

southern lepidopterists'



news



VOLUME 1; NO. 2

JUNE 1979

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

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7TH ZONE ADDED TO THE SOUTHERN LEPIDOPTERISTS

The state of Louisiana has been added to the Southern Lepidopterists as our seventh zone, and the Zone Coordinator for this area will be Mr. Vernon A. Brou, Rt. 1, Box 74, Edgard, Louisiana 70049. We are pleased to add Louisiana to our listings, and welcome one of the south's more knowledgeable Lepidopterists to our midst. Vernon has been devoting much of his time in recent years towards developing a thorough checklist of Lepidoptera known to occur in Louisiana. His own special interest group is Sphingids of the world, and his collection includes over 16,000 of these interesting moths. I'm certain Vernon will be glad to correspond with those sharing interests in Sphingidae.

He provided an extensive list of the material in his collection, as well as distributional information and flight periods for those species known from Louisiana, as well as lists for Noctuids and butterflies. We look forward to hearing his reports and to hearing from others in his area, and to being posted on progress with his work. Those of you who have collecting information which you feel may be useful to Vernon as he compiles his list and data should contact him with the information.

We are still a long way from even beginning to work towards some of the goals expressed, and Tom and I have been kept busy trying to keep up with the new member list, which seems to change every time we turn around, making the list a continual revisional process. A deadline for the membership list has been set as July 1st, 1979. We have more than doubled our original member list, and already have more than 100 members, many from outside the original Zone areas. We are pleased by the response received, and if you for some reason have not received the complimentary issue and the March issue, please notify the editor. Some of you will receive all three with this issue. Please accept my apology for any delay. Future issues will contain a new member section, and will be kept current. The News will be published around the middle of March, June, September, and December. All entries should be sent to the editor by the 1st of those months for inclusion.

MOTH COLLECTING AT SERVICE STATIONS ALONG INTERSTATES

(Ben Gregory, Jr., Dept. of Entomology and Nematology, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL. 32611) Service stations along interstates are good places to collect moths. The lights of these stations attract moths, although it is possible that one or more species could be attracted to semiochemicals present in gasoline or oil.

This year (1979) I began collecting Saturniidae on February 14 at the following I-75 exits : state highway 329 (Micanopy), and state highway 318 (Irvine, Orange Lake). On neither February 14 or 15 did I find any Saturniids, but on ten nights between February 16 and March 13 I collected 36 Actias luna and 6 Antheraea polyphemus, most of which were in excellent shape. In general, I collected between the hours of 7:00 pm and 10:00 pm and spent about 20 minutes at each exit.

The more isolated service stations appear to yield the greatest quantities of moths, both in numbers and species. Also, certain stations are particularly productive, and this seems related to the type of habitat and quantity of vegetative growth around these stations.

I've used the technique successfully during the past three years, and credit learning this procedure to Dr. L. N. Brown of the University of South Florida.

Editor's note : Also overlooked as prime collecting spots for moths are isolated buildings such as schools, warehouses, convenience stores, etc, as well as lights along rural roads, especially those which utilize mercury vapor lamps. If you plan to check such areas with regularity, it is advisable to obtain written permission from the owners or proper authorities, as this could save you some embarrassment with local law enforcement officers. Did you ever try explaining to a policeman that you were catching moths around some building in the middle of the night ? Charlie Stevens, Denny Currutt, Rick Gilmore, David Ivey and I can attest that this is not necessarily as funny as it sounds, and I'm sure others have had similar experiences !

Another productive technique for collecting Sphingidae is ignored by many Lepidopterists; this is collecting over flowers in the evening or at dawn. Prime times are at dusk, the period between 10:00 and 12:00 pm, and at morning twilight. This is usually more effective than using UV for many Sphingids (not all.)

Excellent flower attractants in Florida include cultivated petunias and periwinkles, moonflowers (Calonyction), morning glories (Ipomoea), trumpet vine (Campis radicans), Japanese honeysuckle (Lonicera japonica), yellow jasmine (Gelsemium), Lantana, Plumbago, and Phlox. In addition, you can collect species such as Amphion nessus, Hyles lineata, Hemaris gracilis, and Hemaris thysbe over flowers such as pennyroyal (Pycnanthemum), thistles (Cirsium), or pickerel - weed (Pontederia) with some regularity during daylight hours.

A note from Charlie Covell indicates the Kentucky group enjoyed a fine spring outing, recording 29 butterfly species, including Celastrina ebenina, G. lygdamus, and P. virginensis. He also reported that he is now working in the Pylaloides for the Field Guide, and provided a list of Florida species he felt would be of interest, including probable state records for the following : Euerythra trimaculata (Everglades National Park, 10 May 1972); Pticodis carolina (Ft. Walton Beach, 6 Aug. 1967, leg. Terry Dickel); Leptostales rubromarginaria (Hastings, Fla., in USNM); Tetracis cachexiata (Brooksville, Fla., 18 June 1937); and Calledapteryx dryoptera (Royal Palm Hammock, 4 April 1967 and Collier-Seminole State Park, 12 April 1966.)

CURRENT ZONE REPORTS AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES

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

Several spring trips to Cooper Creek did not produce anything spectacular, but Irving Finkelstein did report locating several stands of Aruncus dioicus, the host plant for Celastrina ebenina. However, a scouting trip to SW Georgia did produce a new state record : on 7 April, Abner Towers and Irving combined efforts to net a specimen of Callophrys hesseli at the junction of Ga. highway 127 and Whitewater Creek in Taylor County. C. gryneus was also reported out during the same period.

Finkelstein reported that Nymphalis antiopa seemed more common than usual in northern Georgia this season, and took his first in the Atlanta area in nine years. (This is not considered a common insect in either Georgia or Florida ; Frank Mead told me he found one in the DPI light trap in Gainesville, Fla. last season, a most unusual surprise!)

Irving informed me that Lucien Harris, author of Butterflies of Georgia, is continuing to slip in health. This venerated southern naturalist is now in his 80's.

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

Ron reported that John Hyatt visited Edisto Island in Colleton County 9-13 April and found several C. henrici ssp. for a new county record. Hyatt and Charles Watson found a colony of Poanes viator near Brunswick, Ga. en route to Florida on 12 May; these were still out on the return trip, according to Denny Currutt and Leroy Koehn. Denny and Leroy stopped at the Savannah River Wildlife Refuge Area in Jasper County, S.C. on 19 May and found the spring brood of Problema bulenta on the wing; they also found Panhiades m-album and E. favonius at Mt. Pleasant, Charleston Co. the same day.

On 26 May Edmund Taylor and Jim Stiver came down from upstate S.C. to collect and photograph specimens; S. kingi was out in the Mt. Pleasant area, as was S. calanus, but E. favonius was just about gone for the season. Ed and Jim also found several fresh S. liparops on 27 May, and Ed got some nice pictures of E. favonius, S. kingi, S. calanus, C. gemma, and Asterocampa alecia to boot.

Ron suggests that those interested in the August brood of P. bulenta to contact him prior to August first, as he knows several locations where it can be found in numbers. Hesperia meskei, H. attalus, and Megathymus harrisi could also be looked for in Aiken County, S.C.

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

Spring and early summer collecting was excellent in NE Florida this season, probably due to high local interest and above normal rainfall. Roger Heitzman reported good mothing at Manatee Springs, Levy County on 24 March, with his best catch being Cerma cora, the second reported from Florida, and probably the southernmost capture for the species. Roger will be working at the Smithsonian Institute this summer as he continues to study the Geometridae as he works toward his PhD.

Visitor Robert Denno from the University of Maryland located what may well be Florida's strongest colony of Callophrys niphon on 17 March along Road 75 leading to Lake Delancey in Putnam County, the southernmost record for the species. The niphon were in association with Pinus clausa (Sand Pine), and were found at mud puddles and visiting Lyonia blossoms. (niphon is considered an excellent find in Florida, generally quite rare, though C. n. niphon was described from the state!)

Other good reports included C. henrici margaretae (Gainesville, Alachua Co., Tom Neal, plus two new Jacksonville colonies found by John Watts and Baggett); the first spring records for Euphyes dukesi in Florida (Jacksonville, 29 May, Jeff Slotten & 6 June, Watts); Poanes yehl, (a number of males between 29 May & 14 June on the UNF campus, Slotten, Watts, Charlie Stevens); Atrytone arogos & Amblyscirtes alternata (Slotten & Stevens, 26 May, Sampson, St. Johns Co.) ; Autochton cellus, (Gainesville, April, Slotten & Ichetucknee Springs, Columbia Co., 21 April, Watts,); Hesperia meskei, H. attalus seminole, and Euphyes berryi, (12 May, Sampson, St. Johns Co., Currutt, Koehn, & Baggett,); Satyrium l.liparops, (May, Gainesville, Slotten & 29 May and 6 June, UNF campus, Jacksonville, Baggett,); Megathymus cofaqui, (22 April, Torreya State Park, Liberty Co., Baggett,) Euphyes dion alabamiae, (UNF campus, 6 June, Watts,); and Feniseca tarquinius, (3 June, Sampson, Watts, Slotten.)

Some fine moths included E. achemon & E. pandorus, (21 April, Gainesville, Slotten,); H. cecropia, Gainesville & Sampson, mid April, Slotten,); C. securifera, (18 April, Jacksonville, Baggett,) Hemaris gracilis, (28 April, Sampson, Baggett); C. angulifera, P. astylus, C. amyntor, S. abbotti, & C. sepulchralis, (Schweitzer & Baggett, 20-23 April, Torreya State Park); Deidamia inscriptum, normally a rather good find in Florida, appeared in swarms this spring, and was reported from Liberty, Jefferson, Duval, Clay, and Alachua Counties during late March and early April. Neal referred to them as a nuisance in his Gainesville light trap, and larvae were so abundant at Torreya in April that virtually all grapevines on the park were completely stripped (Baggett, Weems, & Schweitzer, 20-23 April). Rick Gilmore found the larvae on persimmon shrubs on the park as well, and the larvae could be seen wandering about in all quarters of the park.

Terry Dickel, Baggett, Watts, Stevens, & Zeiger made an early trip to Torreya in April and we all enjoyed a great mothing excursion. Three UV setups provided an almost constant array of all sorts of insects.

Larvae gathered from Hawthorne (Crataegus) yielded prize Catocala moths, including C. orba, C. miranda, & C. grisatra, found on Torreya trips. Larvae of C. minuta were found abundant on Water Locust at Shell Bluff Landing, Flagler Co., by Zeiger, Baggett, Stevens, & Watts on 24 March. The period from June through August is productive for daytime searching for Catocala adults in many wooded areas, especially for the hickory feeders. This provides a good excuse to get out when many butterfly species are gone for the season or are between broods. Look for general mothing to pick up by early July, particularly for species such as Eacles imperialis, Citheronia regalis, and the Anisota species. July is also a good time to look for the second brood of A. cellus in north Florida.

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

Steve, Rick Gilmore, & David Ivey all enjoyed good success at locating Catocala larvae during the March-April period, including C. clintoni (on Prunus & Crataegus, both new host plants,) C. piatrix (on Carya,) C. alabamiae (on Crataegus,) C. consors (on Carya floridana,) and C. amestris (on Amorpha.)

Dr. Dale Schweitzer and Baggett dropped by for a conference of sorts to discuss Catocala moths. Schweitzer had been down for a week's visit to learn more about how to locate larvae of these moths, and his trip was a big success; he is one of the curators at Yale University's Peabody Museum of Natural History, and at present is engaged in the revision of the tribe Lithophanini commonly referred to as winter Noctuids, particularly of the genera Chaetagnalea & Metaxagnalea. Steve took some color pictures of the encounter, but the printer wanted black & white; we had hoped to have at least one included in this issue. We'll see what we can do for next time.

Ivey did well with Spingids from his Geneva, Fla. back yard ; he got Isoparce cupressi, C. amyntor (perhaps a southern limit record, Seminole Co.), and E. achemon among many others. I stopped by for a visit on 7 April, and he was waiting for a batch of Megathymus yuccae buchholzi to emerge; earlier that day I found that C. henrici margaretae was still out in numbers at the Deland locality off SR 44.

Gilmore & Roman reported finding larvae of D. versicolor on Buttonbush (Cephalanthus) near the henrici colony in Volusia County. A note from Leland Martin in Ohio indicated he had found a female Phyciodes frisia near Eustis in Lake County on 24 October 1962, pretty far north for this bug in general, and probably an unreported county record.

In general, not much in the way of butterfly excitement this spring, although Lee Adair found his first M. cofaqui near Tampa in April, and reported several other species from the Tampa area. Slotten and Roman visited the Withlacoochie State Forest near Brooksville and found S.l.liparops out in good numbers during late April.

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

The SL spring trip during 14-18 May was a great success, though we recorded fewer species than last season, and neither P. a. ponceanus nor P. androgeus were seen. Denny Currutt, Leroy Koehn, John Hyatt, Charles Watson, John Watts, Charlie Stevens, and Dave Baggett made the trip. Leland Martin, Chuck Zeiger, & Charlie Covell cancelled plans at the last minute due to business conflicts - but, there's always next year! Terry was suffering from a bout with the flu, so the rest of us split into two groups and checked out a number of localities in Broward, Dade, & Monroe Counties.

The group recorded around 80 butterflies this season, including Marpesia petreus, S. stelenes, P. frisia, E. zestos, P. pigmalion okeechobee, P. leo, E. tatila tatilista, H. meskei, E. palatka, S. acis bartrami, S. columella, S. martialis, E. dina helios, and P. statira. The best catches were Chlorostrymon maesites, (Stock Island,) Tmolus azia, (Homestead,) and Electrostrymon angelia, (four localities in three counties, Stock Island, Homestead, Miami, and Ft. Lauderdale.) Pieris protodice was seen on Key Largo, and is not commonly seen in Monroe County.

Several of us tried some mothing over flowers of Lantana on Key Largo, and in spite of the hordes of mosquitoes, managed to get Xylophanes pluto, X. tersa, C. grotei, Halisidota mia, several species of Melipotis, some nice Pyralids, and one Lois lorina.

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

Bryant has been really moving around lately, largely with business trips, but reported that Rick Kergosian had sent him some 1400 moths to check over, which will keep him busy for a while when he can get to them. He has good reason to believe that certain populations of E. ontario, S. liparops, and E. dion alabamae might warrant a close look by someone with the time, interest, and material for comparison, with the possibility that some of these could be written up. If you are interested, Bryant will provide the material.

A possible new state record involves a female Callosamia securifera taken by Charles Bryson near Tupelo in Lee County, determined by Eric Quinter. However, there seems to be some disagreement at this point, and we'll wait for the final word. The host plant certainly occurs in enough places in Mississippi for this moth to occur, and it has been taken in Alabama, so the probability is good. However, there is considerable variation between both Callosamia angulifera & C. securifera, and both species are quite similar.

A note from Marvyn Betsch of Fernandina Beach reminded me to mention the annual Xerces Society 4th of July butterfly count, patterned after the Audobon Society's annual Christmas bird count. The actual date is not held firm, and the idea is to monitor an area annually to detect changes in both the local habitat and the butterfly populations involved. Those of you interested can contact Jerry Powell, c/o Department of Entomology, University of California, Berkeley, California 94720, the Butterfly Count Coordinator. You can contact Joan DeWind, Briggs Hill Road, Sherman, Connecticut 06784 for additional information concerning the Xerces Society and its functions.

Had a visit from Richard Boscoe & Frank Fee from State College, PA. during mid-March and we got out in the field in Duval, Clay, and St. Johns Counties ; Richard & Frank both specialize in rearing Lycaenidae, and I was quite impressed with their techniques. They generally collect a few females, confine them in specially constructed containers with suspected host plants, feed the adults regularly, and expose them to adequate sunlight to induce oviposition. During their trip they managed ova from C. henrici margaretae, C. gryneus swadneri, Chlorostrymon s. simaethis (Monroe Co.), Strymon martialis (they found larvae or ova on both Florida Trema (Trema micrantha) and Bay Cedar (Suriana maritima), and Strymon acis bartrami (Big Pine Key). They plan to document the life history of the latter on Croton linearis. Frank also managed to get ova from Hesperia meskei on Aristida purpurescens from the Big Pine Key colony. Hats off to a fine effort by these two! They also had tried unsuccessfully with Atlides halesus, but at last word were generally quite successful with the larvae with the exception of H. meskei. We hope to hear more of their efforts with other species from other areas in the future, and it is planned to include a description of their containers and techniques in the next issue.

I had a brief note from John Coffman earlier this spring, a little late for including in the Lep. Society Season Summary, mentioning that he had taken Erebus odora and Catocala alabamiae last season near his Timberville, Virginia home. He provided a list of several other good bugs as well. John is a printer by profession, and made the charter certificates for the original members of the group. He is also quite an accomplished wildlife photographer, and does a lot of pictures of life histories as he rears things.

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