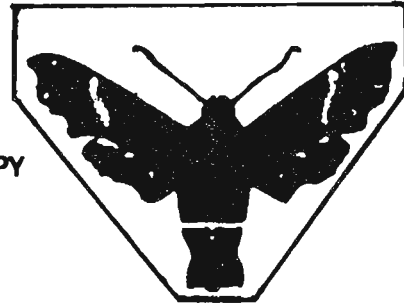


southern lepidopterists'



news



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JANUARY 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

The twenty persons attending the charter meeting in Gainesville, Florida on November 18, 1978 voted and decided to become known as the Southern Lepidopterists, thus officially initiating the formation of the new organization. In attendance were members from Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina. Dr. Frank Mead of the Division of Plant Industry served as the official host for the group, and also present was Captain Younger of the Florida DNR Division of Recreation and Parks, who proved very helpful in interpretations of proposed guidelines for permits to be used occasionally on Florida parks. Charter certificates are being prepared for the members in attendance and for those accepting nominations to structure positions within the group.

It was decided that we annually select a Chairman-Editor, a Secretary-Treasurer, and six Zone Coordinators who will function as leaders for their respective sectional areas and as a Board of Advisors to assist the Chairman. Also, it was determined that we should designate or recognize records keepers for Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and (tentatively) the Deep South. The elected officers and leaders are as follows :

Chairman-Editor Dave Baggett
Secretary-Treasurer Tom Neal
Zone I Coordinator Abner Towers
Zone II Coordinator Ron Gatrelle
Zone III Coordinator Chuck Zeiger
Zone IV Coordinator Steve Roman
Zone V Coordinator Terry Dickel
Zone VI Coordinator Bryant Mather

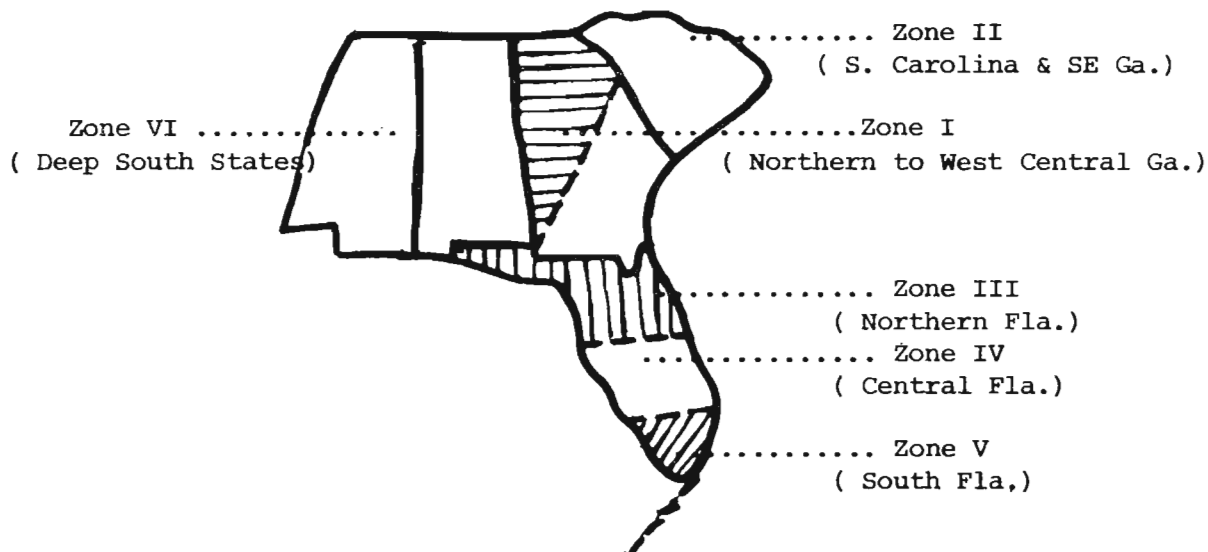
Florida Record Keeper Charles P. Kimball
South Carolina Record Keeper Ron Gatrelle
Georgia Record Keepers Irving Finkelstein, Hermann Flaschka, D. Baggett
Deep South Record Keeper Bryant Mather

The approved goals of the Southern Lepidopterists include :

- (a) To jointly pursue the scientific interest in the Lepidoptera of our region; i.e., new host plant and rearing information, parasite and predator information, migratory behavior, life history investigations, and conservation of rare species.
- (b) To aid in the development and accumulation of records indicating flight seasons and zoogeography.
- (c) To promote the general knowledge of our Lepidoptera fauna.
- (d) To develop and maintain updated state checklists of regional Lepidoptera.
- (e) To provide tips on observing, collecting, rearing, preserving, spreading, and photographing, etc.
- (f) To cooperate whenever possible with State or Federal Park or Agricultural authorities, providing information on distribution, economic pests, parasites, host plants, and advice on management.
- (g) To develop our own specialists in the field of Lepidopterology.
- (h) To improve communications within our region and to facilitate meeting others sharing an interest in the Lepidoptera.
- (i) To establish an annual meeting for selection of necessary officers and to allow for the presentation of papers or other new information.
- (j) To set forth quarterly field trips on a sectional basis to gather data and specimens.

Persons collecting or observing within a respective zone are to make the results known to the respective Zone Coordinator, who will in turn make a report on a quarterly basis of combined activities for incorporation into the News. Our newsletter will be known as the Southern Lepidopterists' News, and will include editorial commentary and letters to the editor, zone reports and planned activities, research requests and trade information, notes of interest and tips, a conservation column, new state or county records, a new member listing with address and the interests, and a short section dealing with how to become a member.

In time perhaps we will develop a journal, but at this time it is best to see just what happens with the group and continue to utilize the existing journals for publication of research papers. It is our desire to fully cooperate with the other existing groups, and to aid researchers when possible. The zones established at the charter meeting are shown below, and may be subject to annual reworking to accomodate everyone in the region. Hopefully we will add to the states of South Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana, in terms of future interest and members.



The respective Zone Coordinators will submit reports and a brief outline of planned activities each quarter, one month prior to publication of the News. Unless Bryant Mather winds up with a few more active members in Zone VI, we will rely on his reports and knowledge for the present. Any members collecting in Zone VI should get the information to Bryant for incorporation. On occasion, we may decide to hold a few joint trips between members of one or more Zones, largely to facilitate getting to know each other better, learning aspects of different habitats, and increasing general knowledge through shared experiences. Are there any comments regarding joint trips ?

Permit restrictions for use on Florida State Parks were discussed at the charter meeting, and a complete summation of these will be in the March issue. These will apply primarily to members in Zones III, IV, & V. An effort will be made to begin developing checklists of butterflies for parks which coincide with our activities, along with information on the status and host plants, as part of a cooperative venture with the Florida Department of Natural Resources Division of Recreation and Parks. Our thanks to Major Jim Stevenson, Chief Naturalist, for helping develop the proposed guidelines, and for the interest he has shown in learning more about the butterflies of Florida, and in demonstrating concern for threatened or endangered species. Nearly everyone shares an aesthetic appreciation for butterflies, while few besides Lepidopterists actually know much about the status and habits of these interesting insects. By sharing such information, perhaps we can aid in developing informed management practices or perhaps assist in saving habitat necessary for survival of the rarer species.

Members present at the charter meeting were Ron Gattelle, Irving Finkelstein, Joe Patterson, John Watts, Frank Mead, Nell Backus, Susanne Dyby, Steve Roman, Tom Neal, Chuck Zeiger, Lee Adair, Roger Heitzman, Bob Belmont, Ben Gregory, Dale Habeck, Charlie Stevens, Jeff Slotten, and myself. Also present were Capt. Younger (Assistant Naturalist, Florida DNR), and Ken Cruickshank (Florida Times-Union). Other charter members include Howard Weems, Bryant Mather, Terry Dickel, Abner Towers, Hermann Flaschka, and Charles Kimball.

On Sunday, November 19th., remaining members decided to visit several locales around the perimeter of Newman's Lake near Gainesville, led by Jeff Slotten. The area near Windsor proved extremely dry, as did Hatchet Creek, and little was seen at either site. However, along the edge of the lake, we found several good stands of Bidens (Spanish Needles) in bloom, and the group recorded Polites vibex, Lerema accius, Atalopedes campestris, Hylephila phyleus, Poanes aaroni howardi, Urbanus proteus, U. dorantes, Vanessa atalanta, Agraulis vanillae nigrior, Heliconius charitonius tuckeri, Precis coenia, Phyciodes phaon & P. tharos, Copaeodes minima, Erynnis horatius, Phoebis sennae eubule, Eurema daira, E. lisa, E. nicippe, Danaus plexippus, Euptychia hermes sosybia, Lethe portlandia (surprisingly fresh and abundant for the time of year), Atlides halesus, and Calycopis cecrops (including several aberrations with wide yellow marginal markings). We also checked the lakes in the Hawaiian Village complex in Gainesville for Poanes viator, which Chuck Zeiger had found there earlier in the month, but apparently the brood had ended just prior to our visit; we did get to learn the host plant, Giant Cut Grass (Zizania sp.), which Chuck pointed out to the rest of us. The grass showed signs of heavy larval damage, but in spite of some careful searching, only a few spent pupal casings were found. Also seen around Newman's Lake were the moths Cosmosoma myrodora and Ciseps fulvicollis, both daytime fliers and fairly common. In the Gainesville area we saw several Phoebis philea ; the reports for P. philea and H. c. tuckeri are encouraging since both species have been scarce in northern Florida for the past several seasons.

John Watts brought several larvae of Fenisica tarquinius, the Harvester Butterfly, to show around at the meeting. These proved interesting to everyone present, since the larvae are carnivorous and are seldom found in the wild. John, Ron Gattelle, and I visited the Jacksonville colony (which John found) prior to the meeting, and found adults, larvae, and a pupa. John has since informed me that he has located several pupa amid the Woolly Alder Aphids on which the larvae feed, giving some evidence as to where and how the larvae select pupation sites. Such observations are what we are interested in, as they help clarify the life histories of species which are at best poorly known. Apparently the Harvester Butterfly has few, if any, larval parasites. However, certain ant and wasp species seek out the Aphids for their honeydew secretions, and in all probability would kill the larvae if found. The Aphids themselves mimic a fungal growth on the Alders. F. tarquinius is rarely encountered in Florida, being extremely local and apparently preferring damp woods. It is most frequently found near water, as are the Alders upon which the larval hosts exist.

Another note of interest is the apparent range extension of Urbanus dorantes, which has become well established in south Florida in recent years, and in the vicinity of Gainesville. This season dorantes was very common in the northeastern Florida counties, with a number of new reports. Chuck Zeiger and I visited Kingsland (Camden County, Georgia) in early December and found it relatively common on Bidens. It is quite probable that dorantes has made it at least as far north as Savannah this season with the relatively mild fall. Georgia and South Carolina members should be on the lookout for it next spring and especially next fall. On the wing it is hard to tell from U. proteus, but at rest on flowers it holds its wings vertically upright as opposed to proteus, which generally rests with the wings open to expose the greenish scaling. It also seems to prefer the edge of woods rather than open areas.

It appears that we have a solid nucleus of people to begin with, and can look forward to making things happen constructively next season by working together and learning from one another. Hopefully we can collectively begin to make some dents in some of the poorly known aspects of the life histories by next season. There is much to be learned, even in many of the major families. Membership fees are set at \$3.00 annually for the quarterly newsletter (4 pages) to cover costs of mailing and printing. Any excesses which develop will be used towards possible group publications or as small research grants to aid members. Dues should be made payable to the Southern Lepidopterists in the form of check or money order, and mailed c/o Tom Neal, 1416 N.W. 2nd. Street, Gainesville, Florida, 32601, prior to January 31, 1979. The first actual News will be sent out in March, and membership lists will follow.

It is with real sadness that I must inform you of the death of one of the charter members, Joe Patterson of Atlanta, a victim of a highway accident in Alabama. Joe had been selected as the Zone I Coordinator at the meeting ; Abner Towers agreed to take over for Joe under the most regrettable of conditions. This is a great loss to us all, and to the study of southeastern Lepidoptera. A full obituary will appear in the March News, in tribute to Joe's activities as a naturalist and Lepidopterist.