

2015 Eastern Catskills NABA Butterfly Count

The 9th annual Eastern Catskills North American Butterfly Association (NABA) 4th of July Butterfly Count was conducted on the traditional last Saturday of the month, 27 June 2015. Dark gray overcast skies throughout most of the morning and early afternoon made for challenging count conditions, and rain prematurely ended the count around 2:00 pm, resulting in several target sites within our count circle receiving little or no coverage compared to previous years. Warm temperatures and calm winds encouraged some butterflies to fly for brief periods, while others could be found with more effort, perched in surrounding vegetation or nectaring on an abundance of Common Milkweed.

Thirteen observers in six field parties encountered a total of **1,353 individuals** of **38 adult butterfly species**, plus four additional unique immature species (Spicebush Swallowtail, Variegated Fritillary, Harris' Checkerspot, and Wild Indigo Duskywing). Diversity was below our 8-year average of 42.6 species, and abundance was just slightly below our average of 1,412 individuals/year. Our collective coverage was somewhat limited this year, not only by uncooperative weather, but also by the loss of one of our experienced and expert field teams.

The outstanding highlight of the 2015 count documented a phenomenal local flight of hairstreaks that exceeded last year's impressive flight during the same late June/early July time period. A remarkable **538 Banded Hairstreaks** were encountered during this abbreviated count day, most nectaring on Common Milkweed in peak bloom, and apparently unaffected by the dismal weather conditions. A new high count was recorded for **Striped Hairstreak** (6, eclipsing 2 in 2010), and **Gray Hairstreak** tied our previous high count of 3 in 2013.

Our final tally also recorded a new high count for **Little Wood-Satyr** (112, eclipsing 94 in 2010) and a very good count of **40 Baltimore Checkerspots**. Three **Delaware Skippers** represents a very nice showing, especially on a day with very little in the way of active skippers. We failed to find any stage of Monarch or Giant Swallowtail, the later apparently suffering high mortality over a long and frigidly cold winter, with only one or two scattered reports of sightings within our count area during this spring and early summer season.

Below is a summary of the count results. Thanks to all of the participants for conducting this survey under very challenging weather conditions. Next year's count is scheduled for Saturday, **June 25, 2016**, with Sunday (26 June) reserved for a rain date. Please mark your calendars and save the dates. Steve M. Chorvas – Compiler.

Adult Butterflies: Black Swallowtail (1), Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (2), Cabbage White (93), Clouded Sulphur (15), American Copper (1), **Banded Hairstreak (538)**, **Striped Hairstreak (6)**, **Gray Hairstreak (3)**, Eastern Tailed-Blue (18), Summer Azure (8), Great Spangled Fritillary (151), Meadow Fritillary (35), Pearl Crescent (26), **Baltimore Checkerspot (40)**, Eastern Comma (2), *Anglewing sp.*(1), Mourning Cloak (1), American Lady (1), Red Admiral (8), Viceroy (2), Hackberry Emperor (2), Tawny Emperor (1), Northern Pearly-eye (6), Appalachian Brown (4), **Little Wood-Satyr (112)**, Common Ringlet (4), Common Wood-Nymph (105), Silver-spotted Skipper (13), Hoary Edge (8), Southern Cloudywing (3), Northern Cloudywing (2), Least Skipper (64), European Skipper (9), Northern Broken-Dash (2), Little Glassywing (27), Delaware Skipper (3), Hobomok Skipper (2), Zabulon Skipper (1), Dun Skipper (3), *Grass-Skipper "Witch" sp.* (27), other *Grass-Skipper sp.* (3).

Immature Butterflies: Spicebush Swallowtail (7 caterpillars [cats] on Spicebush), Summer Azure (2 eggs on Meadowsweet), Variegated Fritillary (2 cats on Common Blue Violet), **Harris' Checkerspot** (~200 cats on Flat-topped Aster), Baltimore Checkerspot (26 cats on English Plantain), American Lady (14 cats on Pearly Everlasting), Viceroy (5 eggs and 15 cats on Aspen, 1 cat on Willow), Silver-spotted Skipper (5 cats on Black Locust), Hoary Edge (4 eggs and 8 cats on Showy Tick-trefoil), Wild Indigo Duskywing (9 cats on Wild Indigo).

Participants, Field Parties and Field Party Effort (Miles on Foot):

Central Area (Site 1) – Steve Chorvas (08:00 – 9:00 / 1 hr. / .5 mile)

Northern (1-5) – Steve Chorvas (09:15 – 14:15 / 5 hrs. / 2 miles)

Northern (6-7) – Frank Murphy, Deb Ferguson (09:25 – 14:05 / 3.25 hrs. / 1 mile)

Dutchess (1) – Barry Haydasz, Steve Bauer, Barbara Mansell (09:00 – 15:00 / 6 hrs. / 3 miles)

Dutchess (2) – Maha Katnani (9:30 – 12:30 / 3 hrs / 1 mile)

Southern (1-3) – Mark DeDea, Bob Miller, Jessica Prockup, Wendy Tocci (09:10 – 14:20 / 5 hrs. / 1.25 miles)

Southern (4) – Thomas Crepet, Donna Seymour (9:45 – 13:45 / 4 hrs. / 1 mile)

Observers: 13 **Field Parties:** 6 **Party-hours:** 27.25 **Party-miles:** 9.75 **Weather: AM Sunshine:** <10 %

PM Sunshine: <10 % **Temperature:** 65 - 72°F **Wind:** Calm **Notes:** Rain ended count at ~2:00 pm. **New High Counts** for Banded Hairstreak, Striped Hairstreak, and Little Wood-Satyr. Gray Hairstreak tied previous high count.

2015 Eastern Catskills NABA Butterfly Count Photos



Striped Hairstreak – Dave Elliott Road Utility Cut



Gray Hairstreak – Dave Elliott Road Utility Cut



Great Spangled Fritillaries on Scat – Dave Elliott Road Utility Cut



Baltimore Checkerspot – Dave Elliott Road Meadow



Wild Indigo Duskywing Caterpillar on Wild Indigo



Variegated Fritillary Caterpillar on Common Blue Violet

9 th Annual Eastern Catskills NABA Fourth of July Butterfly Count June 27, 2015		Central	EBNP	Northern	Seamon Park - HITS	Mt. Airy/Hommel PL	Dave Elliott Meadow	Dave Elliott Utility Cut	Great Vly WMA	Northern	Thorn Preserve	Bristol Beach SP	Dutchess	Poet's Walk	Montgomery Place	Southern	Jockey Hill fields	Hallihan Hill Utility Cut	Fehr Fields	Southern	IBM Rec. Fields	
		1		1	2	3	4	5		6	7		1	2		1	2	3		4		
		Total	Species																			
2	Northern Cloudywing			2		1	1															
64	Least Skipper			3		2		1					1	1		60	54		6			
9	European Skipper			7		6	1						1	1		1	1					
2	Northern Broken-Dash			2		1	1															
27	Little Glassywing			10	2	6	2		5	5			1		1	11	6		5			
3	Delaware Skipper															3	3					
2	Hobomok Skipper			2		2																
1	Zabulon Skipper			1	1																	
3	Dun Skipper			3		2	1															
27	"Witch" sp.			17	2	12	3									10	4		6			
3	Skipper sp.															3			3			
1,353	Total Individuals	14	14	625	93	50	280	193	9	136	135	1	69	50	19	339	152	12	175	170	170	
38	Total Species	5		34						12			11			18				7		

Immature Butterfly Species	Egg(s)	Caterpillar(s)	Pupa(s)	On (plant/surface)	Location
Spicebush Swallowtail		7		Spicebush	Northern – Dave Elliott Meadow
Summer Azure	2			Meadowsweet	Northern – Dave Elliott Powerline North
Variegated Fritillary		2		Common Blue Violet	Northern – Garden
Harris' Checkerspot		~200		Flat-topped Aster	Northern – Dave Elliott Meadow (8 larval tents)
Baltimore Checkerspot		26		English Plantain	Northern – Dave Elliott Meadow (post-hibernation)
American Lady		14		Pearly Everlasting	Northern – Malden Gardens (4), D. Elliott PL North (10)
Viceroy	5	15		Aspen	Northern – Dave Elliott PL North (5/4), Meadow (11)
Viceroy		1		Willow sp.	Northern – Dave Elliott Powerline North
Silver-spotted Skipper		5		Black Locust	Northern – Dave Elliott Powerline North
Hoary Edge	4	8		Showy Tick-trefoil	Northern – Dave Elliott Powerline North
Wild Indigo Duskywing		9		Wild Indigo	Northern – Dave Elliott Powerline North

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