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southern lepidopterists' news



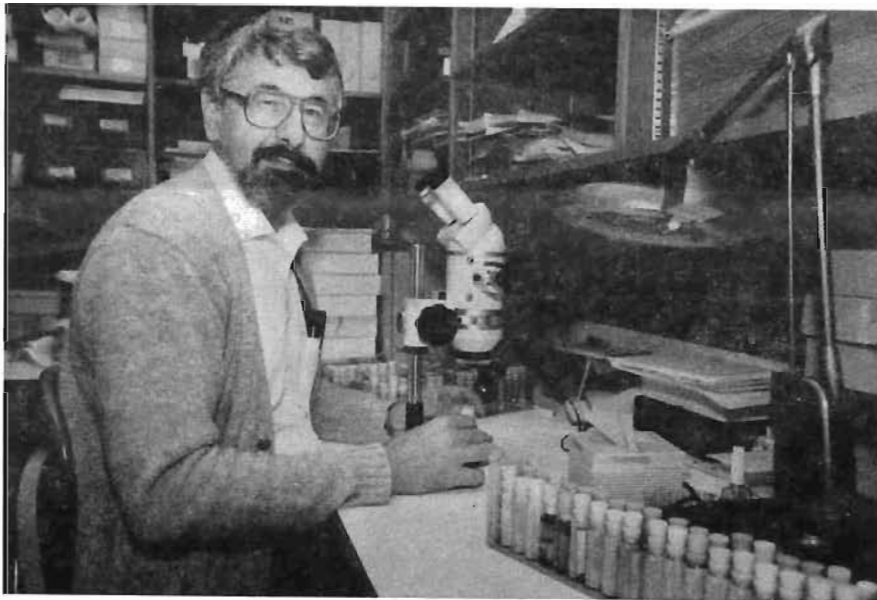

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THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTHERN LEPIDOPTERISTS' SOCIETY, ORGANIZED TO PROMOTE SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AND KNOWLEDGE RELATED TO UNDERSTANDING THE LEPIDOPTERA FAUNA OF THE SOUTHERN REGION OF THE UNITED STATES.

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DALE  
H.  
HABECK  
\*\*\*\*\*  
1987  
JOHN ABBOT  
AWARD  
RECIPIENT

OUR 1987 ABBOT AWARD WINNER was Dr. Dale Habeck, Professor and past Chairman of the Department of Entomology & Nematology at the University of Florida in Gainesville. I think we caught Dale by complete surprise, but again our members have selected an outstanding individual for recognition that is well-deserved. Here is a fellow who frequently makes many contributions behind the scenes without hoopla; ask any of his students, colleagues, and friends. Dale has also been a regular attendee of our past annual meetings. This year he was recovering from a back ailment when we held our meeting in Welaka, and Debbie Matthews, one of his students, actually accepted the award for him. (We are pleased to report that he is back up-to-par now!) Many of you will remember Dale as the primary organizer for the 1980 Lepidopterists' Society meeting in Gainesville. Since he missed his

chance to provide us with an acceptance speech at the meeting, we will allow him space later in the newsletter. Our heartiest and sincere congratulations, Dale!

#### GENERAL NOTICES & MEMBER REQUESTS

Rick Gillmore, 146 Clear Lake Circle, Sanford, FL 32771, will determine Catocala moths from anywhere within the Southern Lepidopterists' region free, as long as you'll pay postage.

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Simon Ellis, Transworld Butterfly Company, Apartado 6951, San José, Costa Rica, Central America : write for information regarding the new text, Butterflies of Costa Rica and Their Natural History. 330 pages covering most families with full life history information & foodplants, line-drawings of preadult stages, and all species are illustrated in color.

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Harry Pavulaan, P.O.Box 20202, Affton, St. Louis, MO 63123: Wants specimens and data regarding all eastern N.A. Celestrina species and forms for a major revision project. Will exchange specimens for Missouri butterflies or share data on northeastern lepidoptera. I can be reached by phone if preferred : (314) 638-4704.

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Tom Neal, Southern Lepidopterists' Secretary-Treasurer, 3820 NW 16th. Place, Gainesville, Florida 32605, pleads for your prompt response to the enclosed 1988 dues notice. Due to the nature of the recent publication schedule of the newsletter, we are reminded that NO notice was sent out during 1987, and our societal coffers are nearly bare after publication of this issue. We want to get quickly back on track in 1988, and have material ready to go, including future Bulletin subject material, but we can't publish without the funds. Since we are backlogged as is, no request is made of you for 1987 issues put out thus far, and we will be using up most of the remaining funds to get out this issue, but PLEASE help us get off on the right foot in 1988 - we hope to get out another issue by the end of March with your help! Definitely fill out the enclosed form ASAP.

#### 1987 ANNUAL MEETING REPORT FROM WELAKA - - Jeff Slotten

Members began arriving at the Welaka field station on Friday evening, Septemeber 18th., setting up light collecting equipment around the main compound area and also at several prime areas accessible only with generators nearby in the pine woodlands across from the main headquarters. Early arrivals had a good time exchanging ideas and collecting experiences, and talking about plans for the field trips. After lights were set up, members either ate supper at the compound or went to town. Moth collecting was not up to quite what we had hoped for, but we still caught a lot of specimens, in spite of some problems with the weather Friday evening.

On Saturday morning members met for breakfast, either fixing their own in the cabins or travelling the short distance to Welaka, and we met in the main compound area at 9:30 AM to depart on butterfly forays. Jeff Slotten led one group to San Mateo, and south down

SR 100 to Bunnell and Deland, with the primary objective to search for choice fall skippers; Dave Baggett remained at the compound to meet late arrivals and to lead them on trails around the IFAS preserve. Jeff's party fared well, and found many spots with Spanish Needles and other flowers to investigate, and several members found Euphyes berryi; general collecting for swallowtails and skippers was good. Intermittent showers plagued the group which remained at the compound, but most of this group was more interested in moths such as Schinia, which we more than made up for later that evening. Saturday night the area was really lit up; mercury vapor and black-light units seemed to be everywhere, and we all had a good time walking and driving around the property to examine sheets. Either the rains had helped or we were there just as many of the Schinia were beginning to emerge, and we collected lots of moths Saturday evening, though we saw surprisingly few Saturniids or Sphingids.

Attending the meeting were Lee Adair, Dave Baggett, Woody Dow, Dr. Frank Hedges, Rick Gillmore, Charles Stevens, Gina Brown, Debbie Matthews, John Watts; Marc, Maria, and Angie Minno; Dr. John Heppner and his wife and daughter; Tom and Leslie Neal; Jack Heinrich, Paul Pfenninger, Elaine Krueer, Dr. Mack Shotts (who made it all the way from Arkansas!), and Jeff Slotten. We had a good time socializing, which is always a high point of the meetings we have. At 7:00 PM on Saturday, we met in the banquet hall for our annual dinner, where we grilled hot dogs, ate potato salad and cole slaw, and enjoyed a few brews. Tom and Leslie Neal provided the food and beverages, and we thank Charlie Stevens, Gina Brown, Dave Baggett, and others who spent time on the grill helping out.

About 8:30 PM we departed for the meeting hall to conduct the annual business meeting, pass out door prizes, and enjoy slides. The meeting was called to order, where we received the Treasurer's report from Tom Neal, followed by discussion for plans for a 1988 meeting. Those in attendance favored possibilities for either North Carolina or Virginia in 1988. Members not in attendance are urged to contact Jeff with opinions, especially if they might be able to help out with lining up logistics for the next meeting. We'd like to have everything resolved by May, since we might try to hold the trek by July.

The Nominating Committee was then appointed, consisting of Charlie Stevens, Marc Minno, and Dave Baggett, to determine future officers. The last item of business was the presentation of the Abbot Award, which was given to Debbie Matthews to deliver to the ailing Dale Habeck, who was unable to attend.

This was followed by drawings for door prizes, which included some terrific books (Riley's Butterflies of the West Indies, Ellis' Butterflies of Costa Rica, Kimball's Lepidoptera of Florida, and many others.) We actually had more prizes than we had members! The meeting was capped off by a terrific slide presentation on the larvae of skippers by Marc Minno, which really captured everybody's attention. We hope he'll bring some more to a future meeting. After this, we all began making rounds of the blacklights, taking full advantage of the many moths on the sheets, and pointing out the Pterophoridae for Debbie, who's working on them for her Master's.

CURRENT ZONE REPORTS

ZONE I - TEXAS. Ed Knudson reports the following from his Texas moth survey work : At Double Lake, San Jacinto Co., 19 April '87, Archips magnoliana was taken as a new state record. At Bouton Lake in Jasper Co., he took the Geometrid Lytrosis sinuosa on 25 April for another state record. At Six Mile Creek, Sabine Co. on 21-22 May, he found excellent Catocala collecting, recording C. clintoni, C. grynea, C. ultronia, C. orba, C. andromedae, C. mira, C. pretiosa, and C. lincolnana, along with other noctuids which included Synedoida grandirena, Acronicta spinigera, A. hammamelis, Melanomma auricinctaria. Other notables included the tortricids Acleris maculidorsana (new state record), Archips infumatana, A. georgi, and the yponomeutid Y. multipunctella. He returned to Double Lake on 31 May, where another state record pyralid was found : Crambus bidens.

On June 5-6, he returned to Six Mile Creek, where he took Manduca jasminearum, a sphingid rarely taken in Texas, and added Catocala epione. Micro collecting was also good : Phaneta umbristriana (new state rec.), Sparganothis lamberti, Prochoreutis inflatella, and the gelechiids Stobisia iridipennella, Anacamptis tristictella, Dichomeris ochripalpella, D. offula, and D. kimballi.

He visited the Canadian, Hemphill Co. locality on June 25-26, where Catocala innubens, consors, meskei, amestris, abbreviatella, neogama, and minuta were taken, along with other noctuids Spartinophaga includens, Amphipoeia erepta, Melanchra picta, Ufeus plicatus (new SR), Lithacodia carneola (new SR), Zale rubiata, Schinia simplex, S. florida, and S. citrinella. Choice pyralids included Saucrobotys futillalis, Lygropia rivulalis (new SR), and Chrysendeton medicinalis; choice gelechiids were new state records in Symmetrischema plaesiosema, and Dichomeris aleatrix, and the oecophorid Aganopterix robinella (SR).

On 18 July he again collected at Six Mile Creek, where he got Cameraria macrocarpella, Acrocercops albinotella (Gracillariids), Menesta melanella (Oecophorid), and Coleophora atromarginata (Coleophorid).

ZONE II - ALABAMA, LOUISIANA, MISSISSIPPI, & TENNESSEE. Vernon Brou provided an updated listing of the Sesiid moths confirmed thus far from Louisiana : Pennisetia marginata, Paranthrene dolli, P. tabaniformis, Vitacea scepsiformis, Alcathoe caudata, Melittia cucurbitae, Synanthedon scitula, S. pictipes, S. rileyana, S. acerni, S. alleri, S. rubrofascia, S. decipiens, S. proxima, S. arkansasensis, S. exitosa, Podosesia syringae, Carmenta pyralidiformis, Vitacea polistiformis, Podosesia aureocincta, and Sannina uroceriformis.

Vernon donated most of his world-class Sphingid collection to the FSCA (Florida State Collection of Arthropods) in Gainesville recently, a collection of about 20,000 specimens representing well over 700 species. This is a collection many members may wish to view in the future. Members at the annual meeting also had the chance to scan Bernard D'Abrera's Sphingidae Mundi-Hawkmoths of the World, brought in by Dr. Hedges. This new text beautifully illustrates virtually all of the known Sphingid species in full color plates. The price (\$150.00) puts it beyond reach of many enthusiasts, and we thank Frank for sharing his copy with us in Welaka. This would be a "must-have" for any sphingid collector.

ZONE III - GEORGIA. Irving Finkelstein reported the passing of member and former coordinator Abner Towers on March 18, 1987 at the age of 71. Abner had been quite ill for the past few years, but his enthusiasm for lepidoptera never waned. He was a friend and colleague of the late Lucien Harris, author of Butterflies of Georgia, and well-known to many Georgia and Florida collectors, where his interests were largely concentrated. He was the first to collect Mitoura hesseli in Georgia, and many of his records are cited in Harris' text (1972). He was a charter member of the Southern Lepidopterists and the Lepidopterists' Society. Other notable captures included the Florida state record for Nyctelius nyctelius, taken on N. Key Largo on 10 May 1974, and his contribution with the discovery of the Georgia endemic Geometrid, Narraga georgiana Covell, Finkelstein, & Towers. Abner's personable nature and outgoing demeanor will be missed by his colleagues, and our deepest condolences are expressed to his family. His collection was willed to the FSCA in Gainesville, where it is now deposited as a lasting testimony to his endeavors as a field naturalist.

ZONE IV - FLORIDA. Dave Baggett reported a new Florida State Record taken in late May at Torreya State Park : Dasychira matheri, determined by Doug Ferguson with the comment that these represent the first capture outside of the type locality in Mississippi. Charles Stevens added several others to the Torreya State Park checklist, including Catocala praeclara and the Pterophorid Platyptilia car-  
duidactyla, the latter another new Florida SR. Baggett also reported the near-completion of master lepidoptera checklists for Suwannee River State Park, to be submitted to the Florida DNR, and also that Dennis Profant has his list for Blue Spring State Park nearly readied for publication in the J. Res. Lepid. Dave's new address is 309 SW 16th. Ave. #122, Gainesville, FL 32601. Marc Minno reported these interesting Florida records : the Florida state record for Antho-  
charis midea, March 1985, Porter Lake, Apalachicola National Forest, by Dave Ritland; the capture of a single specimen of typical Mitoura gryneus ( first for this phenotype in Florida, as all other specimens thus examined from the state, including a very typical sweadneri from Torreya State Park, are referable to the latter) in Liberty Co., just a few miles from the park. Neither of the examples demonstrates any blending characters so typical of other north Florida Lycaenid species. Another outstanding capture made by Marc includes Panoquin hecebokus on Key Largo. Baggett also noted that both Catocala and hairstreak collecting in the Withlacoochee State Forest was very poor in 1987, but was excellent in northern tier counties. A trip to McKethan Lake in September with Linda Fink and Lincoln Brower yielded two Megathymus cofaqui (both released), and Dave demonstrated how to locate tents and pupae of these interesting skippers. The geometrid Melanchroia chephise was netted at buttonbush flowers on the trip, a diurnal species not usually found very far from the coast. Gillmore reported excellent success with pheromones for Vitacea polistiformis near Sanford in October, while Baggett collected a series of Vitacea scepiformis at his back porch screen door with pheromones. Sesiids are incredible mimics of many wasp species, rarely caught without the use of pheromones or malaise traps. Woody Dow reported taking the noctuids Euscirrhopterus poeyi (Hamp.) and Caularis lunata Hamp. in the keys during the summer; the former is a new U.S. record.

ZONE V - SOUTH CAROLINA, NORTH CAROLINA, & VIRGINIA. Ron Gatreille commented that Eurytides marcellus is not generally common in coastal South Carolina due to the relative scarcity of its food plants. He had located a colony in Givhans Ferry St. Pk. during 1986 associated with common pawpaw, Asimina triloba, and re-visited the site on April 29th. and May 2nd. 1987, collecting two females from which about 90 ova were obtained for rearing. Most of the resulting larvae were of the dark phase, and about 60 pupae were eventually obtained. Three of the adults emerged in early June, and another three hatched in mid-July; the rest apparently are still diapausing. He noted that the SC coastal marcellus are identical phenotypically with peninsular Floridian marcellus. Unknown to many researchers is the University of Georgia PhD dissertation of member Jim Maudsley of Athens, GA completed in 1970 : "The Environmental Induction of Seasonal Polymorphism in the Zebra Swallowtail Butterfly, Graphium marcellus (Lepidoptera : Papilionidae)". This work has been missed by virtually all of the recent authorities, and is an important contribution to the understanding of the phenotypic shifts which take place in the Southeastern Coastal Plain. The most significant aspect of Jim's research was his recognition of the validity of Eurytides (Graphium) marcellus floridensis (Holland) as our SE subspecies, whereas most authorities have considered floridensis as a form name. We are confident that subsequent texts will acknowledge Jim's work, once it has been consulted. Part of the past confusion has been the additional forms applicable to spring, summer, and fall broods, while the major difference between nominate marcellus and floridensis is the consistent enlargement of the dark bands on the upper surface of the wings as demonstrated by the SE population in all broods. The material from other areas to the north and west appear almost white by comparison. Maybe Jim will provide a synopsis for us in a future issue of the NEWS, since it is not well-known. Clinal gradients between subspecific populations are commonplace among lepidoptera in the SE Coastal Plain region; because of the general lack of material from this region in major museum collections, many important details have either been missed or poorly understood by authorities. One of the hairstreaks, Fixenia (Euristrymon) favonius, formerly considered two separate species (favonius & ontario), has only recently been elucidated in Jim Scott's new text, but even Scott has missed many of the peninsular Floridian shifts. A most important problem needing resolve now is the exact status of Mitoura gryneus and its relationship with sweadneri, the latter felt by many to represent a distinct species based on genitalic differences and host plant preference, but felt by just as many others as merely the SE and peninsular Florida subspecies. The importance of our region to understanding the exact status of many butterflies and skippers is just beginning to be realized. This only serves to demonstrate the need to do much more collecting in the coastal Carolinas, Georgia, north Florida, and the southern portions of Alabama and Mississippi at present. Much of the limited amount of known material from this band in the SE is very strange in appearance, and this is the area where we all need to spend a LOT of field time and engage in rearing projects! It is amazing to realize the limited amount of attention given by lepidopterists to this area (in fact, far too little since John Abbot !)

[Ed. Note: Much of the above is solicited input from Dave Baggett.]

A New Food Plant Record for Papilio cresphontes in Florida :  
 Chinese Box Thorn (Severina buxifolia) ... Dave Baggett

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I recently observed a female Giant Swallowtail (Papilio cresphontes [Cramer]) ovipositing on Chinese Box Thorn, Severina buxifolia (Poir.) Ten., while returning from lunch. The plants were incorporated in an ornamental hedge mainly composed of boxwood, which lined the walkway leading to the Science Center Building on the University of South Florida campus in Tampa. I had never previously noticed these plants in the hedge, probably because of the superficial similarity to the boxwoods and the fact that the plants were kept well-trimmed by the grounds crew. The leaves of the plants are relatively small, and smell strongly of lemon when crushed; the stems also had a proliferation of thorny spikes. I really wasn't too surprised to learn that Severina belongs to the plant family Rutaceae when the identity was confirmed by a friend in the Botany Department.

I watched the female deposit 5 eggs, and marked the leaves to pick up on the way home that evening. The leaves with attached ova were placed in a Petri dish at home to await hatching; 2 of the 5 eggs eclosed 5 days later, while the remaining 3 were found to have been parasitized by minute wasps (probably Microgaster or Trichogramma, which I should have saved for ID but did not, unfortunately). Since I was gathering fresh leaves daily to take home to my larvae, I decided to conduct a curiosity-inspired study of the situation. None of the plants were more than four feet in height, and it was easy to examine the leaves for additional ova; during the next few weeks I located and followed what happened to 29 additional ova in the wild. Of these, only eight apparently hatched; the remainder were attacked by the egg parasites. Try as I might, I was baffled by the fact that I was never able to locate a single caterpillar on the plants, even though I detected what appeared to be chewing signs made by young larvae. The larvae at home did fine, reaching maturity in about 30 days, and producing perfect adults a week later.

During the course of my observations, I found that two different spp. of Polistes wasps were frequently seen exploring the Severina leaves, and that the hedge supported a thriving colony of Cuban Anole lizards (Anolis sagrei). Polistes wasps are notorious caterpillar hunters, and the lizards are very efficient insectivores. While I was never able to see either the wasps or lizards capture any cresphontes larvae, I suspect that both may be major predators at this location. I did see the Anoles catch and eat ants, flies, wasps, and a spider—quickly responding to anything which moved or landed in close proximity to their resting stations on the hedge plants or ground.

Conclusions from this simple study were (1) that a new host was confirmed for P. cresphontes via oviposition and rearing, and (2) that natural predation at this site was surprisingly high. I was also impressed by the fact that 3 of the original 5 ova had been located by egg parasites within 5 hours of deposition, and that they were very likely responsible for the death of 71% of the ova located in my study. (Those interested in the efficiency of egg predation might try gathering Megathymus ova, or ova of Manduca sexta on garden tomato plants.) I suppose I should add that 2 of the 34 succumbed to higher vertebrate predation as well, since two adults now reside in my collection as vouchers for the new host record.

WINGING AWAY : We regretfully announce the passing of several other members during 1986-87 as follows :

Charles F. Zeiger, best known as Chuck to his many friends, died in his sleep peacefully last spring. Chuck had been a Charter member of the Southern Lepidopterists as well as one of our most active participants, attending most of our meetings. He first developed interest in butterflies as a youth in Missouri, something he nurtured throughout his adult life. He was a long-time Research Associate for the FSCA, where his collection has been deposited; many of his more notable records are given in Kimball's 1965 text, Lepidoptera of Florida.

André Blanchard, the 1985 John Abbot Award recipient from the Southern Lepidopterists, and first honorary LIFE MEMBER, died on September 17, 1986 at the age of 90. His contributions to the study of lepidoptera are summarized by Roy Kendall (J. Lepid. Soc. 41:219-237, 1987). His field activities had been severely curtailed in recent years, but he continued to publish notes and new descriptions through 1986, especially in conjunction with his protégé, Ed Knudson. Few have enjoyed such a productive life in terms of contributions to the study of lepidoptera, and he will also be sorely missed by his many friends and colleagues.

John Wilkie, a regular at many of our past annual meetings, often driving substantial distances to attend, died on June 28, 1986. It was always a pleasure to meet and talk with John, and he shared many of his outstanding slides with members at our meetings. He had developed a nearly complete slide collection of Michigan butterflies, all taken in wild poses, which he had hoped to eventually portray in a text. His loss before completion of that project is tragic; he does, however, leave us with many pleasant memories.

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