

North
American
Butterfly
Association



Photo by
Dennis Dunlap
"Queen" butterfly
taken in Phoenix, AZ

West Michigan Butterfly Association

West Michigan Blues

May 2011

http://www.glsqa.org/wmba/wmba_org.htm

Holli Ward, President

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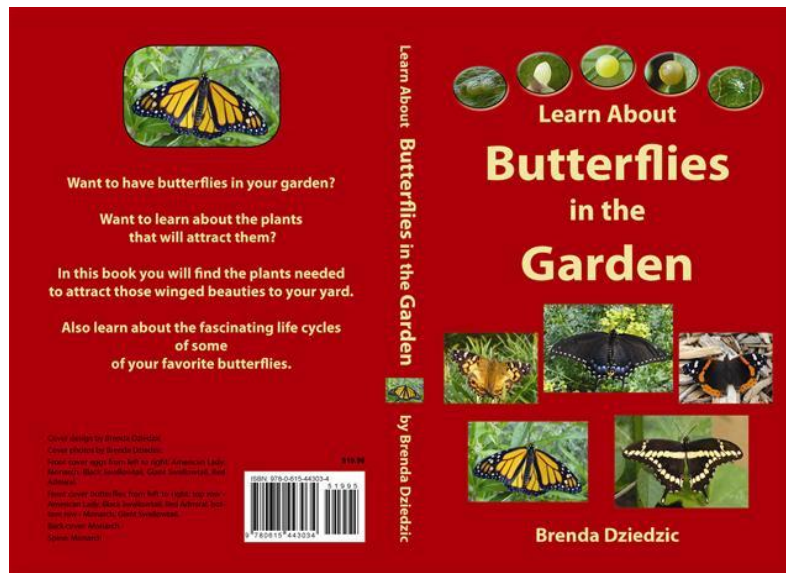
From the President

By: Holli Ward

In the last newsletter, I asked for a bit of feedback. I was surprised at how little I received. I did have one person say that they did think we should try to bolster our roster numbers, and suggested a venue to do this. I would like to see others step forward with activities or meeting ideas. I'd also love to have a few of you submit an article or two about what you like best in regards to this group. Do you have suggestions about how to catch a perfect photo of beautiful butterfly? Are you willing to share a few paragraphs about your favorite butterfly or moth? Where do you go when you want to see the most butterflies?

I fear that these newsletters will be short and repetitive without a bit of help from you – the members. As always, please feel free to send me a message or article at holli@michiganbutterflies.com.

Learn About Butterflies in the Garden



Learn About Butterflies in the Garden by Brenda Dziedzic is a book that covers 33 butterflies from egg to adult, with over 240 color pictures. The book shows the range of which these butterflies have been seen. Learn the plants needed for the butterflies to lay their eggs on and how to raise them.

The book is \$19.95 plus tax and shipping. It can be purchased at www.ButterfliesInTheGarden.com. It will be available by May 11.

Brenda Dziedzic, President
Southeast Michigan Butterfly Association
1263 Springer St.
Westland, MI 48186-3721
(734) 326-0578
www.ButterfliesInTheGarden.com

Monarch Population Status

Reprinted from Monarch Watch

By: Chip Taylor

I've been monitoring the reports of returning monarchs quite closely this spring. The pattern of the return this year is similar to that seen in 2006 but more exaggerated, with more monarchs moving into the mid latitudes (35-42N) than in any previous April (see Journey North's first sighting reports). As I pointed out last spring on our email discussion list and in a text written for our [May 2006 email update](#), such early arrivals at more northerly latitudes are not necessarily a good thing. If these butterflies arrive when the milkweeds are above ground and abundant followed by temperatures that allow for normal development of eggs, larvae and pupae – all is well. But, all isn't well this year. Monarchs arrived in our area (38.97N) in good numbers on the 10th of April with egg laying noted from the 10th through the 15th with some additional eggs on the 18th and later. Milkweeds were scarce -being found in gardens, burned over areas and the edges of roads. Milkweed sprouts in fields were not up or were hidden beneath grasses and weeds. Unfortunately, the temperatures have been colder than normal and none of the hundreds of milkweed stems I've surveyed have shown signs of larval feeding even though most of these plants had eggs at one time. At this writing – 26 April – it appears that most of this early reproduction won't be successful. If so, moving into the mid latitudes earlier than normal will not contribute substantially to population growth this year. In short, it would have been better had these monarchs laid these eggs further south where temperatures were more favorable for growth and development.

In addition to watching the pattern of the returning butterflies, I monitor other conditions – temperature, rainfall, drought, abundance of fire ants, etc., as they play out each month of the breeding season. As you've heard from me before, Texas is key. For the monarchs to have a good year, the conditions in Texas for the first generation have to be favorable. If they are, the population grows, as it did last year. If unfavorable, as they have been in a number of years such as 2004, the population declines. Conditions in Texas this spring have been hot and dry – a significant drought. Milkweeds have been abundant and nectar seems to have been available in most locations but due to high winds and temperatures monarchs just kept moving. The result is that monarchs are not off to a good start and the prospects that the population will rebound in the summer months are getting slimmer each day.

At the end of March, I was saying that the population this coming winter would be no greater than 5 hectares due to conditions in Texas. In contrast, at the end of March in 2010 it was quite clear that the population was going to increase and the only question was by how much; it more than doubled from 1.92 to 4.02. It now appears that the 5-hectare prediction was too optimistic. Four hectares (4.02 last year) is possible but not too likely. If the long-range forecasts for the northern breeding areas are accurate, and they have been recently, the prospect for producing a large monarch population in and north of the corn belt is not great. In fact, the population could drop back to 2009 numbers (1.92 hectares), if the summer is as cold as forecast.

In a week or more – weather permitting – first generation monarchs from Texas should begin migrating through this area to colonize the northern breeding areas. The numbers reaching these northern habitats is largely a function of reproduction in Texas and the weather conditions in May. Reproduction in Texas has yet to play out in numbers, but if past seasons are a good measure, the number moving northward should be less than expected based on the size of the overwintering population. Below normal temperatures are projected for May, which, if true, would limit the number of monarchs reaching the milkweed patches throughout the northern breeding area and ultimately the size of the fall migratory population. While we can hope that the long-range forecasts are wrong, and that reproduction will be higher than I’m envisioning, the prospects – at this date – favor a migration that will result in an overwintering population of 2-4 hectares.

We can’t do anything about the physical conditions that drive the monarch population but we can provide the milkweed and nectar resources they need – PLANT MILKWEED!

2011 Calendar of Events

May 7, 2011	1:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Spring Ephemerals	Kent City, MI
June 23-26, 2011		Lepidopterists’ Society Meeting	New Haven, CT
July 2, 2011	9:00 AM	Butterfly Count	Fennville, MI
July 4, 2011	9:00 AM	Butterfly Count	Kent City, MI
July 5, 2011	9:30 AM	Butterfly Count	Saginaw, MI
July 6, 2011	9:00 AM	Butterfly Count	Newaygo, MI
July 7, 2011	9:00 AM	Butterfly Count	Georgetown Twp., MI
July 9, 2011	9:00 AM	Butterfly Count	Muskegon County, MI
July 26, 2011	8:30 AM	Butterfly Count	Garfield County, UT
August 27	11:00 AM – 3:00 PM	John Ball Zoo Monarch Release	Grand Rapids, MI
Sept. 16-18	TBA	Robert Michael Pyle	Kalamazoo County, MI

2011 Indoor Meetings

None scheduled at this time. Any suggestions?

2011 Field Trips

May 7, 2011 (Sat) 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Spring Ephemerals at Howard Christensen Nature Center. (Kent Co.)

We will explore the grounds to enjoy naked miterwort and a host of other spring flowers. Hopefully,

spring butterflies will be active, and we will visit the blueberry patch at the 18 Mile bog in hopes of still seeing Brown Elfins.

This will be a joint field trip with White Pine Chapter of Michigan Botanical Club. We had a joint indoor meeting with them last year, and people from both clubs suggest we have a joint gathering again.

June 23-26, 2011 (Thursday - Sunday) New Haven, Connecticut

60th Lepidopterists' Society Meeting and field outings based from Yale University in New Haven Connecticut. Visit the Lepidopterists' Society web page for details.

http://www.lepsoc.org/2011_meeting.php

August 27, 2011 (Sat.) 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Monarch tagging and release from John Ball Zoo in association with a zoo event.

Sept. 16-18, 2011 (Kalamazoo Co.)

Robert Michael Pyle, author of the recent book Mariposa Road:

The First Big Butterfly Year

Pyle will be here to share with us. We are still finalizing the date, program, and possible field outing. It will be joint event with other organizations. Pyle is the author the Audubon Butterfly Field Guide among others. More details to follow.

Location: Kalamazoo Co.

2011 Butterfly Counts

July 2, 2011 (Sat) 9:00 AM

Allegan Butterfly Count – Allegan Co.

Leader: Ranger Steve (Mueller)

Meeting location for Allegan Count to Fennville Unit
Allegan State Game Area, 6013 118th Ave, Fennville

July 4, 2011 (Mon) 9:00 AM

Rogue River Butterfly Count –

Leader: Ranger Steve (Mueller)

(Kent, Newaygo, Montcalm Counties)

Meet at Howard Christensen Nature Center
16160 Red Pine Dr. Kent City

July 5, 2011 (Tues) 9:30 AM

Shiawassee Nat'l Wildlife Refuge – Saginaw Co.

Leader: Steven Kahl

Meet at Shiawassee NWR East Entrance–Curtiss Rd.
6975 Mower Road
Saginaw, MI 48601-9783
Phone 989-777-5930 ext 16

July 6, 2011 (Wed) 9:00 AM

Newaygo County Butterfly Count - Newaygo Co.

Leader: Ranger Steve (Mueller)

Meeting location: D&W parking lot at the
corner of M82 & M 37.

July 7, 2011 (Thurs) 9:00 AM

Grand River Butterfly Count - Ottawa County

Leaders: Chip Francke and Linda Koning

Meet at Grand River Park lfrancke@miottawa.org

July 9, 2011 (Sat) 9:00 AM

Greater Muskegon Butterfly Ct - Muskegon Co.

Leaders: Dennis Dunlap

Meeting location for Muskegon Count to Mill Iron Road
north of Apple Avenue (M-46) at the second set of
overhead power lines crossing the road.

July 26, 2011 (Tues) 8:30 AM

Bryce Canyon Nat'l Park Butterfly Count

Tentative Date

Leader: Ranger Steve (Mueller)

(Garfield and Kane Counties, Utah)

odybrook@chartermi.net or

616-696-1753 for more details