



The Antenna

News and Information from the Illinois Butterfly Monitoring Network

Onsite Overview: Cuba Marsh

Editor's Note: This was submitted by Jim Peterson who began monitoring there in 1999.

Cuba Marsh is a Lake County forest preserve located between Barrington and Lake Zurich on Cuba Road. It is a fairly large area, occupying around a square mile. Originally, the land had been drained and used for farming. In the 1970's, it was already planned for development, but in the late 1970's the Lake County Forest Preserve District acquired the land. In the early 1990's, improvements were made to it which included creating a parking lot, and adding about 2 miles of crushed gravel bicycle paths.

Cuba Marsh has a large marshy area just west of Ela Road. Much of the forest preserve is being restored as a prairie. There are also some patches of oak woods on the west side of the forest preserve.

Because most of the land was farmed, the variety of butterflies there is not extremely large. European, Pecks, and Silver Spotted Skippers can be found there. Common Wood Nymphs, Pearl Crescents, and Common Sulfurs are the most common butterflies there. There are also Little Wood Satyrs, Pearly Eyes, and Eyed Browns most commonly found in the oak woods.

Cuba Marsh has a reputation as a good place to watch birds. Egrets, Great Blue Herons, and Swans are often present in the marsh. Red Tailed Hawks also inhabit the marsh.

You can read more about Cuba Marsh at the following web sites:

<http://www.lcfd.org>

<http://chicagowildernessmag.org/issues/spring1998/IWcubamarsh.html>

New Field Guide...

Field Guide to Silkmoths of Illinois

By John K. Bouseman and James G. Sternberg

Published by Illinois Natural History Survey

\$19.95 (includes shipping and handling)

Editor's Note: These authors also wrote Field Guide to Butterflies of Illinois.

A field guide to aid biologists, naturalists, land managers, volunteers, and students in the identification of silkmoths found in Illinois. This guide contains photographs and distribution maps plus information on habitats, natural history, and distribution. To order your copy, please contact the Illinois Natural History Survey at INHS Distribution Office, 607 E. Peabody Dr., Champaign, IL 61820 or by phone at (217) 333-6880. This hardbound book is priced at \$19.95 (the price includes shipping and handling).

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CALL FOR DATA!!! DEADLINE OCTOBER 15TH

It's time once again to submit your butterfly monitoring data. You can mail your field forms in or enter them over the internet. To submit by mail, simply send in copies of all your field forms to Mel Manner at 41W039 Bowes Bend Dr, Elgin IL 60123-8325. If you have never submitted a sketch of your route, please send that in as well.

The internet submission option saves Mel and Doug many, many hours of work, so please try it if you have internet capability. To enter data online, go to our website at www.bfly.org and click on the link "Monitoring Database". You will then need to click on the link containing "ibmn". You will then be asked for a password. If you do not have one, email Doug Taron and he will send you one. Make sure to give him your name, which site you monitor at, which county it is in, and an email address. Once you have a password and enter it in the password box, you will get into the database. If you need instructions, you can open them in a separate window by clicking on "Instructions for entering and viewing data" on our homepage. You can then keep this page open while entering data and switch between the instructions and the database as needed. Once you submit your data, send Doug an email telling him your name, site, and how many days you entered. He will then double check that all your days came through okay.

Most asked question . . . When do I have to stop monitoring?

Answer: Mid September. You must do a minimum of 6 runs of your route between June 1st and August 7th, but you may always do as many runs as you like before, during, and after that time period. Very few butterflies will be flying by mid September. Just get your data in by October 15th!

Expect the Unexpected

Editor's note: Jim Peterson sent this note to me after I described how to identify a Mourning Cloak in a general email to monitors. I thought many of you would relate and sympathize. If you have any stories you would like to share, send them to Mel Manner (see contact information, front page).

Reading your description of how to identify a mourning cloak reminded me of one of my first experiences collecting butterflies. At the time I was probably only 6 or 7 years old. I think that my brother Tom and I had just gotten our first nets and had begun looking at the butterfly book to learn about butterflies (the little Zim paperback.) Just across the street from us was a railroad track, and there was a weedy area along it which attracted butterflies, so we went over there to see what we could find. I remember seeing what I thought were bunches of mourning cloaks, so I was really excited to catch one. I saw one land in the weeds and was sure I had it in my net, since I didn't see it fly up when I brought the net down. But when I looked in the net, there was just a grasshopper in there. We finally figured out that the grasshoppers had the brown wings with the light fringe similar to the mourning cloak.

That is a little like the time we had a polyphemus moth cocoon which we were waiting to see hatch. Instead of a moth coming out, these bugs came out with long tails on their abdomens. We had them walking all over us, and I put my finger on one, and it reared up and stung me with its tail. Then, we figured out that a wasp had laid its eggs in the cocoon, and they had eaten the moth. But these were unusual wasps, so we hadn't identified them as being able to sting us right away.

Electronic Newsletter

Newsletter costs continue to climb as the network expands. So we are now requiring everyone with email and internet capabilities to receive the electronic version of the newsletter. It can be viewed and/or printed through our website. The email notification contains a link and instructions for opening the newsletter. All past issues of *The Antenna* are also available on our website at www.bfly.org. If you have received a paper copy, but you can switch to the electronic version, email Mel at ibmn@sbcglobal.net

Swamp Metalmark Update

Editor's Note: This is a reprint of an article written by Gary Wisby and appearing in the Chicago Sun-Times, Wednesday, July 30, 2003 edition. Butterfly monitor Janice Young sent it in to Mel. Doug Taron reported seeing 2 adult Metalmarks flying this summer. The area is away from the trail system at Bluff Spring Fen to avoid accidental trampling of the butterflies. Once the population reaches a stable level, we will be able to have a tour to see them. Until then, please do not go off-trail at the Fen looking for the butterflies.

Thanks to the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, with a little help from the Friends of the Fen, a tiny butterfly called the Swamp Metalmark is again in residence at an Elgin nature preserve.

Records show the endangered species disappeared from the Bluff Spring Fen Nature Preserve in the late 1930s.

Aerial photos show the 100-acre site was open until then, but over the years it became choked with glossy buckthorn and gray dogwood. Now all the brush has been cleared by the Friends of the Fen.

[Last Fall] Doug Taron, the nature museum's curator of biology, dropped off 38 caterpillars. The fen is rife with swamp thistle, their favorite food.

Notebaert, home to one of only a handful of butterfly breeding labs in North America, last July received seven female Swamp Metalmarks from Wisconsin.

Males aren't needed. "Any female you catch will have mated already," Taron explained. "They mate very shortly after emerging from the chrysalis, and 24 to 48 hours later they're laying eggs."

Taron put the caterpillars in a quarter-acre, close together enough to meet and mate. In a couple years he hopes for a stable population-- "If I can count 30 to 40 adults in a day, I will feel very good about that." Eventually he would like to see several hundred at the site.

The Swamp Metalmark has a wingspread of an inch or less. "It's a gorgeous little butterfly," Taron said--a deep red-orange, with black and white markings on lightly fringed wings and a yellow underside.

It's reintroduction is funded by \$100,000 from the BP Foundation in the form of a BP Leader Award. The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission is overseeing the project.

Announcements

Training handouts from Mel's identification slide shows are now available on the website at www.bfly.org.

The next March Indoor Workshop will be on March 6, 2004.

The Governing Committee is still looking for participants. Doug and Mel need people to step up and help run the network. Most of the contact can be handled by phone or email. Many projects are short-term, and each person need only give a few hours every month or so. This network will not survive without member participation. Contact Mel if interested. (See contacts, front page.)

We have monitors assigned to over 140 sites throughout Illinois. Not everyone was able to monitor this year, but we are hoping to get data from at least 130 sites. Please help by turning in your data promptly.

The Dragonfly Monitoring Network is up and running. For more information, including how to join, contact Gareth Blakesley at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum by email.

If you do not have email, contact Mel. She can email him for you.

Butterfly monitor Carol Freeman is also a professional nature photographer. Her 2004 calendar, "In Beauty, I Walk" is now available. See enclosed flyer for details or go to her website at www.carolfreemanphotography.com. Many other beautiful items are also available through her website. Part of the proceeds are donated to The Nature Conservancy and the IBMN.

Sixth Central Illinois Prairie Conference

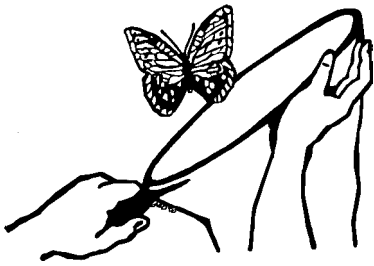
September 20 and 21, 2003
Parkland College, Champaign
"What Makes a Prairie"

Diverse people will picture different scenes or images or thoughts when asked about prairie. A botanist, or a farmer, or a suburban gardener will each have their own conception of prairies. While the question "What makes a prairie?" may seem simple and straightforward to each of these people, the answer given may be wholly different.

Grand Prairie Friends is proud to organize the Sixth Central Illinois Prairie Conference, September 20 and 21, 2003 at Parkland College in Champaign, Illinois. The event is co-sponsored by Parkland College, Champaign County Forest Preserve District, and Urbana Park District. This venue will allow all prairie enthusiasts of the region to gather, discuss, learn, and explore the question "What makes a prairie?"

Please join Grand Prairie Friends Saturday September 20 for a day of concurrent sessions by invited speakers on an array of topics covering tallgrass prairie ecology, flora, fauna, restoration, stewardship, and education. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Roger Anderson from Illinois State University. Saturday will conclude with an informal banquet, a silent auction, and a slide presentation from Dr. Michael Jeffords and Sue Post. On Sunday September 21 field trips to local prairie restorations and remnants will be offered as well as a statewide gathering of natural area stewards.

For more information about the conference, please call James Ellis at 217/244-5695. For registration information, contact Erin Taylor at 217/896-2455. Visit the Grand Prairie Friends website at <http://www.prairienet.org/gpf> for updates about the conference.



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