



The Antenna

News and Information from the Butterfly Monitoring Network

Onsite Overview: Dan McMahon Grove

Veteran Butterfly Monitor John Ayres considers Dan McMahon Grove one of the most unique sites he's worked on in his ten year volunteer history. John has monitored many sites, some years doing more than one per season and as many as three in one day! He has also partnered with other monitors including Andy Krout at Spears Woods and Deb Petro at Cap Sauers and Bergman Slough. Even with all that experience John states he's still finding things he hadn't seen before when he goes into McMahon.

The site is one of the last refuges in Cook County with a high quality wetlands. Joe Neumann, the site Steward classifies it as a Fen, which is an area with alkaline ground water seepage. There are no trails into the area. As John begins his route he edges his way around 30 yards of cattails. On the South edge of the cattails John works his way back to a large Willow tree where the site opens into Sedge Meadow. "Skipper heaven" John calls it, "the numbers are phenomenal!" Dions, Black dashes and Pecks have all been sighted.

Further South it gets even wetter and the sedges change. This is Bronze Copper territory.

On the North side the environment gets dryer and becomes Woodland Edge. John claims there are not a lot of woodland species, yet he has counted Wood Satyrs, Wood Nymphs, Eyed Browns and Northern Pearly Eyes. Delaware Skippers and Duns have been seen as well as Fiery and European Skippers. John uses his binoculars to spot but also does a fair amount of netting especially of the Skippers.

Among the Hairstreaks John has spotted are the Striped, Acadian and Gray. In July of the 2001 season John saw a Great Gray Copper on the single specimen of Butterfly Weed in a Prairie area on the site. The site also has populations of Pipevine and Giant Swallowtail.

We look forward to visiting this unique site and being lead by John Ayres, a unique Butterfly Monitor, with hopes of seeing some of these many species on Sunday, June 23rd.

See Network News for more information.

Judi Ann Dore with thanks to John Ayres.

May 2002

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Credits

Mel Manner: Editor
Judi Ann Dore:
Graphics & Layout

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Take Time to Read...

Handbook for Butterfly Watchers

Robert Michael Pyle

Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992

\$14.00

BMN monitor Carol Saunders suggested this book to me. It is 280 pages and covers a very broad subject and therefore, should be treated as an introduction to many subjects including butterfly biology, behavior, gardening and photography. However, even though each subject is only covered briefly, the essential facts are presented in a very clear, straight-forward manner which makes it easy reading for non-scientists, unlike many texts. It also includes a very extensive, 14 page bibliography broken down into different categories of references. And for that alone is worth the purchase price for most of us.

Contributed by Mel Manner



Time to Monitor

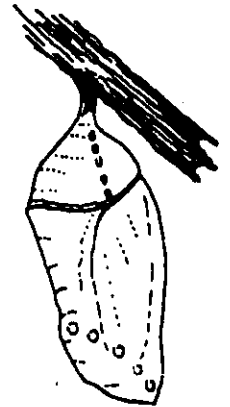
The new season is almost upon us. Remember that you must monitor a minimum of 4 times between June 15th and July 31st. Many people ask if they can only monitor during that time period. The answer is most emphatically, "No". You are always free to monitor extra times before, during, or after that period as long as you do your 4 minimum routes within those 6 weeks. For example, a typical schedule might be to do two routes before June 15th, 4 routes during June 15th to July 31st, and 1 route in August for a total of 7 routes. Make sure to completely fill out a field form for each visit to your site, and remember to mail them in as soon as you've finished your season. Have a good summer!

Data Submission Deadline – September 30th!!!

It has been a growing problem to get people to turn in their data. One of your requirements as a monitor is to turn your data in on time. This year's deadline is September 30th. Mark your calendars! You can submit data through the new BMN website or by mailing all data sheets to:

Mel Manner

It causes quite a few problems for both Mel and Doug if data is not handed in on time. Please help us out this year, and send it in as soon as you've finished monitoring for the summer.



BMN Monitor's Tours

These tours are not training sessions. They are informal walks offered to let monitors explore each other's sites throughout the area. Some sites do have restricted access so you **MUST** register beforehand. We are limiting all tours to 20 participants. Email Mel at manner@foxvalley.net or call her at 847-464-4426 to register. Directions will be mailed out shortly before each tour. Tours will last between 2 and 3 hours at most sites, so start times only are listed. Dates are subject to change. Registered participants will be called with new dates. Suggestions for future sites should be sent to Mel.

Dan McMahan Grove, west Cook County – Sunday, June 23rd, 10:30 AM – Monitor leader is John Ayres. We are hoping to see Acadian Hairstreaks and Baltimore Checkerspots. Knee boots are recommended, as part of the tour is wetlands.

Bluff Spring Fen, northwest Cook County – Sunday, June 30th, 10:30 AM – Tour leader will be Mel Manner or Doug Taron. We are hoping to see the Baltimore Checkerspots and a rare damselfly. Part of the trail may be muddy, so wear old shoes or boots.

Black Partridge, southwest Cook County – Sunday, July 21st, 1 PM – Monitor leader is John Marlin. Two of the species we hope to see are Pipevine and Giant Swallowtails.

Fermilab, west DuPage County – Saturday, August 31st, 1 PM – Monitor leader is Tom Peterson. We are hoping to see Bronze and Purple Coppers as well as Meadow Fritillaries.

New Members

We have several new groups joining our network. McHenry Community College is doing recruitment of volunteers in both McHenry and Lake Counties as part of a grant project. We have had a few monitors in those counties, but have never expanded beyond that. Through the help of Maria Garrison and Janice Young at MCC, we are adding many new monitors and sites in both areas!

Diane Price is another new person who is using a grant to expand our network. She has recruited over a dozen volunteers to start monitoring in lower Wisconsin. They are beginning with three sites, but hope to expand in future years. The long-term goal is for them to branch off into their own Wisconsin BMN when they're ready.

BP, formerly Amoco, is the third group joining us this year. Doug Taron did a training workshop for his former company which gained us over a half dozen new volunteers. Most of them will monitor sites in Kane County.

In addition, we have had some new individual volunteers join our network throughout the Northern half of the state. This year with all of these new folks, we should easily top the elusive goal of more than 100 sites monitored in 2002. Welcome to all of you!

Butterfly Enclosures in the Area

First and foremost is the Butterfly haven in the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum of the Chicago Academy of Sciences. The beautiful haven is open year-round and features both native and non-native species flying free within the space. The displays associated with the haven are also excellent and informative. For those of you wanting to study up on your identification skills, both the haven and the mounted specimens outside it will be well worth the trip.

Brookfield Zoo is again hosting their highly successful butterfly exhibit. It is an outdoor netted garden with a winding path and several water features with free-flying North American butterflies and moths. The exhibit is installed by Spineless Wonders, a group from Minnesota that specializes in invertebrate displays. It will be open from May 25th through September 25th 9:30 AM to 6 PM daily.

For more information, contact Amy Bodwell at ambodwel@brookfieldzoo.org or 708-485-0163 x422

Butterfly Garden Tours

The Illinois Audubon Society is presenting their annual self-guided tour of more than 50 unique and beautiful butterfly gardens throughout the Chicagoland area. Both public and private gardens are included, and are located in Lake, Cook, DuPage, Will, McHenry and Kane Counties. Tour dates are Saturday, July 27: 10 AM to 5 PM and Sunday, July 28: 10 AM to 4 PM. Price is \$15.00 per person. To buy tickets for the tour, send a check made out to "Illinois Audubon Society" for \$15.00 per person to: Jeanne DeRaimo, 706 Colony Lane, Frankfort, IL 60423. A ticket booklet which includes directions to each garden and general information will be mailed out to participants in June. Each person must have a ticket booklet to participate.

More information can be found on the Illinois Audubon Website at www.illinoisaudubon.org

Butterfly Photography

Carol Saunders is collecting names of people who would like to form a photography subgroup. Professional photographer and BMN monitor Carol Freeman has already agreed to help. You do not need to be a great photographer to join. Part of the purpose of the group will be to share tips and help each other learn to take better butterfly photographs.

*If you are interested, mail your name address, and phone number to:
Carol Saunders, Brookfield Zoo, 3300 Golf Road, Brookfield IL 60513
Or email Carol at casaunde@brookfieldzoo.org*

**Outdoor Workshop – Iroquois County State Wildlife Area
July 13th – 11 AM
Registration Required!!! See details on the insert inside.**

Mel Manner's email has not changed. She is still the main contact for the BMN at manner@foxvalley.net

Website Update

The website is in the last stages of debugging. It will be accessible after June 15th at <http://209.172.146.242/>

2001 was a great season for most of the butterfly species. Many monitors were seeing record numbers of butterflies in 2001. When we have "boom" years like this, the following years are frequently "busts" due to the corresponding increase in predators. Butterfly populations are well known for these cycles. So don't worry if you are seeing very low numbers this year. However, with the mild winter, we may still see large numbers in some species. We'll have to wait and see. This is the fun part of monitoring. You never know for sure what to expect.

News and information
from the



**Summer
Issue**

**Iroquois County Wildlife Area – July 13th, 2002
11 AM to 1:30 PM**

This year's outdoor field experience workshop is at Iroquois County Wildlife Area in the northeast corner of Iroquois County. It's a long drive to get there, but well worth the trip. This site is part of a huge complex which crosses the state border and joins another huge protected area in Indiana. Large swaths of very high quality prairie and savanna make up much of the area. In the past Regal Fritillaries have flown here with a host of other butterfly species. Ron Panzer is very hopeful that we will find some remnant Regals and be able to document their continued presence at this site. He raves about the beauty and quality of the site and assures us we are in for a special trip.

Ron Panzer and Doug Taron will be the leaders. Both are true butterfly experts and are a joy to be in the field with. Mel Manner will also be there to help. If we are a large group, we will break up into smaller groups to avoid trampling the habitats. Ron will take the advanced people to do a search for the Regals. Doug will take the intermediates to see what we can find. Mel will take the beginners to practice monitoring and identification techniques. It should be a fun day.

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED!!!

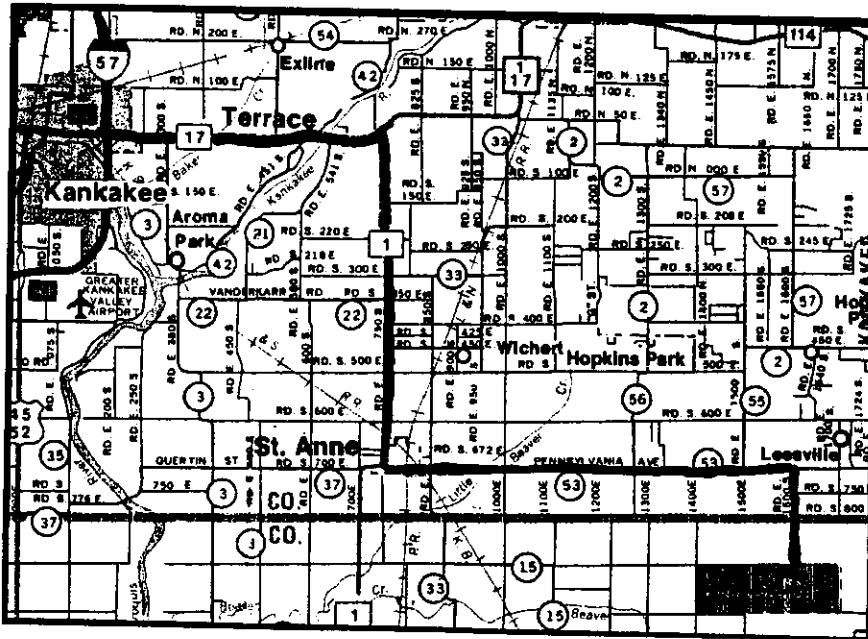
Call or email Mel at 847-464-4426 or manner@foxvalley.net

*Make sure and bring a sack lunch and plenty of water.
Old shoes or short boots and long pants are strongly recommended.*

Directions

Take I-57 south to Kankakee and exit on IL Route 17. Head eastwards (a left turn at the exit traffic light). You will cross over the Kankakee river, and come to IL Route 1 (traffic light). Turn southwards (right) towards St. Anne.

In St. Anne at the intersection of Rt. 1 and County Rd. 7000 s, turn left and head east on Co. Rd 7000 s toward Leesville. (IL Rt. 1 turns westward at this intersection.) Continue eastward until you hit Co. Rd. 16000 e. Turn south (right) on this unimproved road. Only a right turn is possible. Continue south until you dead end at Co. Rd. 3300 n. (The road numbers are now different because you are now in Iroquois County). Park in parking lot #8 right in front of you south of the intersection.



In January of this year, there was a substantial and widely publicized mortality among Monarch butterflies on their wintering grounds in Mexico. Since the inception of the Butterfly monitoring Network in 1987, this is the third occurrence of a large die-off of this sort. In each of these, newspaper and radio articles have used words like "catastrophic" to describe the mortality. Understandably, many people become concerned about the future of the species when confronted with this information.

The Butterfly Monitoring Network continues to play an important role in evaluating the current status of the Monarch butterfly in the Chicago area. The good news is that the Monarch seems to be doing very well here. In 2001, we received data from a record number of sites – 84 in total. The Monarch was recorded on 82, or nearly 98% of these sites. This very high level of observation is probably due to a combination of factors: the butterfly is large and familiar to most people. It has also adapted to a wide variety of habitats in our region, including places highly modified by human activities.

But what of 2002? Can we expect to see any monarchs at all here after such a large mortality? The short answer is yes. Returning Monarchs have already been sighted throughout most of the state of Texas. Most of these will die before reaching Illinois; it is their offspring that we will begin seeing in about a month and a half. The numbers of observed Monarchs may not even be particularly low this year. According to Project Monarch Watch, an organization that tracks the annual migration, "the numbers of monarchs reported [in Texas] in the first three weeks of this season exceed the numbers reported for this period in each of the previous four years." Whether this will translate into strong numbers in Illinois this year remains to be seen, however it is not consistent with an expected near-absence of the butterfly.

This year's observations are fairly consistent with those from other years following mortality events in Mexico. The snowstorms of 1992 and 1996 resulted in substantial mortality, yet the following summers produced above-average Monarch populations. Population records, including those from the Illinois Butterfly Monitoring Network, suggest that the size of the Monarch population in our area each summer depends much more on the success of the spring breeding in Texas than it does on the size of the over-wintering population in Mexico. Given that the over-wintering sites only became known to science in 1976, and that the first reported weather-related mass mortality occurred in 1981, it seems likely that these mortality events are not abnormal, but a periodic feature of the Monarch's life cycle.

Despite recent alarming reports concerning everything from Mexican weather to genetically engineered corn, the Monarch continues to thrive in North America. The strength of this species seems to come from the facts that it is highly adaptable to human disturbance, and uses host plants that are extremely abundant. In conjunction with the aggressive program for protecting the over-wintering sites in Mexico, the Monarch's biology should ensure that this species will continue to thrive as an abundant and beautiful butterfly in our region.

