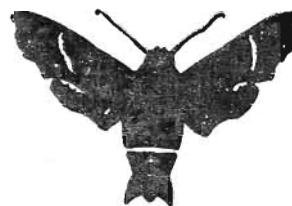




FOUNDED
1978

southern lepidopterists' news

A black silhouette map of the southern United States, including Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Florida, positioned centrally below the title.

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THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTHERN LEPIDOPTERISTS' SOCIETY, ORGANIZED
TO PROMOTE SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AND KNOWLEDGE RELATED TO UNDERSTANDING
THE LEPIDOPTERA FAUNA OF THE SOUTHERN REGION OF THE UNITED STATES.

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** COLLECTING IN SOUTHERN TEXAS **

Collectors visiting extreme southern Texas for the first time are likely to be disappointed at their first glimpse of the area, known to Texans as "The Valley". This area generally comprises Cameron Co. and the southern half of Hidalgo and Starr counties, bordering the Rio Grande delta. The area is very heavily populated, heavily agricultural, and has the lowest per capita income in the state. The area, nevertheless, is a popular vacation and overwintering spot, because of the subtropical climate and proximity to Mexico. For these same reasons, the valley is host to many species of tropical lepidoptera and birds, all of which have their true metropolis further south. The northernmost fringes of the tropical forests of eastern Mexico extend to within 150 miles of the border at this point. It is very tempting for the collector to abandon the valley and head south to greener pastures.

The only extensive areas of relatively undisturbed native vegetation in the valley are found in Laguna Atascosa and Santa Ana Wildlife Refuges, and Bentsen State Park. These areas do require collecting permits, and permit requirements may be strict. Some type of institutional affiliation may be necessary for the Wildlife Refuge areas, and one must write well in advance to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in Austin for a state park permit. However, there are scattered areas outside of these places where excellent opportunities exist. In general, one should seek out old wooded canals or resecas (oxbow lakes), woodlands or old fields bordering the river, or tree-lined railroad tracks. Such places can still be found along the levee at Reylampago, the RR tracks south of Madero, SW of Penitas around the lake, NW of the entrance to Bentsen St. Park along the canal just north of the power plant, roadsides and chaparral near Sullivan City. Be sure to ask permission before crossing fences.

The best time for collecting is late fall (Oct.-Dec.), when the Eupatorium odoratum is blooming, but collecting may also be good during the spring and summer, IF there has been adequate rainfall. The winter months (Jan.-Mar.) are generally the poorest, but if there has been no frost, interesting species may be present. Many interesting moths may be taken year-round, with many species the same or near relatives of, those taken in south Florida.

Space forbids a detailed review of all butterfly species expected, but most recent books illustrate the potential. For details regarding some of the newly recorded species, you can review the following articles in the J. Lepid. Soc.: Tilden, 1974, pp. 22-25; McGuire & Rickard, 1976, pp. 5-11; Rickard, 1977, p. 138; and Neck, 1978, pp. 107-115. The 1973-75 season summary reports for Texas also include many interesting records. There is a great potential for new U.S. records in the valley, since a great number of additional spp. are found within 200 miles of the border. Nothing should be taken for granted, especially the small, dark, obscurely marked skippers.

Collecting is generally best along the trails and the edges of dense woods or neglected citrus groves. The most reliable nectar sources include thistles, morning glories, Eupatorium, Lantana, Verbascena, wild buckwheat, asters, and Bidens, the latter very good when you can find it. Certain spp. are sap feeders and are more often found in the woods; spp. such as Myscelia ethusa, Anaea spp., Asterocampa spp., and Chlorippe spp. are most easily taken with the use of bait traps, as are many choice moths. Skippers make up nearly half of the known spp. of Rhopalocera that occur in the valley. The number of species present is, as in the case with all groups, highly dependant on adequacy of rainfall. Most of the skippers, especially the larger Pyrginae, are active only during the cooler parts of the day. At these times they may be sought on flowers, but during the hot hours, they seek the shelter of the woods. Smaller Hesperinae are most often found in the shaded or semi-shaded grassy areas. The exotic swallowtails of the valley, Heraclides thoas, ornythion, astyalas, and Priamedes anchisiades, are never common and most often encountered in the spring and fall. Eurytides marcellus does not occur in the valley, but E. philolaus is a rare stray. The hairstreaks and metalmarks are best sought in the fall months. Certain species seem to become established for a few years, and then may not be seen again for some time. A good example is Cyanophrys goodsoni, which was common in the mid-1970's but has been absent since. A careful search of areas where balloon vine and Lippia grow will likely yield Chlorostrymon simaethis sarita and Strymon bazochii. In summer and fall, migratory swarms can be encountered, most often made up of Libytheana bachmanii, D. gillippus, and Kricogonia lyside. Sometimes other species become extremely abundant as well, and join in the northward migrations. In past years, Dione moneta, Eunica monima, Dynamine dyonis, Anteos maerula, A. chlorinde, and the moth Urania fulgens have extended as far north as central Texas.

Collectors planning a trip to the valley should bring extra nets, and long extension handles will prove useful. Clothing should be brought that will offer protection from the sun and the many thorny trees, bushes, and cacti. Just as in south Florida, ticks, chiggers, and fire ants are abundant. One can also see tarantulas, large centipedes, scorpions, and wind scorpions (Solpugids), but these are really not dangerous. The Western Diamondback, Massasauga, and Eastern Coral Snake occur in the valley, but any potential danger can be minimized by avoiding areas overgrown with tall grasses or weeds, especially in mesquite woods or chaparral. The valley is also well known for the exotic birds that occur, with the best place for observing them being the Santa Ana Refuge. Coyotes, Ringtails, Armadillos, Nutria, Bobcat, and Javelina are often common in the wilder portions of the valley. Ocelot and jaguarundi are rare, but have been sighted recently. While in the valley, it may prove interesting to visit the Mexican border towns for dining or shopping. No tourist permit is needed for brief visits within 50 miles of the border. However, driving in Mexico is not recommended and should not be undertaken under any circumstances without Mexican auto insurance. For more extended visits, proof of citizenship, i.e., voter registration, etc., is all that is needed to obtain a tourist visa. The Texas coordinators will be happy to help out with any planned trips to Texas, and will provide additional specifics on request.

- Ed Knudson

A pictorial replay of the annual meeting at Torreya State Park & vicinity:
photo credits to Vernon Brou, Steve Roman, and John Riggerbach...

Planning the day's field trips on
Saturday AM, Torreya St. Park.



Lost in anticipation, or just
plain lost in the woods ?



L-R: McInnis, Adair, Baggett,
and Gibson combing the fields
of the Apalachicola National
Forest SW of Bristol. Here we
found C. pegala abbottii, N.
areolata, E. alabamiae, and E.
arpa, among the more desired
prizes. The fields were ablaze
with wildflowers, and numerous
endemic pitcher plants (some
can be seen directly between
participants in the upper rt.
inset above) were found.



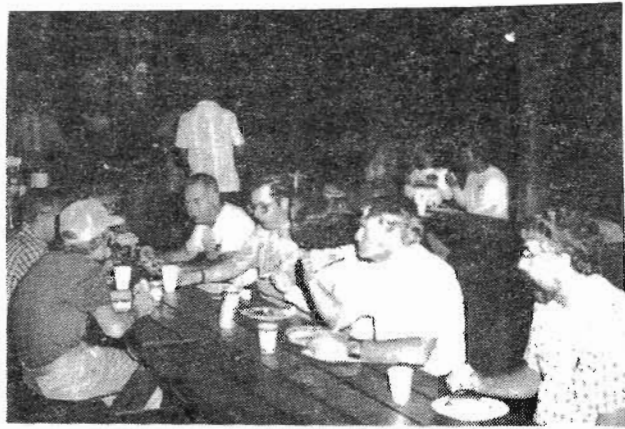
Dale Habeck grins enthusiastically
while searching for larvae with
a beating sheet.



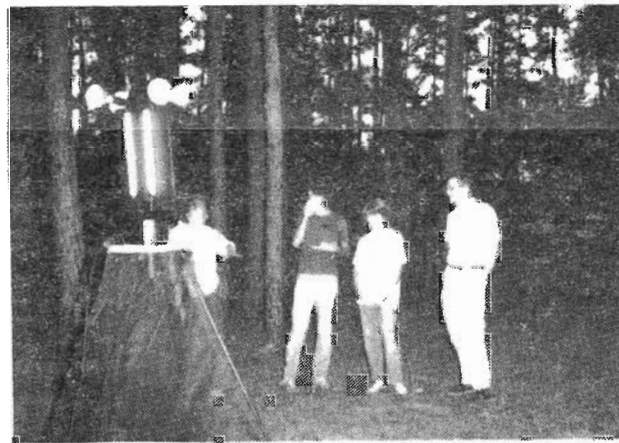
Our guest of honor, Bryant Mather,
receives the Abbot Award from Neal.

Irving Finkelstein entertained the troops while Neal tried to thaw out the hamburger for the starving field trip survivors

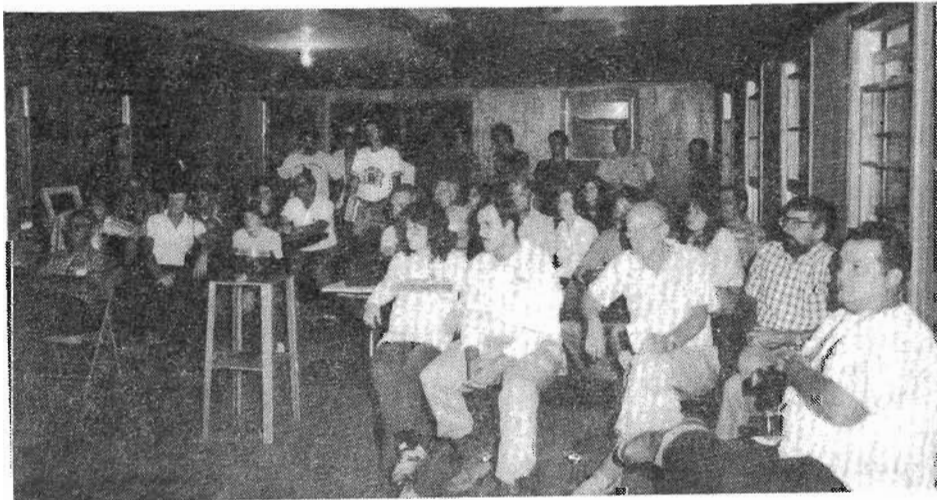
But, we did manage to get the gang fed. After all, we figured that just about anything would taste great if they were hungry enough, right, Tom ?



Vernon Brou's ingenious high-powered light trap drew the attention of many members. Anyone ever heard about those strange lights emanating from the swamps and bayous of Louisiana every so often?



A tired but congenial group met in the pavilion for the business meeting, followed by slide presentations of Abbot's work by John Riegenbach, a Florida butterfly review by Steve Roman, and Paul Milner's movies of his summer in Colorado. Nearly a third of our membership made the meeting; very special thanks to all who pitched in to help make it our best meeting ever ! Space forbids naming all in the pix.



RESEARCH REQUESTS, NOTICES, ETC. :

DAVE BAGGETT, 14406 N. 22nd. St., Apt. 169, Lutz, FL 33549, and DR. JOHN B. HEPPNER, Center for Arthropod Systematics, Division of Plant Industry, P.O. Box 1269, Gainesville, FL 32602, are in the initial phases of gathering data needed for the forthcoming revised edition of Kimball's Lepidoptera of Florida. We are especially interested in hearing from those of you who have host plant information, rearing records, and distributional information pertaining to all species known from Florida.

VERNON A. BROU, Rt. 1, Box 74, Edgard, LA 70049, phone (504) 497 3203 informs us that he is going into the pin business. He assures substantial savings on orders as a result of bulk orders from manufacturers abroad. Top quality Imperial brand pins will go for \$17.00 per 1000, with a minimum order of 5000 pins, offering all sizes 000 through 7, postpaid and insured. Additional specifics on Elephant brand, stainless pins, and minutiens are available on request. Sounds like a pretty darn good deal, so call or write Vernon for full details.

CURRENT ZONE REPORTS:

ZONE 1: TEXAS. Coordinators, Ed Knudson, 808 Woodstock, Bellaire 77401, and Mike Rickard, 6550 Hillcroft #201, Houston, 77081.

Ed has been pretty busy working on plans for the next annual meeting in Texas; He and Mike did some preliminary scouting after the Torreya meeting and indicated good prospects for 120 species of butterflies and skippers in the areas under consideration. He also indicated that those collecting in south Texas will be aided by fermented bait traps when seeking species such as Anaea, Doxocopa, Hamadryas, Aellopos, Thysania zenobia, and Ascalapha (Erebus) odorata. Full details for the Texas meeting will be available by June, with the meeting tentatively planned for mid-October (PRIME TIME!) Avery Freeman commented he had taken a number of Catocala in the vicinity of his Garland, Texas home during the summer, including his first C. consors from that state. He has a number to exchange, and is mainly seeking species like C. sappho, C. miranda, C. orba, C. lincolnana, and C. grisatra from other southeastern collectors. In Santa Ana on October 31st, Ed and Mike recorded collected or saw apprx. 110 species of butterflies, with some of the best being Phocides palemon lilea, Chiodes zilpa, Caberes potrillo, Pellicia arina, Nyctellius nyctellius, Spathilepia clonius (Hesperiidae), Papilio anchisiades idaeus (Papilionidae), Anteos chlorinde and A. maerula, Eurema proterpia and E. daira, the latter not common in Texas (Pieridae), Cyanophrys goodsoni, the latter not reported in Texas for 5-6 years (Lycaenidae), Junonia evarete, Siproeta stelenes, Anartia fatima, Eresia frisia tulcis, Dynamine dyonis, and Doxocopa laure (Nymphalidae). The following week Paul Tuskes and wife took Melanis pixe, Chlosyne janais, and Aphrissa statira jada in the same area, along with a nice Thysania zenobia. Knudson also picked up a number of nice moths, including Isogona scindens, I. texana, I. snowi, I. natatrix, Bendiscodes aeolia, Mimophisma ablunaris, Anomis impasta, Melipotis nigrobasis, Elaphria agrotina, and Cecharismena abarusalis (Noctuidae); Synclera jarbusalis, Hoterodes ausonia, Lipocosma polingi (Pyralidae); and the Cossid Xyleates masoni. Collecting with Paul Tuskes on Sept. 10th. at Huntsville State Park, Knudson also recorded the following: Eacles imperialis f. nobilis, Citheronia regalis, Anisota discolor, Anisota fucosa (Saturniidae), Dasychira atrivenosa (Lymantriidae), Sisyrosea textula (Limacodidae), Peoria punctata, and Oneida lunulella (Pyralidae).

ZONE II : ALABAMA, LOUISIANA, MISSISSIPPI, and TENNESSEE. Coordinators : Vernon Brou, Rt. 1, Box 74, Edgard, LA 70049; Bryant Mather, 213 Mt. Salus Drive, Clinton, MS 39056; Charles Watson, 1339 Watauga St., Kingsport, TN 37660; and John Hyatt, 439 Forest Hills Dr., Kingsport, TN 37663.

Reports received from members showed some interesting trends for 1983 from the lower SE states, including Georgia and Florida. These seemed most noticeable for moths, with indications that it was an above-average year for the Sphingidae, but a "down" and very late season for Catocala. Both Brou and Mather indicated that it had been a good year for Sphingids, with Vernon remarking it had been his best ever in terms of overall numbers recorded. Catocala sent in by Mather (39 total) indicated an off year, but slightly up from last season, but the most important thing was the dates, which began in August and continued into December for one species, with several persisting into November. It is seasons like this which confuse the record books for the single-brooded species and lend error to the presumption that there may be two broods for some Catocala in the south. The results can even vary dramatically within a given state, depending on elevation and rainfall, not to mention the precise latitude gradients. Paul Opler, collecting in the Cumberland Plateau area of Jackson Co., Alabama in late April, recorded thirty spp. of butterflies and skippers, including probable state records for Pieris virginianensis, Erynnis icelus, and Hesperia metea. Other notables included Amblyscirtes hegon in the shaded areas of a ravine, Mitoura gryneus, common in the juniper forests, and hill-topping males of Anaea andria. Hyatt and Watson, reporting for Tennessee, commented on an unusual and delayed spring, due to cold, wet conditions. At Bays Mt. Park on May 5 in Sullivan Co., they collected with J.F. Gates Clarke and found E. olympia (LATE!), A. midea, C. gemma, swarms of Erynnis spp., In-cisalia henrici, I. nippon, and M. gryneus. They noted that the Celestrina spp. seemed down, although Watson found a few G. lygdamus and C. ebenina at Horse Cove, Washington Co. on May 7th. On June 5th, they traveled east from Johnson City in Unicoi Co., where they found Enodia anthedon, E. icelus, and a few others before stopping by a stand of Goatsbeard (Aruncus dioicus), where they found lv. of Celastrina ebenina for a new county record. Vernon provided a number of new Louisiana Lepidoptera Survey records as follows : Noctuidae : Heliothis turbatus, Cirrophanus triangulifer, Polia legitima, Catocala lincolnana, Catocala jair, Lacinipolia implicata, Tarachidia parvula, Zanclognatha martha, Argyrostromis contempta, and A. sylvarum; Arctiidae : Apantesis virgo, Cycnia inopinatus, and C. tenera; Geometridae : Caripeta aretaria, Anacamptodes ephyraria, Exelis dicolus, Nemoria extremaria, and Probole alienaria; Notodontidae : Heterocampa varia; Pyralidae : Neoleucinodes prophetica, Argyria auratella, A. diplomochalis, Tampa dimidiatella, Eudonia heterasalis, Plodia interpunctella, Patissa sordidalis, Nephopteryx subfuscella, Haimbachia squamulella, and H. placidella; Sesiidae : Pennisetia marginata; Tineidae : Xylesthia pruniramiella, Cephitinea obscurostri-gella, Diachorisia velatella, Setomorpha rutella, and Nemapogon acapnopennella; Gracillariidae : Micurapteryx salicifoliella, Caloptilia rhoifoliella, C. blandella, C. violacella, belfrageella, and stigmatella; Cosmopterigidae : Cosmopterix nitens and Pyroderces badia; and Gelechiidae : Battaristis vitella.

ZONE III : GEORGIA. Coordinators : Scott Brown, P.O. Box 207, Homerville 31634, and Abner Towers, P.O. Box 127, Powder Springs 30073.

Again, much evidence of a late spring/summer season was in evidence : collecting in mid-August in the mountain region, Charles Stevens netted a fresh specimen of Satyrium kingi on August 18th, which is probably the latest date ever recorded.

Speyeria diana males still ranged from fresh to worn, and few females were seen at that time, this in the Cooper Creek St. Recreation Area in Fannin county. On Aug. 16th, he took three Megathymus harrisi at Arabia Mt., while both Baggett and Gilmore went empty-handed for their efforts. Hyatt, Watson, and Finkelstein stopped at the Hartley Bridge Rd. locality in Crawford Co. en route home from the annual meeting and each found Hesperia meskei, in spite of continued habitat destruction. Hermann Flaschka and Irv Finkelstein both remarked on bumper crops of Speyeria diana from '83 rearing endeavors. Scott Brown sent in Hesperiid records from the P. W. Fattig collection, recently determined by Lee Miller, including a new state record confirmation for Pyrgus oileus with the following data : 17 July 1941, Cartersville, Bartow Co.; 20 July 1943, Albany, Dougherty Co.; and 20 July 1943, Ochlocknee, Thomas Co., all collected by Fattig, the noted Emory University lepidopterist. Other interesting skipper records included Polites themistocles, Aug. 16, 1949, Lafayette, Walker Co.; Thorybes confusus, May 1965, Candler, Bell Hall Co., taken by R.J. McDonough; and a "probable" Erynnis baptisiae, White Co., March 5, 1959, collected by Preston Hunter. A new record for Poanes hobomok came from Blood Mt., Union/Lumpkin county line, 12 June 1941, determined by N. D. Field. Baggett, Gilmore, and Stevens, collecting for moths in Fannin and Lumpkin counties 16-19 August, recorded approx. 150 spp., with some of the more notable records being the following : Saturniidae : Callosamia angulifera and C. promethea, Citheronia sepulchralis, Anisota virginienensis pellucida; Sphingidae : Eumorpha pandorus, Hyles lineata, Paratreia plebeia, Agrius cingulata, Lapara bombycoides, and Ceratomia catalpae; Arctiidae : Diacrisia virginica, Halysidota tessellaris, and Crambidia casta; Noctuidae : Catocala grynea, C. gracilis, C. nebulosa, C. cerogama, C. resecta, C. andromedae, Colocasia propinquinella, Panthea furcilla, Zale minerea. Euthisanotia grata, Cucullia convexipennis, Balsa malana, Pyrrhia exprimens, Lithacodia muscosa, Paectes oculatrix, Allagrapha aerea, Elaphria grata, Tricolita signata, Bomolocha deceptalis; Geometridae : Xanthotype rufaria, Idea demissaria, Plagodis alcoolaria, P. phlogosaria purpuraria, Probole amicaria, Euclaena muzaria, Pero hubneraria, Selenia alcipharia, and Euclaena obtusaria; Epiplemae : Calledapteryx dryopterata; Limacodidae : Parasa chloris; Thyridae : Thyris maculata; and numerous others. Irv Finkelstein sadly noted the death of Lucien Harris, one of the south's most notable lepidopterists and author of Butterflies of Georgia, during February 1983, and has prepared a eulogy which will be utilized at a later date.

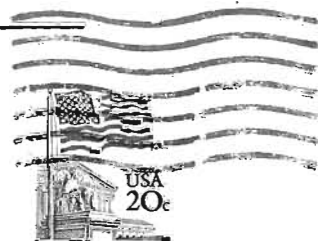
ZONE IV : FLORIDA . Coordinators : Lee Adair, 810 Gascon Place, Temple Terrace 33617, and Steve Roman, 117 Masters Blvd., Winter Park 32792

New member John Calhoun, collecting in Homestead Dec. 14-16 on a visit from Ohio, provided a good record for Eurema nise, the first record received for this species since Paul Tuskes took one on Plantation Key several years ago. This is a Florida species which seems to appear periodically and then disappear for several years before being seen again. Adair, Baggett, Gilmore, Dow, and Profant collected on Sanibel Island on November 11th., where they found good Sphingid collecting, recording three Erinnyis alope, three Protamulyx strigilis, and ten Madoryx pseudothyreus. Linwood Dow also captured a single Horama panthelon texana, which is a new Florida state record for Ctenuchidae. Other notable catches included the noctuids Isogona texana, Melipotis prolata, Palpida pallidior, Hypena vetustalis, Amyna octo, and Metallata absumens. Geometrids included Oxydia vesulia and O. cubana, Sphacelodes vulneraria, and Sericoptera virginaria, and the pyralid Palpita kimballi was common. Irving Finkelstein reported excellent collecting for hairstreaks on Key Largo in mid-December, with Tmolus azia.

Strymon martialis, and Chlorostymon simaethis common; he also picked up a nice C. maesites for his efforts. He commented that best collecting was over flowers of Eupatorium odoratum, blooming profusely along the roadsides.

ZONE V : VIRGINIA, NORTH & SOUTH CAROLINA. Coordinators : Ron Gattelle, 126 Wells Road, Goose Creek, SC 29445; John Coffman, Rt. 1, Box 331, Timberville, VA 22853; and Bo Sullivan, 200 Craven St., Beaufort, NC 28516.

Ron provided some interesting discussion on blend zone populations of Papilio glaucus glaucus and P. g. australis, as well as for Anthocharis midea midea and A. m. annickae, too lengthy to include here, but perhaps the makings for a good lead article in the spring issue when we get little reporting. Ron has the unique advantage of living right on the borderline, and his observations will be worth sharing. Readers will do well to note Charles Remington's article on "Suture Zones of Hybrid Interaction Between Recently Joined Biotas" in Evolutionary Biology, Vol. II; one of these zones extends through much of the coastal plain portion of the SE. Paul Opler again noted the signs of the delayed spring, collecting in SC in late April. He and his son found Mitoura gryneus sweadneri behind the coastal dunes in Georgetown Co., and A. midea still flying on the 24th in the F. M. Forest in Dorchester Co. John Coffman reported that he enjoyed good rearing luck with Papilio cressphontes, Sphinx franckii, and Citheronia sepulchralis in '83, and that he had reared a number of larvae through to the pupal stage from species yet to be determined. Photos of several larvae will be used next time. Bo Sullivan collected with John Burns on 29 July in the Wilmington area, where they found Atrytonopsis loammi, Euphyes bimaculata, and Mitoura hesseli. He tried some limited bait collecting for Catocala, and reported getting several species, with C. muliercula and C. ultronia common, and the best take being C. amatrix. He received a reliable report from friends in the area that several Heliconius charitonius had been observed in the area in late fall.



The SOUTHERN LEPIDOPTERISTS' NEWS
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