



The Antenna

News and Information from the Butterfly Monitoring

Onsite Overview: Shoal Creek Barrens

A shoal is defined as "a sandbank that's makes the water shallow." The term "barrens" generally applies to "open woodlands, with a thin layer of soil overlaying bare rock." Along the shore of Lake Lou Yeager in Montgomery County Illinois is an area that encompasses these types of natural communities. A shallow sandy bottom creek flowing through open woods of Hickory, Post and Blackjack Oaks, into the lake which now covers the shoals. Shoals, a creek and barrens.

The efforts to preserve Shoal Creek Barrens began in the 70's with Henry Eilers. Henry's background in floriculture and botany lead him to explore the old fields of the county. On one such venture he discovered an endangered native Illinois Blazing Star. Henry realized the value of saving the plant within its natural community and began petitioning to preserve it. Finally in 1990 the city of Litchfield, who owned the property, resolved to set aside 200 acres. 50 more acres were added 4 years later.

These days a lot is happening at Shoal Creek. The Shoal Creek Volunteers work with Co-Stewards Henry Eilers and Gary Colin to maintain and restore the preserve. Gary also serves as the Shoal Creek Butterfly monitor. Within his first year Gary saw 40 different species! He was amazed at the diversity. Along with its namesake Eco-type Shoal Creek Barrens contains other interesting natural communities. Remnant prairie still exists with stands of Big Blue Stem where the Byssus Skipper survives. Gary has recorded at least two colonies of Mottled DuskyWing among stands of New Jersey Tea as well as a small population of Coral Hairstreaks. He has been able to identify both Southern and Northern Cloudy Wings within the site. This year he netted a Sleepy Orange. In the 9 years that Gary has been monitoring he has identified and recorded 71 species! This kind of dedication with purpose is what ensures the survival of these species at Shoal Creek Barrens.

Judi Dore With Thanks to Gary Colin and Henry Eilers

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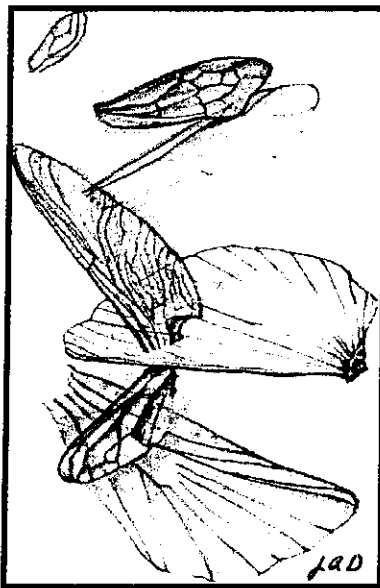
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Credits

Mel Manner: Editor

Judi Ann Dore:

Graphics & Layout



Take Time to Read...

Dragonflies Through Binoculars

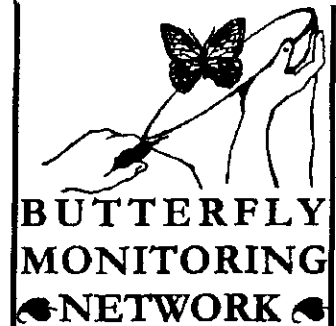
Sidney W. Dunke

Oxford University Press, 2000

\$29.95

OK, it's not about butterflies, but increasingly there is an overlap between butterfly watchers and dragonfly watchers. Without a doubt, *Dragonflies Through Binoculars* is an important addition to the field guide literature. At the moment, it's about the only game in town for dragonfly field guides. Others are either out of print, or concerned with narrow geographical ranges.

Continued on page 4



Time to send in Data!

Everyone should be done monitoring for the season. Please copy your field forms for each visit. DO NOT send us originals, incase they get lost in the mail. Do not send in summaries. We need copies of each field form for each visit! Make sure your name and site are on each sheet.

If you have not previously sent in a route map. I would like you to sketch or draw your route. Don't worry about how good it looks. It just needs to be informative. Please put in major land marks where possible to indicate where to turn etc. These route maps are needed in case you are ever unable to continue monitoring. Label the map with the site name and your name.

If you have any permits at your site, you should submit a copy with your data and maps.

Send your field forms, route maps and permits to:

Mel Manner

This will fulfill your requirements for this year.

Our next event is the Spring workshop on March 2, 2002 at The Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum.

Look for details in the winter issue of The Antenna.

THE HABITAT PROJECT INVITES YOU

To celebrate the successful 2001 monitoring season.

Join us for an afternoon of fun! Bring the family!
We will provide the cups, plates, utensils, beverages and barbecues.
You bring the food to grill.

What: BBQ for Monitors

Where: Busse Woods, Shelter 11 (see below)

When: Saturday, October 13th, 11:00 AM

There will also be games, monitoring recognitions, and a few surprises.

Please RSVP to Steve at sfrankel@audubon.org

A map to Busse Woods, Shelter 11 can be found at:

<http://www.mapquest.com/cgi-bin/share?s4kbh5eagw3co8il>

For more information, call the Habitat Project Hotline

at 847-965-9239 and select 31.

Our gratitude to Judi Ann Dore and Melissa Pierson for their contributions of the artwork in this issue.

Fall 2001

"2001 - The Year of the Butterfly"Doug Taron

As the 2001 butterfly monitoring season draws to a close, it seems appropriate to pause and reflect on what appears to have been the most remarkable season in the history of the Butterfly Monitoring Network. As of this writing, only a small fraction of the data have been submitted, however, both the in-hand data and various conversations that I have had with monitors suggest that just about everyone has seen huge numbers of butterflies this year.

Most prominent among the species showing great abundance has been the red admiral. Beginning as early as April and spanning no less than three succeeding generations, red admirals have been highly abundant at repeated intervals this year. It will be interesting to see just how many turn up in the various monitoring sites as the data begin to come in. A population boom for this species has been recorded in much of the Midwest this year, with news articles on the subject appearing in Oklahoma and Ohio, as well as Illinois.

Although other butterfly species have not been quite so uniformly abundant, many, including the painted lady, viceroy, and pearl crescent, are also showing strong numbers this year. Early indications suggest that the monarch migration may well be spectacular too.

The butterfly abundance this year is particularly striking in contrast to the 2000 season, which was rather poor for butterflies. Last year's poor showing may be partly responsible for this year's abundance, which may reflect the depleted pool of parasites and pathogens that follows an off season. Some researchers have speculated that the prolonged snow cover of last winter may have increased the survival rate of overwintering eggs, larvae, and pupae. Perhaps a combination of these two and other factors simply got the butterflies off to a very strong start this year, and this early abundance has sustained itself through much of the growing season.



Whatever the reasons for the remarkable butterfly season of 2001, it is unclear what next year will bring. Monitors, particularly people relatively new to the program should keep in mind that typical butterfly numbers will appear low when contrasted with the observations for this year. A drastic drop in butterfly abundance in coming seasons will not necessarily be cause for alarm. Meanwhile, enjoy the end of this most remarkable 2001 butterfly season.

The work is ambitious, in that it covers all of the 307 known species from North America in 266 pages. This comprehensive coverage represents both the main strengths and weaknesses of the book. It's small enough to carry into the field, and has the same user-friendly approach to identification that is now expected from the Through Binoculars field guide series. The photographs are uniformly quite good, and the information contained in the general information and species account selections is excellent.

My main criticism of *Dragonflies Through Binoculars* is that it might have benefited by splitting it into two guides to eastern and western species, as has been done with many butterfly field guides. By taking on all 307 species, the photographic plates have a rather cramped feel to them. There are eight photographs on each page, and the reader can be left wanting larger images. The maps have a similarly small presentation that can be particularly vexing when dealing with the edges of the species' ranges.

Despite these criticisms, my overall impression of *Dragonflies Through Binoculars* is positive. It recently accompanied me to Arizona, where I felt at ease identifying neon and roseate skimmers. I recommend it to anyone wishing to become better acquainted with these fascinating creatures.

Doug Taron

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