



The Antenna

News and Information from the Butterfly Monitoring Network

Onsite Overview: Green River State Wildlife Area

Green River State Wildlife Area encompasses 2,565 acres in western Illinois, Lee County. Throughout this acreage are varying bio-systems such as upland woods, native sand prairie and sedge meadow. As much as one third of the area is marsh. Many of these areas have been restored to provide habitat for a variety of wildlife species. Green River is owned by the state and managed by the Department of Natural Resources. The area is open to the public for multi-purpose use. When John and Cindy McKee visit Green River their purpose is to monitor butterflies as they have been doing together for 5 seasons. The McKees began monitoring at Matthiessen State Park and added Green River as a second site in the 2000 season. John speaks with enthusiasm about the new site, its challenges and its enjoyable beauty.

The native prairie is high quality with almost no invasives. Tremendous amounts of both Rough and Cylindrical Blazing Star give an ongoing show of purple bloom. Huge masses of tick trefoil create a memorable view. In their first season at Green River they recorded 5 types of Fritillaries. Their list included Aphrodite, Great Spangled, Meadow, Silver-bordered and Variegated Fritillaries. Remnant reliant species such as Black Dashes, Dion Skippers and healthy colonies of Eyed Browns were counted in the sedge meadow. Populations of Little Yellows and Dainty Sulphurs are also thriving. Purplish Coppers were spotted in the West marsh where they feed on Knotweed. The site is a potential viewing spot for Olympia Marblewing, which John and Cindy McKee hope to record in seasons to come at Green River.

Judi Ann Dore With Thanks to John and Cindy McKee

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Credits

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Take Time to Read...

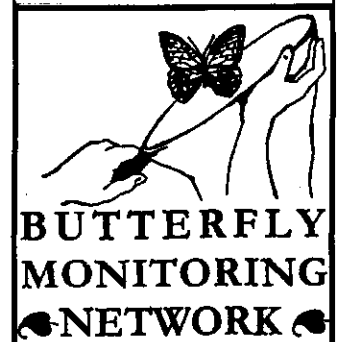
Field Guide to Butterflies of Illinois

John Bouseman and James Sternburg
 Illinois Natural History Survey
 \$19.95

This much-awaited field guide is 296 pages and contains more than 300 color photos of all the Illinois species plus information on habitat, natural history and distribution. The guides are scheduled for shipping at the end of January or early February. A waiting list is already started.

Contact the IL Natural History Survey office at 217-333-6880 to order a copy. Mel Manner should also have a copy for viewing at the March Indoor Workshop. According to butterfly monitor Nick Owens this guide is very similar to the Reptile and Amphibian guide that Chris Phillips recently published.

Mel Manner



Indoor Workshop 2001

March 17th is the date to save for the 11th annual indoor training workshop. We'll be at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum again, so you might want to plan to stay after and tour the Butterfly Haven. We're expecting a huge turnout again, and we've added a little time for socializing, so it should be an exciting day.

We will have a guest speaker as usual, but the details are not yet finalized. We will also have our usual breakout sessions for both beginners and advanced monitors. And the mounted specimens will be available for anyone who has questions about individual species or wants to review the butterflies after a winter of snow.

The beginners' session will cover how to use a field guide, how to decide between a common species versus a rare species, and how to identify the Beginners' Checklist of 25 common species. This talk is designed for people who are new to identifying butterflies. The advanced session will be Part 2 of Doug's famous Making Sense of the Skippers. Anybody who is comfortable with the Beginners' Checklist of species should take this session to begin learning how to separate out the different types of skippers. Advanced monitors will also find this talk useful to review known species and learn new ones.

Registration is Required!

To register, call Mel Manner at 847-464-4426 or e-mail her at manner@foxvalley.net. Please give the name of each person attending and specify which session he or she is interested in. (They can change their mind later. This information is used for space considerations only.)

Directions: The Nature Museum is at 2430 North Cannon Drive. The main entrance is on the east side of the museum. The parking lot is directly across from the main entrance, on the east side of Cannon Drive, north of Fullerton Avenue and the Lincoln Park Zoo. The parking fee is \$7. (The workshop is free.) Check in with Museum Registration immediately inside the main entrance and tell them you're here for the Butterfly Monitoring Network. They will direct you from there to our registration table.

11th Annual BMN Workshop Agenda

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| 9:30 | Registration |
| 10:00 | Opening Announcements and Awards |
| 10:30 | Guest Speaker - TBA |
| 11:30 | Lunch Break - Bring a sack lunch! |
| 12:00 | Breakout Sessions (See descriptions above.) |
| | Beginners: Beginning Identification - Mel Manner |
| | Advanced: Making Sense of the Skippers - Part 2 - Doug Taron |
| 1:15 | Wrap-up |
| 1:30 | End |

Making Good Data Better Doug Taron

You have set up your monitoring census route and visited your site several times. Or perhaps you are a very experienced monitor with several years' worth of data in the database. If you are like most monitors, your information is good and accurate. So how do you make good data even better? There are several easy steps to take:

1. Follow the protocol. Most monitors are doing this. In extreme cases, deviations from the protocol can make your data useless. The most common examples of not following the protocol include going out at the wrong time of the day, or in inappropriate weather conditions-- a surprising number of people have reported it to be raining while they walk their routes. People who report monitoring for many hours, sometimes on small sites, are probably not following the protocol.
2. Do just one thing while running your route: monitor butterflies. Butterfly monitoring demands concentration. This is not the time to be bird watching, identifying plants, conducting tours, or performing management activities. One important use of the data is to compare the number of individuals per hour observed on their routes. These comparisons are difficult if one person on one site is just monitoring butterflies, while another on a different site is repeatedly pausing to take photographs.
3. If you monitor in pairs, use only one set of eyes to find butterflies. The other person should be a silent recorder of data, and should not point out (or record) individuals that the person finding the butterflies has missed. Two sets of eyes will always see more butterflies than one, so it's okay if the observer misses some. Remember that the key is to be able to compare your data with those collected on sites where only one person is monitoring.
4. Remember to record your start and stop times. An amazing number of routes start on the hour exactly- I suspect that some people are saying "I started around 11," and recording 11:00 as a start time. If at all possible please record actual times from your car clock or a watch rather than estimating. This is important, as we convert all data to individuals observed per hour for analysis.
5. Use species range maps and information to help identification. Butterflies are much less likely than birds to turn up as uncommon vagrants far from their usual ranges. Use the Illinois Species Checklist to narrow down your focus. Remember that if you are faced with a choice between a species that lives in this region and a very similar species found elsewhere, well over 99% of the time you will be viewing the native species.
6. We have recently begun more statistical analysis of the data. It is a testament to the skill of our many monitors that we are able to do this and get meaningful results. More powerful statistical analysis is possible if you encounter a species on multiple visits each year. For sites with important remnant-reliant species, make 2-3 visits within the flight period of that species, if possible.

We now have an excellent database, and are beginning to pull important information about the ecology of Illinois butterflies out of it. By gathering the best data you can, you are improving our chances to reveal important information about conserving the region's butterflies.

Network News

Data Submissions Needed!

Almost a third of the sites have not submitted their data from last year.

This data is needed immediately so that Doug can create the annual reports for the landowners and Illinois Nature Preserves Commission. All your hard work goes to waste if you don't turn it in!

Please submit your data ASAP to Mel Manner (See Contacts, pg 1.)

12th Northern Illinois Prairie Workshop

This workshop is geared towards people interested in ecological management, but it will also have several talks of interest to monitors. A panel presentation will explore all of the different monitoring programs in our area, including ours of course. Doug Taron will also be presenting his paper "Butterfly Abundance Trends on a Fire-managed Fen in Northern Illinois." It was submitted to *Biological Conservation* and it is the first submission of an analysis of BMN data to the peer-reviewed literature. Many other speakers from all aspects of the world of restoration will be presenting as well. It should be a very rewarding experience.

The workshop is on Saturday, March 10th at the College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn. Mel Manner will have the registration information by the end of January. Call her if interested at 847-464-4426.

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from the



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C/O Mel Manner

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