

2021 Eastern Catskills NABA Butterfly Count

The 15th annual Eastern Catskills North American Butterfly Association (NABA) Fourth of July Butterfly Count was conducted on **26 June 2021**, the traditional last Saturday in the month of June. Weather conditions were better in comparison to last year, but challenging none-the-less and far from ideal for encouraging butterfly activity and detection. Participation was down from past years, with just eight observers in four field parties finding a total of **1,606 individuals, 37 adult butterfly species**, and **four** additional unique immature species (Black Swallowtail, Giant Swallowtail, Harris' Checkerspot, and Hackberry Emperor).

Considering the past history of this survey, plagued by frequent instances of inclement weather, we avoided rain this year and conducted the count under roughly average conditions. Skies were mostly cloudy with temperatures ranging from 73-84° F, in the presence of intermittent 0-15 mph wind. Our results were also typical of recent years, just 39 individuals and two species below our ten-year average of 1,645 individuals and 39 species/survey. Our total abundance continues to be significantly influenced by a single large Baltimore Checkerspot colony, though not to the extent of last year's remarkable 3,500 individuals. All other species combined accounted for a total of 594 adult butterflies this year.

On a regional basis, the spring and early summer of 2021 has been another down year for most species of butterflies, with no stand-out irruptions, immigrations, or big local flights outside of the large colony of Baltimore Checkerspots at Thorn Preserve. No new species were added to the count composite, no new record highs were set, and thirty-two (32) Least Skippers was the only new record low count (ten-year average 85/survey).

Below is a summary of the count results including field party effort. Thanks to all of the participants for their time and effort as we struggle with loss of access to multiple historic sites and too-few field parties. Next year's count is scheduled for Saturday, **June 25, 2022**, with Sunday June 26th reserved for a rain date.

– Steve M. Chorvas (Compiler/Coordinator)

Adult Butterflies: Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (1), Spicebush Swallowtail (2), Cabbage White (153), Clouded Sulphur (21), Orange Sulphur (3), "*White*" female Sulphur sp. (1), Banded Hairstreak (8), Gray Hairstreak (3), Eastern Tailed-Blue (49), Summer Azure (9), Great Spangled Fritillary (70), Meadow Fritillary (16), Pearl Crescent (13), Baltimore Checkerspot (**1,012**), Question Mark (1), Eastern Comma (5), Mourning Cloak (5), American Lady (1), Red Admiral (1), Red-spotted Purple (3), Viceroy (1), Northern Pearly-eye (3), Appalachian Brown (3), Little Wood-Satyr (61), Common Wood-Nymph (4), Monarch (10), Silver-spotted Skipper (14), Hoary Edge (4), Northern Cloudywing (2), Wild Indigo Duskywing (1), Least Skipper (32), European Skipper (19), Peck's Skipper (3), Tawny-edged Skipper (2), Northern Broken-Dash (5), Little Glassywing (50), Hobomok Skipper (1), Zabulon Skipper (3), *Unidentified "Witch" skippers* (5), *Other unidentified Grass-Skippers* (6).

Immature Butterflies: Black Swallowtail (10 eggs, 6 caterpillars), Giant Swallowtail (5 cats, 1 pupa), Spicebush Swallowtail (2 cats), Harris' Checkerspot (~90 eggs, 440 cats), Baltimore Checkerspot (~6,800 eggs, 20 post-hibernation cats, 4 pupa), Question Mark (2 eggs), Hackberry Emperor (2 eggs, 7 cats), American Lady (2 cats), Monarch (1 cat), Silver-spotted Skipper (3 cats), Hoary Edge (32 eggs). Total: **11 species / 7,427 individuals** (6,936 eggs, 486 caterpillars, 5 pupae).

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

Observers: 8, Field parties: 4, Party-hours: 30.75, Party-miles: 12.00

Northern Areas (1-8) – Steve Chorvas, Alan Beebe (05:00 – 20:15, 15.25 hrs., 3 miles)

Dutchess Areas (1) – Barry Haydasz (09:00 – 15:30, 6.5 hrs., 3 miles)

Southern Areas (1-5) – Jessica Prockup, James Prockup, Lin Fagan (09:00 – 15:15, 6.25 hrs., 4 miles)

Southern Areas (11) – Joe Bridges, Barbara Hart (10:50 – 13:28, 2.75 hrs., 2 miles)