



The Antenna

News and Information from the Butterfly Monitoring Network

Onsite Overview: Nelson Lake Marsh

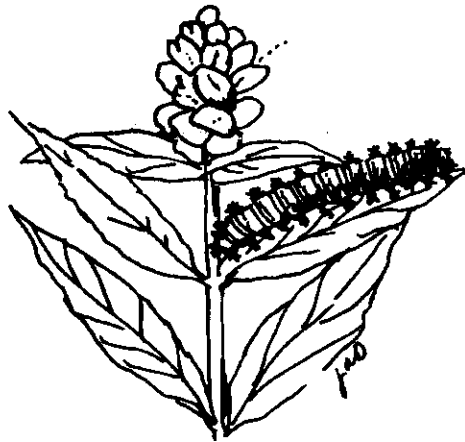
Nelson Lake Marsh is a dedicated Illinois Nature Preserve, owned by Kane County Forest Preserve. This high quality natural area is located west of Batavia. The preserve is in the midst of farmland being developed as commercial and residential property. Kane County has been able to purchase some of the land around Nelson Lake Marsh which will serve as a buffer zone between this development and the marsh itself.

Tom Peterson, butterfly monitor since 1998 at Nelson Lake Marsh considers the preserve a challenging site. It takes over two hours to complete his monitoring. His route includes woods and an old field but is mostly marsh. Tom trail blazes through tall cattails, lots of Joe Pye Weed, various sedges and ferns as well as other marsh plants. The presence of native Turtlehead in the wetland supports a good population of Baltimore Checkerspots. Tom has noted the Baltimore Checkerspots are most active in mid June through July. He has also observed the caterpillars of the Baltimore Checkerspot in the early summer, on Turtlehead, which is their host plant.

Other species that have been identified at Nelson Lake Marsh include Black dash, and Dion Skippers. Long Dash Skippers can be found nectaring at the Blue Flag iris which is in bloom when they are flying.

Tom has also done some site surveying for the Butterfly Monitoring Network at Fermilab, his place of employment. It is hoped a permanent monitor will be doing a route there soon.

Judi Ann Dore with thanks to Tom Peterson.



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Credits

Mel Manner: Editor

Judi Ann Dore:

Graphics & Layout

September
2002

Take Time to Read...

Peterson First Guide to Caterpillars

Amy Bartlett Wright

Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993

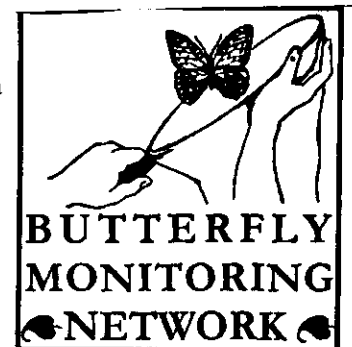
\$5.95 ISBN 0-395-91184-2

Doug and I are frequently asked about caterpillars and how to identify them. This book is a great, inexpensive place to start. It covers 120 common and conspicuous species, including some swallowtails, satyrs, blues and sphinx moths. It also has a few less common species, like purplish copper and Baltimore checkerspot.

In addition to drawings of the caterpillars, it has pictures of the adults and information on the larval host plants. It also includes a section in how to raise and feed caterpillars - a must for anyone who wants to do this. It is very important to know what you are doing and to correctly identify the caterpillar, so that you are not removing rare species from their habitats.

In general, the Peterson First guides are wonderful little books, and this is one of the more popular titles.

Contributed by Mel Manner



Slowing the Spread of Gypsy Moths: Dubious and Potentially Dangerous

The Gypsy moth is a European species introduced into this country in the 1860's that eats tree leaves in its larval caterpillar stage. The Department of Agriculture has created a control program called "Slow the Spread." Gypsy Moths are just becoming established in northern Illinois, and this past spring the Slow the Spread program was initiated in Cook and DuPage Counties. Both opponents and proponents of Slow the Spread agree that Gypsy moths will become established with or without the program, and the result will be unpleasant. Once or twice a decade, large numbers of Gypsy Moth caterpillars will defoliate entire trees. Weak and sick trees may not survive these outbreaks.

Right now, the method used for control is to first aerial spray areas with BTK, an insecticide which targets all lepidoptera species, not just Gypsy moths. Then follow up a few weeks later with another aerial application of pheromone flakes. These flakes blanket the sprayed areas with Gypsy moth pheromones making it very difficult for males to find females to mate with. Both sides of this issue also agree that the widespread applications of BTK will kill large numbers of non-target butterflies and moths. This is why the BMN is very concerned.

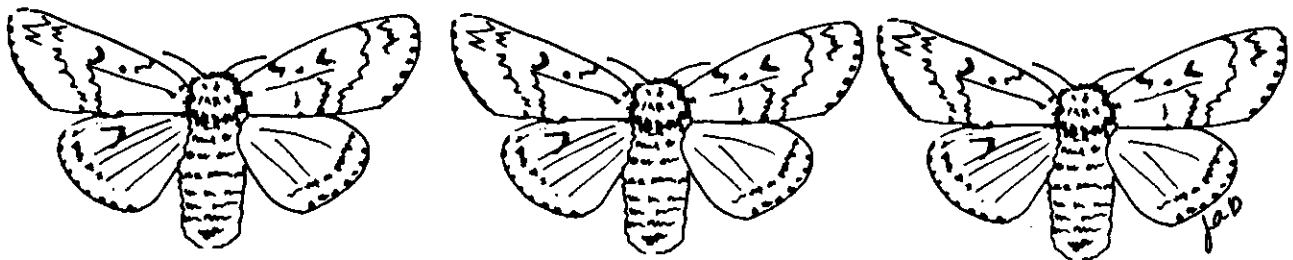
Doug Taron believes that there is significant potential for long-term harm for some of the state's butterflies and moths as a result of this program. Worse yet, the lepidoptera most likely to experience long-term harm are the remnant reliant species including rare ones such as Leonard's Skippers, Mayapple Stem Borer moths, Silvery Blues and Mottled Duskywings. Many inhabit oak woodlands, often on only a handful of sites in the state. Some of these sites are targeted to receive further treatment with BTK.

The proponents of Slow the Spread have not addressed the peril of these rare species. The head of the program, Stan Smith of the Illinois Department of Agriculture, recently said to the Chicago Tribune, "those butterflies are native, so they'll repopulate after we're done spraying, maybe by the end of the season or definitely by next year." In reality, the nearest sources from which these rare species can repopulate are tiny colonies scores of miles away- much further than they travel. If eliminated from a site, these butterflies will remain absent from it. They are at significant risk of being extirpated from the region.

Other more butterfly-friendly approaches to slowing the spread of the Gypsy moths might include:

- Substituting BTK with more species specific agents such as nucleopolyhedrosis virus or entomophaga fungus, especially on natural areas such as Forest and Nature Preserves.
- Continuing the use of pheromone flakes, which are a highly species-specific control method
- Identify areas with the most vulnerable species and sparing them from Gypsy moth control efforts
- Continuing to use BTK, with aerial application as required, as long as this control method is confined to city parks, residential neighborhoods, and other developed areas.

Regardless of which method is used, the Gypsy moth will become established in Illinois. As with other parts of the country where it has been established, Illinois will learn to cope with the species, and will not become a treeless wasteland. The real question is what long-term damage will we do to our rare butterfly species while we make this transition?



BMN Monitor's Tours 2002

2002 was the first season the BMN has offered tours of selected sites. Mel hopes to set up at least 5 tours throughout the monitoring season each year. So far the walks have been a success in Butterfly spotting as well as friendly socializing.

- A tour of Illinois State Beach Park, April 27th was led by monitor Melissa Pierson. Both Olymphia Marblewings and Hoary Elfins were seen as hoped.
- John Ayres led a group of 7 to tour Dan McMahon Grove. A variety of Skippers were spotted, including Least, Tawny Edge and Black Dashes.
- The attendees of the tour at Bluff Spring Fen, were led by Mel Manner and Doug Taron. Baltimore Checkerspots were spotted as well as a rare damselfly .
- The tour of Black Partridge was guided by monitor John Marlin. Several people were out with John and saw Pipevine Swallowtails and a visitor from Southern Illinois the American Snoutnose!
- The final tour this season will be at Fermilab on Saturday August 31st at 1 PM. The monitor leader will be Tom Peterson. As of this writing Purple Coppers have already been spotted.

Endangered Butterfly Returns to Illinois

In late July of this year, a very special beer cooler crossed the state line from Wisconsin into Illinois. The cooler contained something much more precious than Leinenkugel's Red: seven female swamp metalmark butterflies that will be used to reintroduce this species to an Illinois site where it has not been seen for many decades. The butterflies were transferred to the breeding lab at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, where they have since laid eggs. The caterpillars have hatched and have begun feeding on potted host plants (swamp thistle) in the lab.

In September, the caterpillars will be released at Bluff Spring Fen Nature Preserve in northwest Cook County. The species formerly occurred at that site, however there have been no confirmed sightings since the late 1930's. The butterfly has a low tolerance for the invasion of sites by brush. The severe filling in of Bluff Spring Fen by brush between 1940 and 1980 likely contributed to the elimination of the species from the site. Fortunately, since the early 1980's, extensive management and restoration activities, including brush removal, have improved the ecological health of Bluff Spring Fen to the point where it should again be able to support Swamp Metalmarks.

The loss of this species at Bluff Spring Fen is by no means unique. Historically, Swamp Metalmarks have been recorded in Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Arkansas, and Missouri. There are a few colonies in Kentucky, Iowa, and, possibly, downstate Illinois. The species is listed as endangered or as a species of special concern in all of its range except for the states of Missouri and Arkansas. In *Butterflies Through Binoculars: The East*, author Jeffrey Glassberg states, "This species needs immediate protection and an ongoing recovery plan...For the world to lose this gorgeous animal would be a true scandal."

Many people have collaborated in the return of the Swamp Metalmark to Illinois. I am taking the lead on the project as Curator of Biology for the Chicago Academy of Sciences. The work has been funded by the BP Foundation through their BP Leader Award. The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission is overseeing the work. The Nature Conservancy and Friends of the Fen have been responsible for the site management and restoration that has made Bluff Spring Fen ready to again be a home to these butterflies. Susan Borkin of the Milwaukee Public Museum has previously worked with this species and very generously provided technical expertise that will help ensure success of the project. The landowner, The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, has endorsed the project.

Contributed by Doug Taron

CALL FOR DATA

It's time once again to submit your butterfly monitoring data. This year we can accept data either as hard copy or electronically. To submit in the traditional way, send a copy of all field forms and a sketch of your route (unless previously submitted) to Mel Manner at 41W039 Bowes Bend Dr., Elgin, IL, 60123-8325.

THE DEADLINE FOR BOTH TRADITIONAL AND ONLINE DATA SUBMISSIONS IS SEPT. 30TH!!!
We can't do the annual reports until all the data are collected.

TO DO ONLINE DATA SUBMISSION, PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING VERY CAREFULLY.

The correct address for the website is <http://209.172.146.242:2000>. Once you load this site, click on the link that starts with IBMN. You will then be asked for a password. Leave the userid line blank and enter your site password on the password line. To obtain a password, email Doug at djtaron@chias.org. When the database comes up, click on the New Record link on the left side. Use only the tab key or your mouse to move within the report. Visit dates should be entered in the form mm/dd/2002. If you enter mm/dd/02, the database reads it as 1902. Species that are unidentified or incompletely identified should be noted in the comments section. Example: Question Mark/Comma - 3 in transect B. Once you have entered everything, you must click on the word Submit. Do not just exit the website before submitting. Lastly, send Doug an email to let him know that you have entered your data so that he can check it.

This is the first time this website is being used. Please be patient and expect some minor problems. If you are unable to enter something, put it in your comment section. Do not put general comments about the website there. Email Doug Taron separately with problems. Thank you very much, and we hope you had a great time monitoring this summer!

Doug and Mel

**DATA SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS SEPTEMBER 30TH!!!
SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON PAGE 3.**

**Habitat Project Picnic! All monitors welcome!
12 to 4 Sunday, September 22nd (rain or shine)
Busse Woods Forest Preserve – Shelter 5
On Rt. 72 (Higgins), east of I-290 in Cook Co.**

This annual event, hosted by The Audubon Society, celebrates all the hard work we do as citizen scientists. It's also a great way to meet monitors from not only the BMN, but all of the monitoring projects out there. Family and friends are welcome too. They'll have volleyball, croquet, Frisbee, and games for kids; raffles to award to monitors who get their data in on time; and Citizen Scientist Awarded to honor monitors and partners. It's a lot of fun with no pressure to identify anything!!!

Bring a meat or main dish for your family, a side dish to share (salad or side dish if your last name begins with A-L, dessert if M-Z), and folding chairs for your family to sit on. Drinks, cups, plates, utensils, and a grill are provided.

**RSVP – Maggie Invals (pvfarm@core.com or 847-821-9928) or
Karen Glennemeier (kglenneier@audubon.org or 847-965-1150).**

Please do not call Mel Manner before 9AM or after 9PM. Thanks!!!

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from the



**Autumn
Issue**

