterfly species, including 2 at the meeting point in Quilcene. Not bad for West-



Red Top. (D. Droppers)

Six WBA members and a reporter from the Yakima Herald had a spectacular day in the flowery meadows below Bear Creek Mountain in late July. The flowers had only just started blooming but were putting on a great show along with 23 species of butterflies. There is something about this mountain meadow location that soothes the soul and makes time stand still. I speak from experi-



Arctic Fritillary. (D. James)



Zerene Fritillary. (K. Holtrop)

(Continued from page 4)

ern Washington! The most abundant species was *Clodius Parnassian*. It was a nice walk counting butterflies and noting plants, ending with ice cream at the Quilcene Village Store. Thank you all who participated – Alison, Stewart, Don, Regina, Melanie, Liz, along with Karen.

Photographing butterflies with Mt. Townsend in the background. (R. Johnson)



Little Quilcene trip. (K. Holtrop)

Snow Mountain Ranch, Yakima, September 13 David James

Our last WBA field trip of the 2025 butterfly season was held at Snow Mountain Ranch just west of Yakima on September 13. It was a sunny, warm 80 degree fall day and we were treated to eleven species including about 40 *Coronis Fritillaries* busy feeding on the abundant blooms of Rabbitbrush. It was not quite the hundreds that I saw during September 2024 at Snow Mountain Ranch, but enough to make us all happy. All the usual late-season butterflies made an appearance including Ringlets, Gray Hairstreaks, Woodland Skippers, Juba Skippers, Clouded Sulphurs, Western Whites and Cabbage Whites. A Red Admiral, California Tortoiseshell and Northern White Skipper rounded off the day. Mostly, it was great to see everyone one last time this butterfly season and we hope to see you all again next season!

Coronis Fritillary. (D. James)



Snow Mountain Ranch. (D. James)



A Symbol of Hope in the Midst of Drought!

Spokane, Sept 3, 2025, approaching 101 degrees F

I'd just finished lunch and was walking a bucket of vegetable stuff back to our compost when I spied a fritillary flying slowly and low to the ground in a weedy patch of our yard we call "the north 40", where native shrubs and volunteer weeds and wildflowers have the run of the place. Following the butterfly's movements as unobtrusively as I could, I soon found that she was here on a mission to bring a brood of young 2026 Zerenes into our yard next spring. The attached photos show the lady straddling a tough old dandelion leaf to plant a young 'un in the duff beneath. To witness this rebirth taking place in my own backyard during a day of record heat, during the driest summer ever recorded in Spokane (0.26 of an inch June 1st to August 31st) has done my heart as much good as anything else I've seen in a lifetime of watching butterflies. We join Mama Frit in hoping for cool, damp autumn and winter seasons to support her children.

John Baumann



November Butterflies in the Yakima Valley!

Yakima, November 15, 67 degrees F

In previous years, I have been excited and blessed to see butterflies in the Yakima Valley close to Halloween. Orange Sulphurs, Cabbage Whites and Sachem Skippers are often seen flying and visiting the last blooms of Rabbitbrush, right up until Halloween scares them away. To see butterflies in November, I usually need to go to California to see my beloved monarchs but I will often also see Red Admirals, West Coast Ladies, Cabbage Whites and for a bit of exotica, I sometimes see a Gulf Fritillary or two.

This year is different. It is mid-month as I write and we have had some light frosts but no killing frosts in the Yakima Valley. Thus, there are still some flowers blooming in gardens and along rivers, thistles, sweet yellow clover, knap-weeds, dandelions etc. There is even a profusion of resprouting and flowering Hoary Tansy-Asters populating a mowed meadow near the wetlands of Toppenish NWR!

November 15 was a partly sunny day but the temperature reached 67 degrees by midday. So, I decided to take a walk through the Hoary Tansy-Aster meadow at Toppenish to see what insect life remained of the season. As I approached, I could see the distinctive yellow flutterings of Sulphur butterflies! Over a couple of hours, I counted ten Sulphurs, all, by my reckoning, Clouded Sulphurs. Orange Sulphurs are still flying as well; one was seen in a Yakima garden on the same day.

For those few hours, it almost seemed as if the 2025 butterfly season was still alive and well, and indeed it was in the Hoary Tansy-Aster meadow. It wasn't just butterflies either. Other pollinators were celebrating season-end too, many species of hover flies, tachinid flies, tiny native bees and wasps.

According to the weather forecast, an insect-killing freeze in the Yakima Valley is still about 10 days away, so I am looking forward to reliving my butterfly echo of summer at least one more time! - David James



Likely Northwestern Fritillary. (J. Baumann)



Ladybird Fly, Toppenish NWR, Nov. 15. (D. James)

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At-Large	Paulette Murphy		Newsletter	Regina Johnson
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At-Large	Jim Reed			

Committees

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