



CHARTERED  
1978

Southern lepidopterists' news



VOL. 8, NO. 1  
MAY 1986

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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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### NEW SOUTHERN LEPIDOPTERIST STAFF TAKES CHARGE IN 1986

With Volume 8, a new era in Southern Lepidopterist reporting takes place, with Rick Gillmore ascending to the Editorship and Jeff Slotten grabbing the gavel as our new Chairman. Tom Neal continues as our Secretary-Treasurer for another term. We experienced a serious falling-off in reporting activity during the past few years, and want to request member support in getting things on the right track. There are so many things that individual members can contribute to the newsletter - and it is disappointing that so few of you take interest, instead waiting to see what the next guy is doing. We have established coordinators for you to funnel information through, and have also encouraged direct response to the Editor. Let's have some home-county checklists, or local park lists from your past collecting experiences, and we'll try to include a couple in each of our future newsletters. Some time ago Dave Baggett began with some individual species accounts; no one else bothered to grab on to the idea, which was a good one. Dave and Ed Knudson also came up with novel articles on collecting in south Florida and south Texas, respectively. What about options for collecting in some of the other states, coordinators? What's it like to collect in some of these places, what do you find, and when do you find things best? Some time ago we mentioned that we'd try to put together a Sphingid monograph - what happened, Lee & Vernon? There are so many things we can do, if only we get some support from the members. We realize that some of you are very active field workers, and that others are only occasional in your lep interests. We have had more input from VISITORS to the area in some cases than we have from the S. Lep. residents, who certainly should be making more of a contribution. WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU !! We WILL include some things from back files to get started, but we want you to be thinking how YOU can contribute, and we ARE expecting this from you in the future. We suggest that you begin by getting something off to your new Editor this spring. Take some photos of odd specimens you've collected; send us some excerpts from your recent field trips; try to let us know you're still alive and interested, OK? We can help encourage this by letting you know we will provide 25 pages of Southern Lepidopterist stationery with letterheads for any article submitted and accepted for the newsletter! Come on, get to know your Editor! Have you got some ideas for local field trips? We can use the newsletter to set up field trips if you'd like, to encourage more group participation outside of the annual meeting - let us know if you'd like this as a new option. Your ideas and comments will always be welcome here, and we'll pass them along when we get them.

MEET YOUR EDITOR : I grew up near Pittsburg, PA and attended Clarion State University for two years, then transferred to California (PA) State University where I received my BS degree in Education in 1969. I taught 5th. grade and also coached high school wrestling in Pennsylvania before moving to Florida. At first, I settled in St. Augustine, the scenic "Old City" where I taught 6th. grade and also coached basketball at the elementary level, but I later moved on to Winter Springs (near Orlando) where I taught for two more years before going into business for myself as an aluminum contractor, which I've made my living at ever since. I concentrate my work on room additions and specialize in things like pool enclosures; after 13 years in this endeavor I've served as President of the Aluminum Association of Florida and have received a number of honors from this group. I've been married twice, and suffered the consequences of having endured the murder of my second wife, Barbara, a case that has never been solved. I still have not gotten over this completely, four years after the fact, but have now found a new collecting companion and friend in Ann Chambers, who is a real trooper when it comes to camping and getting out with the bugs. I remain very thankful for my friends and their support.

My interest in lepidoptera came early while growing up in Pittsburg, where I became good friends with both the late Harry K. Clench and John Bauer at the Carnegie Museum. In spite of their busy schedules, they both always seemed to find time to answer my many questions, and I'm certain helped to stimulate my interests. Shortly after moving to Florida, I became a close friend of Steve Roman, and we made many trips to the Florida Keys together where we chased many butterflies and sphingids together in learning the new territory. At one time I had the largest holdings of Isoparce cupressi, Danaus eresimus tethys, and Siproeta stelenes biplagiata in North America, well before the general knowledge of the latter two was regarded as established residents. I've collected on many occasions in the past with both former Editors, Ron Gatreille and Dave Baggett, and have made many new friends through my collecting experiences in Florida. I hope I'll make many more as your new Editor. I still have a fondness for hair-streaks, but these days I find myself more interested in moths as my interests expand; I hope that I might be able to encourage some of you to broaden your own horizons as your Editor. I remain very interested in eastern Catocala, and own a number of firsts from Florida in terms of life history work and state records; I also have a growing fascination with pheromonal attraction of the Sesiidae, and have perhaps the best overall knowledge of the Sphingids known from the state of Florida. If you want to know when and where to find 'em, ask me! Your new Chairman and I frequently collect together, since we both have an intense interest in Catocala and are very interested in the life histories; we've both spent many hours beating for larvae, putting up with mosquitoes and chiggers in the swamps of northern Florida. Chiggers and I do NOT get along at all, incidentally. I can tell the instant the little devils find me. If you want to know if they're around, just take me along as a sensor! They have to be the abomination of the southern woodlands as far as I'm concerned. I've met many of you in the field in the past, and hope that our paths will cross in the future. I encourage you to help me do the best job I can for you, and with your help, I'll promise to try. PLEASE don't leave me with just the chiggers to keep me stimulated, OK? I'll do the job, but I want your help; I can assure you that I'll do a BETTER job with your help than without it. I firmly believe that we have too good a group not to receive more support than in the past, and I'll do my darnedest to find out why.

In order for this publication to be an effective tool in spreading information and trying to promote scientific interest in the lepidoptera of the Southeast, we want to encourage your participation. If you're not a letter-writer, call me at (305) 323 2195; if you are, WRITE! General collecting information from your spring trips, comments on migratory behavior, rearing aspects and techniques, local field trips, and so on will be welcomed by this Editor. Good Collecting/Better Reporting!

Perhaps a major underlying/contributing factor to the lack of member input during the period between fall and early spring is that many lepidopterists seem to fold up shop and go into a diapause of their own, since they almost completely stop their field endeavors in September and don't seem to stir much until the following March as the leaves begin to unfold. It still seems very hard to believe that practically none of our readers did any collecting during fall-winter-spring of 1985-86. Surely SOME of you managed to get out after Hemileuca maia, or collected other Saturniid cocoons ??

Is Hyalophora cecropia still alive and well in the deep South; has anyone ever found cocoons of or taken specimens of Samia cynthia in recent times outside of the popular northern haunts? Winter noctuid collecting has caught on in recent times in New England and some of the midwestern states, but we find a real lack of interest here in the South. Many CHOICE species can be taken even when there is snow on the ground, gang. You can also use mercury vapor or blacklights on warm nights in winter and spring to take them - there are a number of rarely reported genera we'd like to hear more about - such as those like Zale, Feralia, Metaxaglaea, Chaetoglaea. Late fall and early winter are apparently good times to pick up exotic strays among the noctuids and sphingids, based on literature reports. I personally caught my only Thysania zenobia in PENNSYLVANIA, and many exotic sphingids are reported during fall well north of the usual range. You may be missing opportunities simply because you're not out there trying! Winter noctuid collecting is best done using baiting, and on a good night hundreds may be seen or collected, yet the general knowledge of these is poor in the South.

On the other hand, when was YOUR last spring trip made, and what did you find? What was the first butterfly seen for 1986 in your home area? Al Stodghill gave the first butterfly report of 1986, taking Nymphalis antiopa in Tallahassee, FL in February, and also catching Poanes zabulon and Cyllopsis gemma in March. The first Catocala of the season was C. connubialis, taken jointly by Terry Dickel, Linwood Dow, and Dave Baggett on March 28th. in the Fakahatchee Strand portion of the Everglades (more than 30 specimens at this early date!) in Collier Co., FL. Several trips were planned by local members to search for Incisalia nippon in Florida during March and April, but weekend frontal systems thwarted attempts to find this in '86. Those of you interested in Catocala miss a lot of fun by not getting out early to search for the larvae, or by beating for them on known host plants. I'm sure that many opportunities are missed for rare species by not trying this technique - the larvae are there as soon as the plants break forth in the spring, and they might be found easier by this method than by looking for adults later on. Some species apparently use the flowers of plants like Prunus, rather than the leaves (Catocala clintoni is a good example). If some of you took advantage of a trip to the tropics during the winter, drop us a line to fill in our members on what you experienced. We badly need your input during the fall and winter periods. Sum up last year's season and give us a report; those of you who aren't getting out during the period can at least find time to fill us in on what you found when you did get out! It's tough to put together a newsletter without input. A suggestion for 1986 to all of you is to promise yourself to at least try out a new area this year, rather than just hitting the old familiar spots again and again - you just might find something new! If you don't like to write (I'm not the best in this regard, either), give me a call to provide a report or update. Regardless, you can write to me at 35 S. Devon Avenue, Winter Springs, FL 32708, or call me in the evenings at (305) 323 2195. I'm waiting to hear from you, and again am wishing you good collecting and improved reporting for the coming year. Since I primarily collect moths, that's what you'll hear about if some of you more enthusiastic butterfly-chasers don't contribute to the

cause. Jeff Sloten and I are laying plans to coordinate the 1986 meeting. At this writing it appears we'll try to re-do the ill-fated 1985 meeting, rather than try to promote one in Aiken Co., SC. We'll have an update out in the next issue, and should have things lined up pretty well by then. We WON'T try to hold it over Labor Day weekend, however, as this seems prime time for tropical storms and two past meetings in Florida have suffered because of them.

MEMBER NOTICES AND RESEARCH REQUESTS, ETC.

DAVID PURDUM, 5232 Roselawn Rd. SW, Roanoke, VA 24108 : Interested in obtaining Eacles imperialis pupae or ova from Florida. Can exchange northern imperialis, C. regalis, or western C. splendens.

ERNST ARENBERGER, Börnergasse 3,4 /6, A-1190 Wien, Österreich/Austria : I am interested in Pterophoridae or the world, and would like to trade you for specimens of this family. I make trips to collect Micro- and Macro-lepidoptera in Europe, N. Africa, and Asia Minor each year. Write me with you exchange offers.

PAUL TUSKES, 7900 Cambridge, #141G, Houston, TX 77054 : I'm interested in exchanging material from Texas, Arizona, and California for Florida Saturniids.

FLORA AND FAUNA PUBLICATIONS, 4300 NW 23rd. Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32606. Write for listing of new books regarding plants and animals, and inquire about the new insect journal, Insecta Mundi; the latter is devoted to new insect descriptions.

VERNON A. BROU, 137 Jack Loyd Road, Abita Springs, LA 70420. FOR SALE : Insect pins, \$18.00 per 1000, in sizes 000-7, insured and postage paid. Elephant and stainless, and minutiens also available.

DR. RICHARD L. BROWN, MISSISSIPPI ENTOMOLOGICAL MUSEUM, DRAWER EM, MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY, STARKVILLE, MS 39762 : Position available for entomological curation, requires BS in Entomology and good background in various entomological systematics. Send resumé ; letters of recommendation useful.

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CURRENT ZONE REPORTS :

ZONE I - TEXAS. Coordinators: Edward C. Knudson, 804 Woodstock, Bellaire, TX 77401; Mike Rickard, 6550 Hillcroft #201, Houston, TX 77081.

Steve Roman , collecting in the vicinity of Waco, TX in March, found Incisalia henrici and Mitoura gryneus on the wing. Steve and wife Debby will be moving to Waco in June; perhaps we'll get some new information from this area.

ZONE II - ALABAMA, MISSISSIPPI, LOUISIANA, TENNESSEE. Coordinators: Vernon A. Brou, 137 Jack Loyd Rd., Abita Springs, LA 70420; Bryant Mather, 213 Mt. Salus Drive, Clinton, MS 39056; Charles Watson, 1339 Watauga St., Kingsport, TN 37660; John Hyatt, 439 Forest Hills Dr., Kingsport, TN 37663.

Charlie Watson reported finding Speyeria diana common for the second year in a row at his Washington County, TN locality during 1985. Mecky Furr, reporting from Germantown, TN, provided a list of Catocala taken during 1985, including Vernon Brou's recently described new species, Catocala atocala. Outside of Louisiana, this still appears to be quite rare in collections, but is very similar to C. agrippina. It should be looked for in swampy areas. Vernon Brou collected a nice series of C. orba in Louisiana during 1985.

ZONE III - GEORGIA . Coordinators : Scott N. Brown, P.O. Box 207, Homerville, GA 31634; Abner A. Towers, P.O. Box 127, Powder Springs, GA 30073.

Irving Finkelstein commented on the unusually high numbers of Catocala seen in downtown Atlanta during July 1985. Many species could be seen flying in the daytime, or landed on buildings in the downtown area. He was especially happy with the capture of C. nebulosa and C. residua. The residua may mark the southernmost point of known capture; it is not listed south of North Carolina in either Sargent's text nor in the Barnes & McDunnough monograph. Baggett, determining the Catocala in the University of Georgia collection for Dr. Cecil Smith, found a single specimen of Catocala delilah taken in June by Smith on Sapelo Island, a new state record. C. delilah is very rare in the eastern U.S., and is primarily known from central Florida and eastern Texas. It is often confused with C. desdemona from Texas; figures in both Sargent's text and in Covell's text for this species actually refer to desdemona, which is southwestern in distribution. Presently listed as a subspecies in the MONA checklist, it will be afforded full species status in the future, as confirmed by the thesis investigation of the southwestern oak-feeders by David Hawks. Dr. Hermann Flaschka has taken the trouble of preparing a full species index for Covell's recent Field Guide to the Moths of Eastern North America for those of you without a copy of MONA to decipher the new genera; he'll provide a computer printout of the index to anyone wanting one for one dollar and a LARGE self-addressed envelope. This is really a handy reference tool, and contains the species names with page references.

ZONE IV - FLORIDA . Coordinator : Lee Adair, 810 Gascon Place, Temple Terrace, FL 33617.

Stodghill's bait trap produced two new county records in 1986 with Sphecodina abbotti (March 1986) and A. pyramidoides (June 1985). His March record for Poanes zabulon also represents a new record, all from Tallahassee, Leon Co. Slotten reported H. maia on the wing in Duval and Putnam counties in January. William Grooms, down from Maryland, collected a specimen of Amblyscirtes alternata near Princeton, Dade County in November 1985. The species had not been taken in Dade county in many years, and was thought to have been extirpated by development. It remains very rare in Florida. Gillmore, Ann Chambers, and Jeff Slotten collected Catocala larvae on wild plum and hawthorn trees at White Springs, Columbia county and at Suwannee River State Park March 14-15, 1986, including C. clintoni, C. alabamiae, and C. "texarkana f. bridwelli", which your Editor feels is synonymous with C. pretiosa. At lights, we collected E. phasma, P. myops, L. coniferarum, Z. calycanthata, Z. lunifera, P. atomeris, and L. ypsilon at Suwannee River St. Park. Gillmore also got larvae of C. minuta on water locust at Lake Harney, Seminole County on March 30th, and found several larvae of C. alabamiae on hawthorn at Apopka, Orange County. Using pheromone traps, your Editor collected a number of sesiids beginning as early as Feb. 14th, including S. pictipes, S. geliformis, S. acerni, S. sapygaeiformis, S. rubrofascia, P. syringae, and C. texana, all in the Seminole county area. Later on, P. palmii, P. asilipennis, and S. alleri have been added, as well as S. uroceriformis. We'll put in a feature showing how to make your own sesiid traps in the next issue, using empty 2-liter cola bottles! We've got two good lists in already from Baggett, Dow and Dickel from Collier county and the keys, and another from Myakka State Park from Adair and Baggett, but will include them in the next issue. Early spring collecting in general seems about two weeks later than normal for both hairstreaks and Catocala, one of those funny Florida phenomena with regard to collecting. In part, this is probably due to cooler evening temperatures in central Florida than normally expected for this time of the year. It's definitely time to get out those nets and light traps, though. Woody Dow proves that moth collecting can be good even in

the cooler months, though : on 16 November he collected at Collier-Seminole State Park and recorded 8 species of Sphingidae, including C. antaeus, P. caicus, P. strigilis, 4 spp. of Noctuids, including B. purissima & G. nutrix, 8 spp. of Pyralids, including P. diminuatalis, D. redtenbacheri, and P. kimballi, plus many others. On January 6, at Moss Park, Orange county, he collected many micros, including N. slossonalis, D. leoducusalis, S. florella (pyralids), H. lepidophaga, S. algidella, E. pinifoella, D. boreasella (Gelichiids), E. malachitana, Platynota flavedana, P. iduasalis, and E. otiosana (Tortricidae). Woody has collected fairly extensively in Florida for microleps and is becoming not only a fine preparator of this tiny creatures, but a wealth of information regarding their distribution and seasonality. We hope to talk him into giving a mini-workshop in preparation at our next meeting. His technique is fast and efficient, and produces fine material.

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

John Coffman reports a fairly mild winter without excessive snow in VA, and is expecting an early spring. Blacklighting yielded choice noctuids such as Feralia jocosa & F. comstocki, E. electilis, C. grotei & C. stryrcis, plus M. adjuncta. John also sent in some photos of aberrant Saturniids we'll use in the next issue. Gatrell provided a Charleston area report, and also commented on a mild winter. P. rapae and C. eurytheme have been out since mid-February, and Papilio palamedes was first seen on February 19th. ! He anticipates a good season for Falcapica midea due to good winter rainfall, and is planning to look for new colonies of the rare Incisalia irus arsace. Jeff Sloten, collecting with Vince Lucas, Leroy Koehn, and Denny Currutt in the Green Swamp region of NC in April, reported Amblyscirtes alternata (common), I. irus arsace, A. loammi, A. reversa, A. carolina, T. pylades, L. portlandia, and C. gemma. Blacklighting produced Jeff's first Sphinx gordius and L. coniferarum. The Green Swamp area of NC is one of the northern reaches of true SE Coastal Plain and offers some excellent collecting. This would make an exciting place to try to hold an annual meeting one year - what do you members think ?

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