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THE OHIO LEPIDOPTERISTS

## LONG-TERM MONITORING OF BUTTERFLIES NEWSLETTER FOR OCTOBER 2001

### **LTBM Monitoring Workshop Scheduled for March 9th**

Mark your calendar today for the Spring Monitoring Workshop: Saturday, March 9, 2002. The location will be at Dawes Arboretum, 7770 Jacksontown Rd. SE, Newark, Ohio. Your Monitoring Committee is already hard at work planning the details of the workshop, which will run 9:30 am - 4:30 pm. Full details will be in the next monitoring Newsletter but expect sessions on season highlights, long-term trends locally and regionally, transect set-up, and the usual sessions on identification by our cadre of experts. Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned veteran of monitoring, there will be something for you on March 9th.

- *The LTBM Committee*

### **Ohio Lepidopterists Winter Meeting January 19th**

Many monitors are members of The Ohio Lepidopterists, and *all* monitors are interested in Lepidoptera. You don't have to be a member to attend the annual winter meeting of The Ohio Lepidopterists -- you just need to show up at the O.S.U. Museum of Biological Diversity, 1315 Kinnear Rd., Columbus, on Saturday, January 19, 2002. Doors open at 9 am; the morning will be an opportunity to visit informally, sample the wonderful selection of semi-free refreshments, view The Ohio Lepidopterists' voucher collection, and stop by our sales table to browse, and perhaps to buy a reference book to help with your monitoring. The afternoon will feature this year's speaker, Mitch Magdich of the Toledo Zoo. Mitch has been very involved in the successful reintroduction of the Karner blue into the Oak Openings area, and his talk will be of interest to monitors because conservation is one of the main reasons we are monitoring. There will be additional presentations on this and that. For more information about the meeting, and about The Ohio Lepidopterists, consult our website: [www.ohiolepidopterists.org](http://www.ohiolepidopterists.org)

- *Dave Horn*

## **Transect Tips # 2:**

**Question:** How should I deal with weeks when I miss a count?

**Answer:** One of our biggest problems is what to do about a week when I CAN'T COUNT. Ideally everyone should have one or more other folks to back them up for vacations, illness, etc. If you do not have backup you should recruit and train some right away. If there is really no one suitable for backup, let me know. I can at least suggest the nearest other counters. Backup counters will not help when the problem is no suitable weather. One year I lost 2 weeks due to rain on the only open time slots.

To find a solution to this problem let's reexamine the goal: "To provide weekly data throughout the season." For bookkeeping reasons we use a 7-day week starting April 1. If you miss a count on week 1 due to bad weather, don't worry about it - cold weather means no butterflies anyhow. Missing a week in the peak of the season is more of a problem. Pollard suggests averaging the counts in adjoining weeks. This is a data interpretation tool. Close examination of his book shows that he did not do much of this averaging either. Our data entry group will enter the data that you provide into the database. They are not averaging anything.

Therefore I recommend counting as soon as possible, such as the first day of the following week, wait 3-4 days and do a second count. In this way you balance no count in week 10 with 2 counts in week 11, one of which is nearly a week 10 count. For a planned absence you could do this before the absence as well as after. Regardless of your best attempts, sooner or later you will miss dates due to weather and travel. Don't worry. Do your best to cover the hole and move on.

- *Jerry Wiedmann*

## **Database Update**

As the 2001 season ends, it is time to send in site records. Please reread the last newsletter's suggestions for monitors before submitting site reports. It is essential that records are complete and that Site Information forms and maps are included in the mailing. Adding names and addresses of those who help monitor will add to the mailing list.

With recent database additions, the sites and dates have been reported are at 2,368 with 18,789 observations of butterflies reported for those sites and dates.

- *Barb Coleman*

## **Thank You!!!**

A BIG and ongoing “Thank You!” to the Division of Wildlife, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, for their continuing support of Long-term Butterfly Monitoring. The Division has funded annual workshops since their inception, including production of the workshop materials, and also underwrites copying and mailing costs for producing this newsletter. Without the moral and financial support of the Division we would never have achieved the level of participation and the volumes of data we now have.

- *The Committee*

## **Editorial Space**

I did not get a lot of articles for this issue but we wanted to get it out so that you can put the spring workshop meeting date (*March 9th*) on your calendar. We do want to hear from you, and we will try hard to print any and all articles received from monitors. Meanwhile, in an effort to avoid “white space” and to prove that we’ll publish almost anything, I offer two more “transect adventures” below:

**I Wuz Robbed!** It has been more than 40 years since the Brooklyn Dodgers departed Flatbush for sunny L.A. but the cry “we wuz robbed” still echoes in baseball lore. I have my own version: twice this summer I was walking my Hocking Hills transect when I spied a butterfly (once an orange sulphur, the other time a great spangled fritillary) ahead, flitting lazily along as though waiting for me to get within the mandatory 15 feet for monitoring. Suddenly, without fluttering, and at blinding speed, the butterfly darted onto a nearby flower and perched -- upside down! I turned aside to find my butterfly in the clutches of a predatory robberfly (Family Asilidae). I did not count either of them as they had been yanked off my transect before I got within 15 feet. (I have found Lepidoptera being eaten by robberflies on many occasions; it seems that day-flying, white tiger moths (genus *Haploa*) are among the favorites -- or maybe I simply notice them more often.)

**“Gonna Need an Ocean ...”** Transects along roads and established trails are good, because generally the vegetation is cleared and you can get nice views of the butterflies. Staying on the path is also good. While monitoring one of my transects on the hottest day last summer I found it desirable to bushwhack around some fallen trees (cut by beavers, actually). Of course I broke twigs and leaves, releasing sap, and of course I was drenched with sweat so whatever I’d got into spread liberally over much of my body. You can fill in the rest. “Leaflets three, let it be.” Three days later, there I was: Eagle Scout, merit badges in botany, forestry and nature, in my ocean of calamine lotion. (The good news is that during summer Bible school I got to play the part of a leper without any makeup.)

- *Dave Horn*

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