

The Ohio Lepidopterist

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Online Newsletter

This issue of *The Ohio Lepidopterist* continues the recent policy of a shortened print edition of the newsletter for hard-copy distribution, and an enhanced pdf version available on our website (or by individual request). Readers will be able to find announcements of all Ohio Lepidopterists' events in the print version and expanded details of events and programs in the pdf version here. We hope that most of our members continue supporting this transition, which allows us significant savings allowing more flexible programming while maintaining our current dues structure.

As always, Islay Cowie and Kerr Gibson were most helpful yet again in producing both the print and pdf versions of this issue of the *Ohio Lepidopterist*. Many thanks are due to them.

Items for the next Newsletter are due to me by November 15th. (horn.1@osu.edu)

Dave Horn, Continuing Interim Editor

Annual Winter Meeting to Feature Monarch Biology and Migration

Our annual membership meeting will be *Saturday January 19, 2013*, from 9:30 am onwards at the Museum of Biological Diversity, Ohio State University, 1315 Kinnear Rd., Columbus. The morning will be informal, a chance to socialize, use the Ohio Lepidopterists' reference collection and help one another with identification conundrums. At 1 p.m. our featured speaker, Dr. Chip Taylor of the University of Kansas, will present "Monarch Conservation: the Challenges ahead." Chip is a world authority on the monarch butterfly and its spectacular yet fragile migration, is co-founder and director of Project Monarch Watch (www.monarchwatch.org). He is Professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. Trained as an insect ecologist, Chip Taylor has published papers on species assemblages, hybridization, reproductive biology, population dynamics and plant demographics and pollination. Starting in 1974, Chip Taylor established research sites and directed students studying Neotropical African honey bees (killer bees) in French Guiana, Venezuela, and Mexico. In 1992, as the bee research was coming to an end, Taylor founded Monarch Watch, an outreach program focused on education, research and conservation relative to monarch butterflies. Through the last 20 years Monarch Watch has enlisted the help of volunteers to tag monarchs during the fall migration. This program has produced many new insights into the dynamics of the monarch migration.

Seven years ago, in recognition that habitats for monarchs are declining at a rate of 6000 acres a day in the United States, Monarch Watch created the Monarch Waystation program. The goal of this program is to inspire the public, schools and others to create habitats for monarch butterflies and to assist Monarch Watch in educating the public about the decline in resources for monarchs, pollinators and all wildlife that share the same habitats. As he relates, "I have been studying the effects of climate on monarch populations for several years and climate change really has me worried. Higher temperatures are likely to negatively affect monarch populations by reducing reproductive success and altering the distribution and abundances of milkweed species on which the monarchs depend."

Abstract of Chip's presentation: The numbers of monarchs seen each year in the eastern United States and Canada are determined by the amount of habitat available and the month to month temperature and moisture conditions the monarchs encounter through the breeding season (March-October). The monarch population is declining coincident with the rapid loss of habitat due to the adoption of herbicide tolerant crops, the push for the production of corn and soy based biofuels and development. Extreme weather events, which threaten to become more common, have also had a negative impact on the population. In addition, rapid changes in climate are on the near horizon. Sustaining the monarch migration will be a challenge and will require the support and cooperation of Canada, the United States and Mexico.

In addition to Chip's presentation there will be short talks by some of our own members, a sales table, and the usual business meeting, door prizes, fun and fellowship.

Pre-meeting Gathering

The Ohio Lepidopterists will continue the time-honored tradition of gathering Friday evening before the winter meeting for socializing and modest consumption of food and drink. We will gather from 7:30 pm onward at Dave Horn's house, 37 Arden Rd., Columbus. (There is NO parking on the south side of the street; once the driveway is full, park on the north side, across the street. Coleopterists have received parking tickets over the years, but no lepidopterists, yet.)

Upcoming Election of Officers

All members of the Ohio Lepidopterists should receive by mail a ballot for election of officers and Board members for 2013. Please take seriously your invitation to vote. The slate of candidates is President, Steve Smith; Vice-president, Troy Shively; Secretary, Islay Cowie; Treasurer, Don Reuter; and Board Members at-large, Greg Raterman and Jerry Wiedmann. Thanks to all for their willingness to continue service to the Ohio Lepidopterists.

2013 Monitoring Workshop Scheduled for March 23rd

The date is set for the 16th annual Long-term Butterfly Monitoring Workshop, to be held Saturday, March 23, 2013 at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Once again we expect to have a variety of presentations that should hold the interest of newcomers and monitoring veterans alike. Even if you are not a monitor but simply have an interest in butterflies, you will find the presentations useful, and will benefit from informal discussion with people who know butterflies really well. Program details and a registration form are on the last two pages of this newsletter. Please consider taking advantage of this opportunity.

-Dave Horn

Other Important Events to Remember (further information is available in the pdf version of *The Ohio Lepidopterist* or from the websites listed):

Ohio State Museum of Biological Diversity Open House, Columbus, Saturday, February 9th
<https://mbd.osu.edu/open-house>

Ohio Natural History Conference, Columbus, Saturday February 23rd <http://www.ohiobiologicalsurvey.org/>

Ohio Wildlife Diversity Conference, Columbus, Wednesday March 13th www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife

“Mothapalooza,” Shawnee State Park, June 14-16 mothapalooza@gmail.com

2nd Annual National Moth Week July 20-28 <http://nationalmothweek.org>

Sales Program

As has been noted in the *Ohio Lepidopterist* we are not currently selling by mail order nor online due to increased handling costs. We do have some books in stock, and insect pins and glassine envelopes are available. We will have a sales table and price list at the winter meeting. For more information about sales, contact Dave Horn.

Very Rare Butterfly Sighted

Nearly every field naturalist hopes to discover a true rarity, and the Early Hairstreak, *Erora laeta*, is one of the most sought-after species by butterfly observers. It is rare throughout its range; I've seen two live ones (in Vermont) in 60 years of butterflying. Only four Ohio records were known until July 21, 2012, when Sam Eiben encountered one at Holden Arboretum, Lake County. Sam alertly photographed the butterfly and kindly gave permission for us to include it here:



This is a new county record. Previously the species had been found in Ashtabula, Cuyahoga and Highland Counties. Congratulations, Sam, and thank you for sharing your find.

DJH

Submit your Season Summaries

Those of you who are regular collectors/photographers/observers are invited to submit your observations for 2012: Butterfly summaries go to Dave Parshall, 5288 Abby Gate Rd., Westerville, OH 43081, dparshall@insight.rr.com, and moth information goes to Mike Gilligan, 16721 County Rd. 109, Arcadia, OH 44804, mtgillig@tds.net.

Butterfly Observers Group

The Butterfly Observers Group will next meet Tuesday February 5th, 7 pm at the Upper Arlington Public Library. Dave Horn will present on the challenges of moth identification. The BOG meets bimonthly in winter and more frequently spring through autumn, actively pursuing butterflies for observation, appreciation and photography during the summer months

Apology

In the September issue Greg Raterman was listed as sole author of the BOG reports, whereas in fact one of the southern Ohio trip reports was submitted by Diane Weeks. Thank you Diane for the report, and I'm sorry to have left your name off. I could blame it on the computer but I was punching the keys myself. - *Dave H*

July 4 Butterfly Counts – Summary

	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
Number of Counts	15	16	16	16	15	16
Number of Counters	160	141	178	136	143	183
Party Hours	294	287	302	225	223	233
Average Number of Species	43	35	38	31	31	31
Butterflies Seen	22851	17966	31342	14322	21587	18632
Butterflies/Hour	77.7	62.6	104.0	63.7	97.2	80.0
Total Species Seen	89	80	84	78	73	73
Most Common Butterfly	Pearl Crescent	European Skipper	Pearl Crescent	European Skipper	Cabbage White	Cabbage White

The 2012 season stands out for a number of reasons. The average number of species per count was way up from 2011. The total number of species seen was also way up however the total number of butterflies seen was not unusual. The year started with two distinct waves of millions of Red Admirals moving through Ohio. By June however there were not enough to be more than in an average year. Along with the Red Admirals there were a substantial number of “summer form” Question Marks migrating in and enough of them stayed to make it an “up” year for Question Marks. The highlight of the summer was the large numbers of migrants including some rarely seen in Ohio. For comparison I have tabulated the numbers of some of these species. Remember that 2010 was the best year for Ohio butterflies since 1999-2000.

Butterfly	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Red Admiral	222	43	855	58	99
Question Mark	244	56	460	47	74
Cloudless Sulphur	136	2	9	6	17
Little Yellow	105	1	53	0	0
Dainty Sulphur	29	0	0	0	0
American Snout	60	41	107	0	15

Common Buckeye	548	49	129	12	26
Variegated Fritillary	174	4	8	2	15
C. Checkered Skipper	13	1	3	1	0
Fiery Skipper	112	10	14	1	2
Monarch	385	256	549	344	249

Also most unusual in 2012 was the addition of 5 species not recorded on NABA counts previously. The new Oak Openings count contributed Karner Blue, Silver Bordered Fritillary and Duke's Skipper (also seen at Magee Marsh). Holden Arboretum had an Early Hairstreak and 5 of the 15 counts had Dainty Sulphurs.

- Jerry Wiedmann (NABA regional editor for Ohio)

Identifying Moths Part I

The appearance of a new field guide plus ongoing improvement in digital photography has led to a huge surge in popularity of "moth-ing." Moth-ing, like birding and butterflying, is enjoyment of moths in the field for both recreation and instruction; it is a welcome expansion of natural history whether one "moths" to accumulate lists of species seen and perhaps photographed, as many birders do, or simply to enjoy and appreciate the wondrous variety of moths. I am all for moth-ing and I am pleased to see the explosive growth of people who have begun to appreciate moths as I have for quite a few years.

With this, I use my esteemed position as editor of *The Ohio Lepidopterists* to introduce an occasional feature on moth identification that may help novice and intermediate moth-ers with some of the identification conundrums they will face. Here some general comments:

There are over 20 times the number of different kinds of moths in Ohio as there are butterflies, and no single field guide can illustrate all of them and be portable. Writers of field guides have done an admirable job selecting common or obvious species but moth-ers should anticipate finding species that are not in any field guide.

Moths are highly variable especially in the amount of dark scales, and guidebooks have room for only a few variations which may not be the commonest. The Moth Photographers Group website (<http://mothphotographersgroup.msstate.edu>) shows variation and can be helpful. Patterns of lines and spots on moth wings are very consistent despite variability in amount of dark scaling.

Similarities between related species may be so close as to not be visible to us. Nocturnal moths recognize members of their own species by chemical cues rather than visually like most birds

and many butterflies. Some moth species simply cannot be identified from a photograph, or even from a specimen without microscopic examination.

Birds and butterflies are well-known groups whereas we are still finding undescribed species of moths even in Ohio. This is especially true of smaller moths (“Microlepidoptera”) which constitute the majority of species. It is still possible to find a new species of moth in Ohio. We of course have names for the vast majority of moths but we have incomplete knowledge of distributions even of some common species. Added to that, distributions are changing, including introduction of exotic species from overseas. In this area recreational “moth-ers” can be of great help as there simply are not enough professional lepidopterists to intensively survey every corner of Ohio. Just ask the birders.

Once again I’m writing this from outside Ohio (Massachusetts) so in the next issue I’ll illustrate what I’m talking about.

Dave Horn

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<http://www.ohiolepidopterists.org>

The purpose of The Ohio Lepidopterists is to promote interest in the butterflies, skippers and moths (Lepidoptera) of Ohio and neighboring states. This is accomplished by activities designed to increase knowledge, dissemination of scientific information on the Lepidoptera, encouraging conservation of wildlife in general and of Lepidoptera in particular, and achieving closer cooperation and understanding among all lepidopterists so that they may work together in the common cause of furthering appreciation of Lepidoptera. The Ohio Lepidopterists is a non-profit organization incorporated in 1984 in the state of Ohio.

The Ohio Lepidopterist is published four times a year at irregular intervals in Columbus, Ohio. The Ohio Lepidopterists grant reprinting rights as long as the newsletter is credited. The Ohio Lepidopterists also publishes scientific research reports, holds two yearly meetings for its members, and sponsors field trips and workshops.

The Ohio Lepidopterist is published to encourage and facilitate the exchange of information by the membership and to keep the members informed of the activities of the organization. Members are strongly encouraged to contribute items for inclusion in the newsletter such as articles, news items, notes, new or interesting records and season summaries.

For address changes contact Rick Ruggles, 5529 Corkhill Drive, Dayton, OH 45424 Phone:937/233-6715
[e-mail:fbrug@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fbrug@sbcglobal.net). For membership information and dues payment contact Don Reuter, 274 Westview Avenue, Columbus, OH 43214 Phone 614-436-5608 e-mail reuter@battelle.org.

Membership dues rates are \$15.00/year for regular membership and \$5.00/year for students.

President: Dave Horn
614-262-0312
horn.1@osu.edu

Vice President: Steve Smith
517-486-2854
sesmith61@hotmail.com

Secretary: Islay Cowie
614-436-1693
islay@insight.rr.com

Treasurer: Don Reuter
614-436-5608
rreuter@battelle.org

Past President: Leslie Angel
503-410-1804
L_angel5@hotmail.com

Board Members at Large:

Greg Raterman
614-877-3850
gregraterman@aol.com

Jackie Riley
419-350-8181
jriley4@sbcglobal.net

Linda Romine
513-735-6560
Linda.G.Romine@usace.army.mil

Troy Shively
937-935-9023
troyph@hotmail.com

Jerry Wiedmann
440-254-4230
wiedmannb@aol.com

Survey: Dave Horn
Butterfly Monitoring: Jerry Wiedmann
Butterfly Observers Group: Greg Raterman

Constitution: Barb Bloetscher
614-292-4624
bloetscher.1@osu.edu

Curators: Dave Horn & Steve Passoa

State Fair Butterfly House:
Dave Parshall
614-939-0354
dparshall@insight.rr.com

Valerie Passoa
614-799-9272
vapassoa@ameritech.net

Sales Program: Ohio Biological Survey
614-457-8787
info@ohiobiologicalsurvey.org

Membership Coordinator: Rick Ruggles
937-233-6715
fbrug@sbcglobal.net