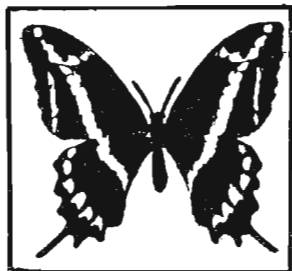


southern lepidopterists'



news

VOLUME 1; NO.1

MARCH 1979



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTHERN LEPIDOPTERISTS,
A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION PROMOTING SCIENTIFIC INTEREST
IN THE LEPIDOPTERA FAUNA OF THE SOUTHERN UNITED STATES

CHAIRMAN-EDITOR : DAVE BAGGETT

SECRETARY-TREASURER : THOMAS M. NEAL

ARTHUR JOE PATTERSON

April 9, 1948 - November 22, 1978

An enthusiastic and energetic Lepidopterist, Joe Patterson was very excited about the formation of the Southern Lepidopterists, and eagerly looked forward to serving the group as its first Zone I Coordinator and to designing the logo for the newsletter. On Nov. 22, just three days after attending the charter meeting, Joe left Atlanta to spend the Thanksgiving holiday with his family in his home town of Ashland, Alabama. On a rural Alabama highway that night, Joe was killed instantly in a head-on collision.

Though Joe had been interested in Lepidoptera for about ten years, it was not until 1975 that he began to seriously study them and build his impressive collection; at his death he had nearly 4,000 specimens, most of which he had taken himself. Among the highlights of the material are a female Papilio androgeus, taken in Broward Co., Fla., in March 1976, the first U.S. record for the species; an Erora laeta from Fannin Co., Ga., on Aug. 31, 1976, a late date record for the species, and one of three Georgia specimens; a Proteides mercurius from the vicinity of Baton Rouge, La., on July 24, 1976, a state record and one of very few southeastern records for the species; Speyeria diana, with a June record for a female in Alabama; and numerous rarities and range extensions from Mexico.

Joe grew up in Alabama, and attended Auburn University from 1966 to 1969, where he majored in architecture. He moved to Georgia in 1969, working for an architecture firm, then subsequently for Anaconda Aluminum and General Motors, before enrolling at Georgia State University in 1972, from which he received his Bachelor of Visual Arts degree in 1975.

At present, Joe's collection is being reorganized and prepared (by Irving Finkelstein & J. D. Christy) for donation to institutions where those species of particular scientific interest and importance will be readily accessible for future study. A portion of Joe's collection will be presented to an institution in Georgia, his "adopted" state, to demonstrate the range of his interests and provide material of general interest. Joe will be missed by his many friends, and we share in the loss to his family. Joe was also interested in the flora of the region.

..... ILF

The following guidelines were developed to allow members in Zones III, IV, & V to pursue interest in the Lepidoptera on Florida State Parks, with carefully considered limitations. Collecting of butterflies on Florida Parks is illegal unless you have a permit. Although the restrictions are quite thorough, they are necessary to prevent abuse of the privilege. Those of you applying for the permits should bear in mind that your actions are reflective of the group as a whole, so use them with discretion and keep in mind that many park visitors may not see things in the same light, as parks are obviously wildlife preserve areas. Be discretionary in your activities and do not attempt to offend others.

1. A Research Associate must accompany members holding collecting permits.
2. Members must be aware of the restrictions placed on the permits, which will be terminated for reported abuse.
3. Certain high-use parks (heavily visited) are to be avoided except during the off-season periods.
4. A limit of six specimens per species may be collected.
5. John Pennecamp Coral Reef State Park and Lignumvitae Key State Botanical Site are off limits to collecting.
6. Cooperation between members of the Division of Recreation and Parks and members of the Division of Plant Industry is encouraged.
7. Inspection of collecting gear and vehicles by park personnel is permissible and is to be expected under any questionable circumstances.
8. If clippings of trees or shrubbery are essential to rearing purposes, this should be done outside of the park premises whenever possible. If this is not feasible, the park superintendent should be notified prior to pruning.
9. Reports of activities should be filed with the park superintendent upon entering the park, and a verbal or written report can be made on conclusion of activities.
10. Only approved individuals will be granted collecting permits, after a written statement of understanding the restrictions has been provided to the office of the Chief Naturalist.
11. Activities on any given park should last for no more than a few days during any specific visit.

A list of regional members will be provided to the Chief Naturalist, Jim Stevenson, Division of Recreation and Parks, Florida Department of Natural Resources, 202 Blount Street, Tallahassee, FL., 32304. The reports made will provide a basis for beginning checklists of butterflies on certain parks covered by our activities; notes pertaining to host plants for rare or threatened species should also be provided in reports.

A number of Florida members are Research Associates now; all of the Florida Zone Coordinators are Research Associates for the Division of Plant Industry. Those of you interested in learning more about the R.A. program should contact Dr. Howard V. Weems, Jr. or Dr. Frank Mead at the Division of Plant Industry, P.O.Box 1269, Gainesville, FL., 32602. The Associates perform as adjunct collectors and curators for the Florida State Collection of Arthropods (FSCA), providing periodic reports and donations of material to the state. Regional members may also be interested in the Florida Entomological Society, which provides a quarterly journal pertaining to entomological interests largely reflective of the southeast. The Florida State Collection of Arthropods includes one of the largest insect collections in the south; we can help build it up concerning the Lepidoptera. Dr. Dale Habeck is engaged in building up a larvae and immatures collection, and many of even the common species are not yet represented, so we will encourage support along these lines as well. I'm sure Dr. Weems will be glad to hear from you.

PLANNED SPRING ACTIVITIES AND CURRENT ZONE REPORTS

ZONE I: Coordinator, Abner Towers, 3260 Rilman Rd., Atlanta, Ga. 30327

Abner & Irving Finkelstein plan several spring trips to Cooper Creek State Recreation Area, off Hwy. 60 near Suches in Fannin County, a favorite spot for many southern collectors, located at around 3000 ft. in the lower Appalachians. They will be seeking C. irus, A. midea, P. virginiensis, and possibly the spring brood of E. laeta and perhaps even C. ebenina. They also intend to visit locales in SW Georgia to search for C. hesseli in white cedars there.

ZONE II : Coordinator, Ron Gattelle, 126 Wells Rd., Goose Creek, S.C. 29445

Ron suggests that those seeking A. midea, C. gryneus ssp. or spring coastal species to check Edisto Island ; good possibilities for C. irus, C. henrici and others exist in Bryan Co., Ga., probably best around late March to early April. New records for coastal Georgia include E. brizo brizo (Bryan Co.), C. gryneus ssp., C. henrici ssp. (in press.), C. irus arsace (R. T. Arbogast), and the unpublished records for C. gryneus smilacis (sweadneri ?) from Chatham County, March 1976 (R. T. Arbogast). He also had a note from Ed Taylor of Seneca, S.C., noting that a specimen of G. lygdamus had been taken in 1926 in the vicinity of Clemson, S.C., now located in the Clemson University collection.

ZONE III : Coordinator, Chuck Zeiger, 3751 Sommers St., Jacksonville, FL. 32205

Chuck, your editor, and others are planning to check the Putnam County white cedars for the possible presence of C. hesseli; we'll also be looking for new spots to find C. henrici margaretae in the NE counties. Last season we found them in several new locations, primarily by checking blossoms of willow, wild plum, hawthorne, and other spring flowers near swampy hardwood areas. Keep on the lookout for C. nippon, Psychomorpha spp., Thyris lugubris, and Alypia wittfeldii and other spring species which visit the same flowers. Little is known of the distribution for these in Florida, with the exception of the latter. A blacklight trip is planned for early April at Shell Bluff Landing off SR 100 SW of San Mateo in Flagler Co.

Jeff Slotten reported success at locating tents of M. yuccae buchholzi in the Gainesville vicinity; John Watts and I checked out Spanish Bayonet stands in St. Johns and Flagler counties the weekend of Feb. 24th. and found about two dozen tents, most of which already contained pupae; last season most were still larvae in mid- March. We discovered that many native Yuccae stands in St. Johns and Flagler Cos. were decimated by the imported Yucca Weevil, which could seriously compete with the Giant Skippers in the future in the coastal Florida counties. Some of the adult weevils and grubs are being sent to the Div. of Plant Industry; to my knowledge, it has not been reported from many Florida counties yet. E. brizo somnus is just now appearing on the wing.

ZONE IV : Coordinator, Steve Roman, 117 Masters Blvd., Winter Park, FL. 32792

Steve is planning to visit the Brooksville-Istachatta area in April to check for spring Lycaenids, especially S. liparops liparops. He'll also be searching for Catocala larvae and can show others how to locate them in daytime searching.. Steve, Rick Gilmore, David Ivey, Zeiger, and I intend to check many areas as we continue our research of the Catocala moth family in Florida; last season our efforts were rewarded by rearing 19 species, three of which had no previous life history information (C. grisatra, C. miranda, and C. louiseae), plus we added several new types to the state faunal record. We have learned how to successfully "pattern" the hiding habits of most of the adults in this interesting family for Florida species. If you have an interest in these moths, check with Steve or Chuck for details during the April-June period, and we hope you might be able to join us in the field. C. henrici margaretae was reported on the wing Feb. 25th. at the Deland locale in Volusia Co. by Zeiger; the main brood had not yet emerged, and he estimated another 10 days.

ZONE V: Coordinator, Terry Dickel, P.O.Box 385, Homestead, FL. 33030

The big planned activity here will occur the week of 14 May, when members of the Southern Lepidopterists and members of the Kentucky Lepidopterists plan their first joint venture, headquartered at Camp Owaissa-Bauer in north Homestead, FL. This should be a great learning experience for any of you who are interested. Dr. Charles V. Covell will be leading his party from the Kentucky group and several biology students; Terry Dickel, Doug Ferguson, Leroy Koehn, Denny Currutt, Loran Gibson, and I had an enjoyable trip last season, and found the trip mutually beneficial. Aside from finding a couple of Eastern Diamondbacks there by surprise, the weather and Lepidoptera proved great. We recorded 92 Butterfly species and numerous moths during the trip, including sight records for Papilio aristodemus ponceanus and Papilio androgeus, and anticipate an equally rewarding experience this season. Perhaps Terry can introduce George Avery to the group, an expert on south Florida plants. Reservations will be required, so I urge you to contact me if you are interested; we will probably stay at Bauer for three days, then adjust our schedule accordingly. Zeiger, Charlie Stevens, and I will probably head north in mid-week. I can be reached at 8442 Thor Street, Jacksonville, FL. 32216, or by phone after 9 PM at 904-724-8597. You may want to check with Dr. Covell, c/o Biology Dept., Univ. of Louisville, Louisville, KY, 40208 for details if you are coming from outside the state. South Florida members should be on the lookout for two new introduced species; Hamadryas februa diasia and the day-flying Ctenuchid moth, Empyreuma affinis. Both were reported in 1978 as new U.S. records.

ZONE VI: Coordinator, Bryant Mather, 213 Mt. Salus Dr., Clinton, Mississippi 39056

Bryant recently provided a list of 28 Sphingid species he had recorded from Mississippi and several other good moth records for the state; the highlights are in the Lepidopterists' Society Season Summary which will be forthcoming soon. I presume Bryant will keep up his good work in learning more of the moths in his region; other than economic pests and desirable species, little is known about the distribution and flight period for many southern species. I strongly encourage many of you who express an interest in only Rhopalocera to expand your horizons. A true Lepidopterist has an interest in both moths and butterflies, and it doesn't take much to guess which needs more study. If you think they're dull, just spend a little time working on a nice family like the Catocalas. You should find them equally as fascinating, and you can find them in the daytime just like you can with butterflies, but it's more of a challenge. For such a major moth family, little is known about many of the species, their southern flight periods, host plants, or hiding habits. *(Family is loosely applied to the genus Catocala.)*

RECORD SEARCH : If you can provide additional records in the form of dates and localities for Pholisora catullus in Florida, please notify the Florida record keeper, Charles Kimball, (simply) West Barnstable, Massachusetts 02668. Another bug which could use a few more records from Florida is Polites origines, which many probably have confused with P. thermistocles. When it comes to distributional records, all that is needed is the county. If you have difficulty in moth determinations, consult the fine reference collection at the Division of Plant Industry, and if you in Florida do not yet have a copy of Lepidoptera of Florida by Mr. Kimball, you will find it a valuable tool for moths in the region. I believe the cost is \$5.00, payable to the Div. of Plant Industry, a good buy for the money.

Terry Dickel and I discussed the possibilities of reviewing and updating the plates, and in providing additional color plates as a future project. Anyone who has done any work with the moths knows how difficult it is for the amateur (like

myself) to figure out just what in the dickens some of our UFO's are. While the Moths of America North of Mexico will greatly help, the material considered is monumental and voluminous, and the combined cost places it beyond the reach of many amateur Lepidopterists. Moreover, it will take a long time to complete the work. Charlie Covell's Peterson Field Guide for the moths will be completed before too much longer, and will help, but it is virtually impossible to cover all the ground with one book- it would take an encyclopedia !

Irving Finkelstein informed me that the Lauderhill colony of Electrostrymon angelia has fallen to the bulldozers; the area was a vacant lot located in a residential area, now cleared for housing construction. He had found the species abundant at the site in June, and was shocked to learn it was gone on a return trip to visit his dad in Ft. Lauderdale in September. This brings to mind that we need to work on the life histories of many species, because we can do little to prevent this sort of action without adequate knowledge of the food plant. Instead of simply collecting, learn about the relationships of the species in your area, and try rearing when possible. This is the way to progress intelligently, and a good way to contribute to increasing the knowledge of our Lepidoptera fauna, and add to the scientific value of your work as a Lepidopterist. How many of us can claim we know what the larvae of the species in personal collections look like? Think about that one....., then ask yourself what it feeds on, aside from what you might have read..... get the message?

Our spring is just now getting ready to break; those of you in the region should drop your Coordinators a note now and then to let them know of your own activities, and if interested, try to get with them for some of the planned activities. Your input will be valuable when we really begin to get the Zone reports in. Those of you outside the area are encouraged to drop a line now and then also, since we'd like to hear about what's happening in your area as well!

Rick Gilmore reported that he and David Ivey had checked on the Buck Moths in the Deltona area on 14 January, and found the adults active. Rick found a newly emerged female, which he placed in a container, and proceeded to draw in over 40 males. Jeff Sloten had also reported finding adults out in the Gainesville area in the annual mating flights. In Florida, this usually occurs between late November and mid-January, shortly after the first sustained freezing nights, followed by a warming trend. Hemileuca maia usually mass-emerges and remains on the wing in a given area for about three weeks; in Florida it feeds on Quercus laevis and Q. myrtifolia, the larvae being communal like Automeris io in the early instars, and can usually be found during April with little difficulty. They seem to show preference for the dry scrub areas. Pupae can overwinter for two seasons.

Dues Reminder : there are a few who have expressed interest but have not yet paid their dues. Please get your \$3.00 check in the mail to Tom Neal, 1416 NW 2nd. Street, Gainesville, FL. 32601. It costs us to print up the News and for mailing fees, so help us keep up with our budget planning. We will do the best we can in terms of quality and quantity, and appreciate suggestions on how we can improve. Regardless, get in your dues, or you will be dropped from the mailing list. Our thanks to Charlie Covell for the nice plug given the group in his Kentucky Lepidopterist newsletter, and we're pleased at the response. If you are

interested in the activities of the Kentucky Lepidopterists, consider joining the group to learn more of the activities in that region of the U.S. (The two groups share a number of joint memberships , with the dues the same as ours. You can contact Dr. Covell at the address listed previously.) I consider this our "sister" organization, and through activities with this group, began the ground-work for the development of our group. Ron also mentioned the group formation in the Lep. Society newsletter, which resulted in further interest.

A comment here on records: a record is not official until it has been listed via publication, preferably registered with the Lepidopterists' Society Season Summary or a recognized entomological journal. You may have a state record, but if no one else is aware of your discovery, it is of little value to the Lepidopterist community. You should get new entries logged officially during that season; one does not need to divulge exact localities, but the county is necessary. I ran into several difficulties this year with the annual Season Summary. Though through common local knowledge the word seems to get out and has been assumed, an entry does not become official until it is published.

TIP : For those of you who have struggled through the woods at night lugging a 12 volt battery to supply blacklights with a power source, try this; Zeiger found that there is a new gel-type rechargeable 12 volt battery about the size of a regular lantern battery. The battery and charger sell for about \$30.00 combined, and can be used hundreds of times. The light weight and versatility of this battery will serve the interests of those seeking moths well; he found his at a hobby shop where it was advertised to crank model airplane engines. I believe they may also be ordered through most Radio Shack stores, or through local electrical suppliers.

Looks like we're ready to really get underway now, though it has taken a while to really get things well organized. If you have any comments to make in terms of constructive criticism towards making our News more informative or something which you feel will aid the quality, let us know, and we'll respond if it sounds legitimate and practical. If you have questions regarding Lepidoptera of the region, ask, and if I can't provide the answer, I will seek out advice from those better qualified. The door is open..... HDB

The SOUTHERN LEPIDOPTERISTS' NEWS
c/o the Editor, Dave Baggett
8442 Thor Street
Jacksonville, Florida 32216



Dr. Charles V. Covell
c/o Biology Dept.
Univ. of Louisville
Louisville, KY 40208