

On The Wing

*Newsletter of the Tennessee Valley Chapter
North American Butterfly Association*
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HOT WEATHER IS HERE. COME PREPARED!

Summertime counts can be brutally hot! A wide-brimmed hat, sunblock, and maybe even lightweight long-sleeved shirts to keep the sun off are good on sunny days. Long pants are advised, even with hot temperatures. They keep your legs from getting scratched, and can be tucked into socks to help protect from chiggers, ticks and poison ivy. Bug spray might help too. Please wear comfortable close-toed shoes (not sandals or crocs), as we may walk through muddy areas, tall grasses, poison ivy and briars. Ticks are very bad this year!

Bring close focusing binoculars if you have them. They are great when making identifications without crowding a nervous butterfly. You may wish to bring a butterfly field guide if you have one. (*Yes, even veterans consult them!*)

Food and drink are important too. Always bring a cooler with snacks/sandwiches that can be eaten during travel time from one area to another. Bring plenty of water or other drinks. One bottle of water is not enough for a full day in the field! Bring several. Always stay hydrated in the heat!

You are free to leave at any time during the day. All participants must pay a \$3.00 fee, which goes to NABA to defray their publication expenses. This applies even if you can't stay all day.

You may drive your own vehicle, especially if you plan to leave mid-day. You may also ride with other counters if you wish. This is recommended, as some of our stops do not have room for more than 3-4 cars to park.

Sat., June 2: 24th Annual, Tennessee River Gorge, TN

Meet: 9:30, Food City, Signal Mountain Rd. parking lot.

Leader: Bill Haley, (423) 326-9248 cell, wgh@tnaqua.org

Join us for the second 2018 count in this circle. It was chilly on April 5, but will be much warmer this time around. Butterflies should be more plentiful too!



Nancy W Williams

Monarch, male, Photo by Nancy Williams, 5-4-18

Sat., June 9:

22nd Annual, Soddy-Daisy, TN

Meet: 9:30 at Daisy United Methodist Church, 9508 Dayton Pike, Soddy-Daisy. Leader: Bill Haley, (see contact info, 1st column). Directions: Take Hwy. 27N and get off at the Harrison Lane exit, turn left. When road T's into Dayton Pike, turn right. Church is atop hill on the right in less than 1/2 mile.

This count circle offers chances at some good butterflies. We welcome help from both veteran counters as well as folks who are new to butterfly counts.

Sat., June 16:

3rd Annual, Williamsburg, KY

Meet: 9:30, in front of Super 8 Motel, Williamsburg, KY. Directions: Take first Kentucky off I-75, exit #11 / Hwy. 92 - turn right and motel is on left in less than 1/2 mile. Leader: Bill Haley.

It is a 200 mile trip from Chattanooga, but this count has been one of our best the past couple of years. Join us and see what butterfly treasures Kentucky has to offer.

Sat., June 30: 19th Annual, Lookout Mountain, GA

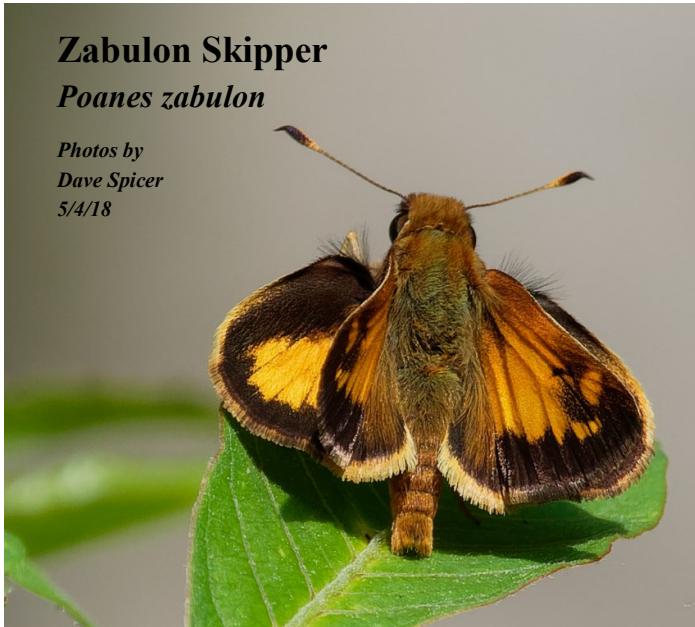
Meet: 9:30, International Towing and Recovery Museum parking lot. Directions: Take Broad Street south towards St. Elmo. Museum will be on the right, before the turn to St. Elmo. (Look for statue of heroic tow truck driver rescuing a couple of people.) We'll caravan to count circle from there.

No shortage of June butterfly counting opportunities! We'll meet the last day of the month to survey Chattanooga Valley and Lookout Mountain.

Soddy-Daisy Spring Count Totals The Soddy-Daisy spring count took place on Friday, May 4. It was overcast, but warm, with temperatures from 71-84 degrees. Mike O'Brien, Libby Wolfe, Nancy Williams, Harold Birch, Tommie Rogers, Dave Spicer, Jon Spicer, Scott Spicer and Bill Haley put in a combined 15 hours of count effort and 4 miles walked. They split up into 3 counting parties, and as usual, this effort to cover more of the count circle paid dividends. Tommie Rogers found one species nobody else found, Dave, Jon and Scott Spicer found 6 species nobody else found, and the party of Bill, Harold, Libby, and Nancy found 12 species nobody else found. It is interesting that only 4 species were found by all three parties! Notable species were 4 Goatweed Leafwings, 4 Gemmed Satyr, and one each of Lace-winged Roadside Skipper, Common Roadside Skipper and Mottled Duskywing! Look for photos from the count on this page and throughout the newsletter.

Species and Individuals: E. Tiger Sw. 16, Spicebush Sw. 2, Checkered White 1, Cabbage White 2, Orange Sulphur 2, Cloudless Sulphur 1, Sleepy Orange 1, Red-banded Hairstreak 1, E. Tailed-Blue 16, Spring Azure 2, Pearl Crescent 40, American Lady 1, Painted Lady 1, Common Buckeye 1, Red-spotted Purple 7, Goatweed Leafwing 4, Gemmed Satyr 4, Carolina Satyr 9, Little Wood Satyr 1, Monarch 1, Silver-spotted Skipper 1, Juvenal's Duskywing 9, Horace's Duskywing 1, Mottled Duskywing 1, Wild Indigo Duskywing 3, Sachem 4, Zabulon Skipper 4, Lace-winged Roadside Skipper 1, Common Roadside Skipper 1. Unidentified: dark sw. sp. 6, satyr sp. 4, duskywing sp. 2.

Total: 29 species, 149 individuals



Surprise! Nancy Williams took this photo of a **Goatweed Leafwing**, *Anaea andria*, one of four found along a gravel road that runs through a pine plantation atop Bakewell Mountain. This is the same road where Bill Haley first found a colony of Gorgone Checkerspots a number of years ago. He has visited this site many times over the years during both butterfly and bird counts.

Why was he surprised? He had never seen a Goatweed Leafwing on this road before! We have found Goatweed caterpillars on their host plant, Prairie Tea, which is a member of the croton family, during other counts, so we looked for this plant there. Didn't see a single one. Where the Leafwings came from remains a mystery. You just never know what surprise species might pop up during a count.



A few grass skippers are starting to show up!
Dave Spicer sent in these two beautiful photos of a male **Zabulon Skipper** he took during the Soddy-Daisy spring count. You gotta love those cute little furry guys!



This photo of a **Gemmed Satyr**, *Cyllopsis gemma*, was taken by Nancy Williams during the Soddy-Daisy count. Many times this species lands on the forest floor among dead leaves and is extremely difficult to find when it is at rest. Lucky for us, this individual was very accommodating. It perched for an extended period of time on this blade of grass right alongside a dirt road on Bakewell Mountain. *Butterflies of the East Coast* states, “all the other members of its genus inhabit mountain woodlands, either in the southwestern United States (two species) or in Mexico or Central America. This is the only low-elevation member of the clan, also the only one found in the East.”

Remaining 2018 Butterfly Counts

- Sat., June 2: TN River Gorge, TN (summer)
- Sat., June 9: Soddy-Daisy, TN (summer)
- Sat., June 16: Williamsburg, KY (summer)
- Sat., June 30: Lookout Mtn., GA (summer)
- Thurs., July 12: Stevenson, AL (summer)
- Sat., Aug. 4: TN River Gorge, TN (fall)
- Thurs., Aug. 16: Soddy-Daisy, TN (fall)
- Sat., Aug. 25: Lookout Mountain, GA (fall)

Join Us!

North American Butterfly Association



The North American Butterfly Association, NABA, was started in 1994 to popularize the study of butterflies through observation and identification through use of field marks rather than collecting.

The Tennessee Valley NABA chapter was formed in 2008. The chapter's territory is centered around southeastern Tennessee, but also encompasses areas of northwestern Georgia and northeastern Alabama. Anyone who joins the national organization within a zip code area beginning with 374, 373, 307, 357 or 359 will automatically become a member of the chapter.

It is also possible for people living outside our zip code areas to become members of the Tennessee Valley chapter. When you join or renew your NABA membership, specify that you'd like to be affiliated with the Tennessee Valley NABA chapter.

Joining online is easy. Go to their website at <http://www.naba.org> and click on Membership. Individual \$35, Family \$45, Institution/Library \$60. There also other sponsorship levels if interested.

Members receive quarterly publications from NABA, “American Butterflies” and “Butterfly Gardener”, as well as monthly “On the Wing” newsletters (March-Nov.) from the local Tennessee Valley NABA chapter.

Totals for the Lookout Mountain, GA Spring Count

The Lookout Mountain, Georgia spring count, first scheduled on April 14 and cancelled because of predictions of rain and thunderstorms, was held on Thursday, May 17. Once again, conditions didn't look promising, with predictions of rain and a completely overcast sky in the morning. Four people, Dave and Judee Spicer, Tommie Rogers and Bill Haley, took this as a challenge and showed up to count anyway. They split up into 3 parties: Dave and Judee, Bill, and Tommie, each surveying a different part of the count circle. They learned you can't always listen to the weatherman! Things got better as the morning wore on, the sun occasionally peeked out, and the butterflies showed up. The rain didn't start until 3:45, and by that time the three counting parties had found an amazing total of 41 species, which is outstanding for a spring count. Bill would like to thank all who showed up and were instrumental in this great count total.

Splitting up into separate parties paid off. Bill found 9 species nobody else located, Dave and Judee found 6 species nobody else found and Tommie saw 3 species nobody else got. Of the 41 species, only 11 species were seen by all three parties. Great finds included Zebra Swallowtail, Giant Swallowtail, Banded Hairstreak, Goatweed Leafwing, both Northern and Southern Pearly-Eye, Dusted Skipper and Common Roadside Skipper. Fourteen species of skippers were found. Carolina Satyr (68) proved to be the most abundant species of the day, followed by Cabbage White (40) - a new count record total, and Little Wood Satyr (38), also a new count record.

Species and Numbers:

Pipevine Swallowtail 2, Zebra Sw. 1, Spicebush Sw. 5, E. Tiger Sw. 7, Giant Sw. 3, Cabbage White 40, Clouded Sulphur 2, Orange Su. 7, Cloudless Su. 2, Banded Hairstreak 1, E. Tailed-Blue 3, Spring Azure 31, Am. Snout 16, Gr. Spangled Fritillary 9, Silvery Checkerspot 24, Pearl Crescent 21, Question Mark 8, E. Comma 2, American Lady 1, Red Admiral 1, Red-spotted Purple 6, Goatweed Leafwing 1, Hackberry Emperor 34, S. Pearly-Eye 2, N. Pearly-Eye 14, Carolina Satyr 68, Little Wood Satyr 38, Silver-spotted Skipper 5, Hoary Edge 2, Juvenal's Duskywing 1, Clouded Sk. 1, Least Sk. 6, Fiery Sk. 1, Tawny-edged Sk. 1, Crossline Sk. 3, Little Glassywing 2, Sachem 9, Zabulon Sk. 11, Dun Sk. 2, Dusted Sk. 1, Common Roadside Sk. 1. Unidentified: dark swallowtail sp. 3, satyr sp. 21, duskywing sp. 1.

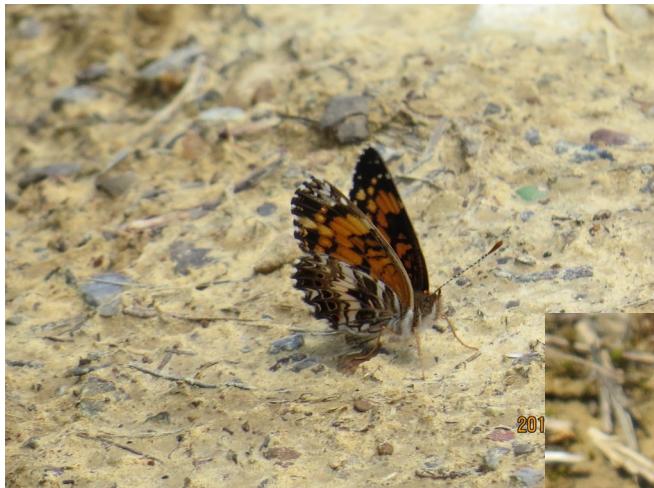
Total: 41 species, 420 individuals



The team of David and Judee Spicer found 14 **Northern Pearly-eyes**, *Enodia anthedon*, more than we've ever seen on any count. This photo of 5 Northern Pearly-Eyes and 1 **Silvery Checkerspot**, *Chlosyne nycteis*, shows the drawing power of a nice animal dropping. These butterflies are indulging in a behavior known as "puddling". It is often the males which frequent such sites, extracting needed minerals and nutrients. This addition to their diet makes them much more attractive to the opposite sex.



Bill Haley snapped this photo of a **Great Spangled Fritillary**, *Speyeria cybele*, nectaring on Golden Alexander blooms in a power line cut atop Lookout Mountain during the Lookout Mountain count.



Gorgone Checkerspot Found! Libby Wolfe sent in these photos of a fresh **Gorgone Checkerspot**, *Chlosyne gorgone*, she located on Bakewell Mountain the day *AFTER* the Soddy-Daisy butterfly count, so unfortunately it could not be added to the count day totals. It was located on a dirt road through a pine plantation, near where the first colony was found years ago. They have been elusive since then, and have only occasionally been found the past few years. Top shot is ventral, photo to the right is the dorsal. It is good to know some still remain.

Butterflies of the East Coast states, “Few field observers have been lucky enough to encounter a *Gorgone Checkerspot* in our region. This Great Plains species is mostly a rare opportunist in the East, with only a few permanent colonies known. And these tend to be thin and ephemeral, or at the very least inconspicuous. The interval between sightings at one historic location in Georgia extended for almost 200 years.” (Gatrelle, 1998c).



Baltimore Checkerspot *also* Found! The only known colony in Hamilton County of the uncommon **Baltimore Checkerspot**, *Euphydryas phaeton*, is located to the north of Sale Creek, TN. It is near a wetland that lies within feet of agricultural fields, which makes the existence of this small colony somewhat shaky. They seem to have a very limited flight period in early to mid-May. Tommie Rogers was lucky to find this individual on May 19 and was able to get this nice photo. She visited a couple of days later and could not locate a single one. The Baltimore Checkerspot really can't be confused with any other local species. It's at the very southern edge of its range here.



Butterflies of the East Coast, by Cech and Tudor, has this to say about Baltimore Checkerspot: “Mostly sedentary, they tend to form small, loosely-connected colonies”, and advise this species is “Widespread but ‘intensely local’.” (Klots, 1951). Hostplants are turtlehead, gerardias, and plantains.



Since this seems to be the “checkerspot issue”, it seems only fair to include this glamor photo of a **Silvery Checkerspot**, *Chlosyne nycteis*, taken by Tommie Rogers during the Lookout Mountain spring count on May 17. It is one of 11 species found by all three counting parties, and they had a nice combined total of 24. The Silvery Checkerspot is by far the most common member of its clan found in our area.



Libby Wolfe photographed the very uncommon **Mottled Duskywing**, *Erynnis martialis*, on the Soddy-Daisy count. She had been looking for this species for a long time, so it was one of the stars of the count and a life butterfly for her.



Bill Haley mans the Tennessee Valley NABA table at the Bee City U.S.A. pollinator event on Sunday, May 20.



Mike O'Brien sent this photo of a **Green-veined White**, which he took while on vacation in Western Ireland. He says a number were flying in stiff winds and temperatures around 65 F. From the top they resemble Cabbage Whites!

Interesting Data from 2017 NABA Butterfly Counts

I recently received the annual publication **NABA Butterfly Counts, 2017 Report**. Anyone can order one of these 90+ page books detailing specifics and totals of every butterfly count done in North America in the past year. I think the current cost is \$7.

2017 marked the 43rd annual NABA Butterfly Counts, completed in March through November. Participants conducted a one-calendar-day census within a 15 mile diameter count circle that is the same every year.

Last year 404 counts were done: 36 spring seasonal counts, 304 summer/4th of July/1st of July (Canada) counts and 64 fall seasonal counts. No seasonal counts are conducted in Canada due to their short flight season. 379 of these counts were completed in the U.S. in 42 states. Florida led in the number of counts (55), followed by California (26), Michigan, Tennessee and Virginia, (22 each). That's right folks, once again Tennessee was one of the nationwide leaders in number of counts. Seven states reported a single count, including Alabama, (our count in Stevenson). No counts were submitted from Delaware, Washington D.C., Hawaii, Illinois, Nevada, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, West Virginia or Wyoming.

A total of 3867 observers (the sum of people from each count. Many participated in more than 1 count) tallied 329,320 adult butterflies in 6760.5 party hours and reported 4,127 miles on foot. The TN River Gorge spring count led the nation in most West Virginia Whites (7).