

# *Kentucky Lepidopterist*

*Newsletter of the Society of Kentucky Lepidopterists*

*Volume 28 Number 3 31 August 2001*

**THE SOCIETY  
OF  
KENTUCKY  
LEPIDOPTERISTS**

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Eric Metzler - 2001\*  
George Balogh - 2002\*  
Dr. James K. Adams - 2003\*  
\* term expires

**The Society of Kentucky**

**Lepidopterists** is open to anyone with an interest in the Lepidoptera of the State of Kentucky. Membership dues are annual \$10.00. Dues sent to the Treasurer: Les Ferge, 7119 Hubbard Avenue, Middleton, WI 53562

## **FALL FIELD MEETING TO WESTERN KENTUCKY SEPTEMBER 7-9**

The Fall Field Meeting is scheduled for the weekend of September 7, 8, & 9 in western Kentucky. Bill Black will once again host the annual event. Bill has planned a full weekend with visits to some new locations as well as some familiar locations. The meeting has been planned to take advantage of the dark of the moon and as a result there will be night moth collecting, so bring your light traps and bait traps.

Bill has suggested that those attending the field meeting should make arrangements for lodging at the Executive Inn which is in close proximity to Bill's home (See map below). When calling to make your reservation, let them know that you are with the Society of Kentucky Lepidopterists and you will get the special rate of \$59.00 per night. For reservations call: 1-800-866-3636.

### **MEETING SCHEDULE:**

#### **Friday, September 7 - 4:00 PM & 7:00PM CDT**

Meet at Bill Black's at 4:00PM to set out light traps and bait traps for moths at a nearby location. If you plan to join us, please contact Bill Black before the meeting at 270-442-9587. The site we choose to set out traps for moths must be able to accommodate the people who wish to participate. We will meet again at Bill's home at 201 Friedman Avenue for Stroh's Beer and a social get together at 7:00PM CDT.

#### **Saturday, September 8 - 9:00AM CST**

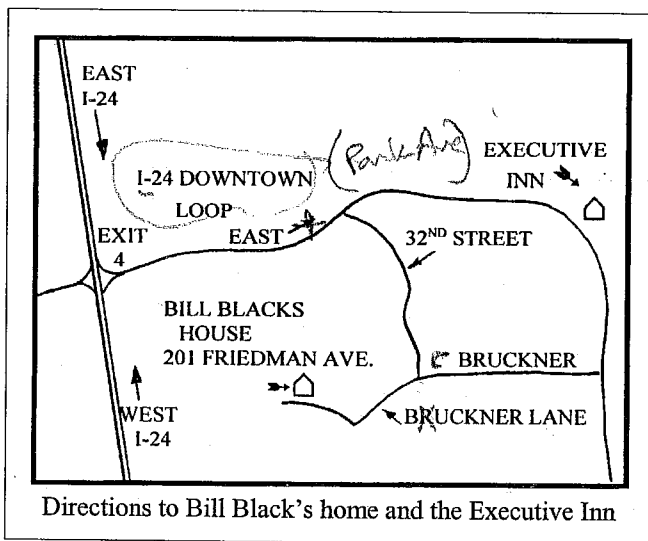
We will meet at the Executive Inn (See map and directions below) at 9:00AM for breakfast at the restaurant in the motel. Following breakfast we will visit the Zip-Track Site, Massac Creek in McCracken County, Sandy Branch in Carlisle County and the Hickman site along the Mississippi River in Fulton County. There are additional sites in Massac and Pope counties in Illinois and several sites in Graves and Calloway counties in Kentucky.

We will visit a local restaurant for dinner prior to lighting for moths. A site will be selected based on the number of participants and the number of light set-ups available. Light traps for moths will also be set out at various locations in western Kentucky. (Cont. on Pg.# 14 )

**Sunday, September 9 - 9:00AM CDT**

We will meet again at the Executive in at 9:00AM for breakfast. Following breakfast we will return to sites visited on Saturday or to a site chosen by the group. After lunch many will begin the journey home and other's may choose to remain. Those who choose to remain will be on their own.

For more information about Paducah, contact the Visitor's Bureau of Paducah at:1-800-PADUCAH.



From I-24, Exit 4, turn east onto I-24 Downtown Loop, turn right on 32<sup>nd</sup> Street, drive to the end of 32<sup>nd</sup> Street and turn right onto Buckner Lane, go two blocks and turn right onto Friedman Avenue. Bill's house is on the right as the street bends to the left. The address is 201 Frieman Avenue. A Society Logo sign in the yard sign will identify the house.

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**PLAN NOW  
TO ATTEND THE  
SOCIETY'S 27TH ANNUAL  
MEETING  
NOV. 16-17  
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY**

The 27th Annual Meeting of the Society of Kentucky Lepidopterists will be held in the usual places on Friday, November 16 and Saturday, November 17, 2001. Friday night: Open house at the Covells', 7-11 PM.

Saturday morning, insect collection and entomology lab open at Life Sciences Bldg. Room 321, University of Louisville. Rest of morning for visiting, identifying specimens, buy-sell-trade, etc. The annual business meeting will begin at 1:00 PM in that room, our key note speaker this year is John Shuey, Director of Conservation Science of the Indiana Office of the Nature Conservancy. The title of John's talk will be: "Conservation Reserves and Lepidoptera Conservation". There will be additional contributed papers, slide series, equipment and specimen displays, etc. Dinner together follows at 6:00 PM at the University Club near the Life Sciences Building.

Prior to the annual meeting on Thursday and Friday, Dr. Naomi Pierce, Sid Hessel Chair of Lepidopterology at Harvard University will lecture. Thursday, Nov. 15 - 4PM "Ants, Plants and Blue Butterflies". The lecture will be held in the Eckstrom Library Auditorium and hosted by Dr. Lee Alan Dugatkin, Dept. of Biology. Friday, Nov. 16, Noon - "Life History Evolution in the Lycaenidae: Cradle Robbing, Meat Eating, Ant-Loving Caterpillars. If you can come early, plan to attend one or both of these lectures.

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**PRESIDENTS LETTER**

I hope you have been enjoying the sunny summer in general and the plethora of butterflies and moths in particular. From my vantage point in Louisville, and reports from some of you, the numbers of some species of Lepidoptera are definitely "up." Most obvious have been the high numbers in the genus Vanessa, with noticeably extraordinary numbers of Vanessa atalanta (Red Admiral) and Vanessa virginiensis (American Lady) in the early part of the summer. Now the "outbreak" numbers of the Painted Lady, Vanessa cardui, has made itself evident here, where it was recorded to westward earlier in the summer. The other day I visited a local butterfly garden and saw about 15 of these, and there should be many more as the late summer days pass. In the first half of the summer, however, I thought small skippers were in lesser numbers than normal.

On June 30 our Oldham Co. July 4th butterfly count #17 resulted in sighting of 83 Variegated Fritillaries (Euptoieta claudia), the highest number I have ever seen on one day. It corroborated a high number reported by Mike Flynn's Lexington July 4th count of 2000.

(Cont. on Pg.# 15)

(Cont. from Pg.#14) The 160 Great Spangled Fritillaries (Speyeria cybele) we saw that day attests to an unusually high number of this species for the second year in a row. We had pre-field trip media coverage on WHAS-TV and an article afterward in the Oldham Era, the local weekly. We started with about 15 people, including members Mike Flynn and his wife from Lexington, Charles Wright of Frankfort, Joan Schuler, Tom Barr, wildlife biologist from the Univ. of Kentucky (who got to see his first Northern Metalmarks), Dr. Wayne Davis of University of Kentucky, and Victoria Motyka with her kids Natalie and Adrian. The count resulted in 35 species and 733 individuals, about average.

Two weeks later I enjoyed participating in the Lexington area (Fayette and Jessamine counties) July 4th count led by Mike Flynn, and accompanied by Wayne Davis and Charles Wright again and several devoted butterflyers in the Lexington area. This count involved more driving, with visits to the University of Kentucky Arboretum first, then the nature trails at Raven Run Park, followed by a woodland creek site, then ending in a clover field on a farm. The total number of species recorded was 34, with 655 individuals.

As usual I have been monitoring the butterfly garden at the Louisville Nature Center and now another one adjacent to the Louisville Zoo established by a group called "Compassionate Friends," who support cancer victims. A large number of butterfly bushes there make this garden very attractive, but it is a bit hard to get to. I also have continued monitoring Lepidoptera at Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest with the help of students Jeremy Bennett, Melanie Hurst and Jennifer Lewis (now a graduate student in entomology at the Univ. of Georgia). Last week I found the 81st butterfly species for Bernheim. It was a Lace-winged Roadside Skipper, Amblyscirtes aesculapius, close to a cane patch where one would expect it.

At home my garden has yielded 27 species to date, all of them seen before. Oh, there was one more: on Sunday Aug. 12 I went into my back yard and there sitting on a peony leaf was a Heliconius ismenius! Since this butterfly lives in the rain forests of Central and South America, its presence in my garden was quite surprising to say the least. However, I knew that this summer a butterfly house had been established at the Louisville Zoo, and so I called the manager of the exhibit, experienced butterfly house operator Martin Feather, and told him what I had. He gave me the names of this and another Heliconiine, and on Monday I decided it was Heliconius ismenius.

Overnight it had wrecked its wings and died in a net where I had it confined; but I spread what was left, and also had made photos of it alive on the previous day. Strange that an escapee from a butterfly house had flown about 3 miles to the back yard of a lepidopterist, to be discovered for what it was. I wonder how many others have escaped from this exhibit, and others across the country. While this species would not confuse records, there are other butterflies that do, such as the Gulf Fritillary, Agraulis vanillae, and the Queen, Danaus gilippus. Those have been recorded in Kentucky, and escapees could certainly be seen and reported as naturally occurring. Thus butterfly houses as well as releases of reared butterflies can provide false biogeographic data. Dr. Wayne Wehling, who heads the APHIS (USDA) office that provides permits for interstate transport of insects, told the Lepidopterists' Society Annual meeting attendees in July that it is illegal to transport live insects interstate without a permit! That means if you collect eggs of a butterfly in Tennessee and bring them to Kentucky to rear, you are in violation of a law, unless you obtain a permit through his office. We will try to get that information for you for a later article.

Those who collect and study underwing moths of the genus Catocala are certainly enjoying a good year. Numbers of species and individuals are UP. I caught a Catocala piatrix in my own porch light last night, the first Catocala I have seen there in several years. Spingids seem to be doing well, too.

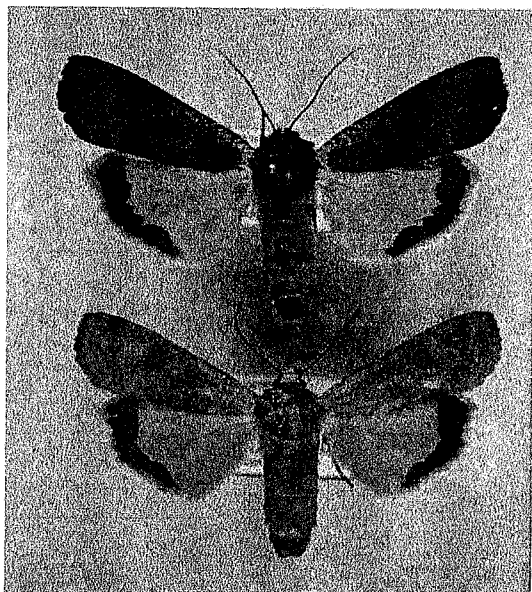
I would like to urge you to attend our annual meeting Nov. 16-17. On Friday, Nov. 16, my Department is hosting a seminar by Dr. Naomi Pierce of Harvard University, where she holds the Sidney Hessel Chair of Lepidopterology at the Museum of Comparative Zoology. Her talk will be "Life History Evolution in the Lycaenidae: cradle-robbing, meat-eating, ant-loving caterpillars." The seminar will be in Room 23, Life Sciences Bldg., at 12 noon. I hope you can arrive early to hear and meet her.

Our special speaker on Saturday is Dr. John Shuey, who will talk to us about butterfly habitats and conservation of same. We also hope that Ken Bliss from NJ, Publications Manager of the Lepidopterists' Society, will join us too. Those of you who would like to give talks, slides or "show-and-tell" please let me know in advance so I can put you into the program. (Cont. on Pg.# 18)

# A KENTUCKY RECORD OF THE EUROPEAN CUTWORM, NOCTUA PRONUBA (L.).

BY  
**LEROY C. KOEHN**

I had set out a dozen bait traps by early May and began to find several interesting moths. One moth that was a regular visitor to my bait traps was Noctua pronuba, the European Cutworm, a recently introduced species from Europe. It was first reported from North America in 1979 and has steadily moved south and west. Vernon Brou found Noctua pronuba along the gulf coast of Louisiana in 1996. It has also been reported from our neighboring states of Indiana, Ohio, Tennessee, and Virginia. Being a recent resident of Kentucky, I failed to look in the book (The Butterflies and Moths of Kentucky, Covell 1999) and assumed that Noctua pronuba had been found long before I came to Kentucky. During the summer field meeting to Big Black Mountain, I was surprised when Dr. Covell commented that Noctua pronuba was not recorded from Kentucky. The first individuals of Noctua pronuba that I collected in bait traps were in early May in Bourbon County. These individuals were not in good condition and I released them. On the 18 May 2001, I took several dozen in bait traps in Franklin County that were in excellent condition and I kept several of them for my collection. Two specimens are figured below.



## REFERENCES

The Butterflies and Moths of Kentucky. An Annotated Checklist by Charles V. Covell, Jr. 1999: Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission, Scientific & Technical Series Number 6.

## NEW MEMBERS

Robert B. Butler, 14109 Robcaste Road, Phoenix, MD 21131. "General interest in Lepidoptera, esp. butterflies. Collect books about butterflies. Have a collection of mostly butterflies."

Elizabeth Ann and Catherine Ann Hansen, 895 Millbrook Cr., Shepherdsville, KY 40165. Phone: (502) 543-2422.

Laura Myers, 1812 Harry Hughes Road, Charlestown, IN 42111. Phone: (H): (812) 256-2266; (W) (812) 256-6363. I do some photography and gardening, and wish to improve my identification skills.

Peggy Oates, 3315 Brownsboro Road, Louisville, KY 40207-1862. Phone (H): (502) 899-5239. I am interested in birds and butterflies.

JoAnn Brown Schuler, 12005 E. Osage Road, Anchorage, KY 40223. Phone: (H):(502) 254 -3864.

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## BOOK REVIEW OF THE FIELD GUIDE TO BUTTERFLIES OF ILLINOIS

BY  
**ERIC METZLER**

Authored by John K Bouseman and James G. Sternberg. January 2001. Illinois Natural History Survey. Champaign, Illinois. Manual 9. ISBN: 1-882932-05-6. 5.5" by 8.25" Cloth binding with dust jacket. 264 pages with numerous color photographs. \$20.00. Order from Illinois Natural History Survey, 607 East Peabody Drive, Champaign, Illinois 61820.

Don't walk. Run and buy this book. Even if you don't like this book, and you will love it, a butterfly book, Smythe sewn, with hardcover, dusk jacket, and chocked full of superb color photographs for \$20.00 is a bargain which doesn't come along very often. Such a deal.

John Bouseman and Jim Sternberg are both long-time entomologists with degrees from the University of Illinois. (Cont. on Pg.# 17)

(Cont. from Pg.# 16 ) John works for the Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS) and Jim is Professor Emeritus from the Univ. of Illinois. Like many entomologists, John has a life-long interest in butterflies, and Jim is an accomplished photographer. They combined their common interests and talents to meet an important goal of the INHS - publication of a very nice book about Illinois' biota. We, the readers, are the beneficiaries.

As a field guide, the Smythe sewn binding means the pages will not fall out. Kudos to the INHS for this detail. And the hardcover will help prevent it from becoming dog-eared over time. I recommend two copies one for your field pack and one for your reference library. The book begins with introductory materials that briefly explain how to use the book and explanations of the species' accounts. A few pages are devoted to descriptions of habitats (illustrated with excellent color photos) and mention of the butterflies expected in each of the habitats. Four pages with color pictures of larvae and pupae are followed by an excellent chapter on Collecting and Studying Butterflies. Additional paragraphs are devoted to photography, Gardening, and Conservation.

The section on Conservation reveals a true gem in the book. The authors are objective in their knowledge of habitat loss as the real cause of decreasing butterfly populations at the hand of humans. The following sentences are key: "Responsible collecting is unlikely to have any effect except in the case of the most highly localized populations." Overzealous management practices; forbidding collecting altogether; may be deleterious."

A concise accurate description of butterfly morphology and behavior (with excellent drawings) is followed by the Species Accounts. Each family is given an introduction. I'm impressed with the authors' ability to provide copious detail without intruding on the easy flow of the discussions. For example, taxonomy to the tribe level is presented without overshadowing the field guide nature of the book. How I wish authors would also include the year of description with the author's names for each species.

Each species of butterfly (skippers will be covered in an upcoming companion volume) is illustrated in color, usually with more than one photograph, often in nature, and if necessary, from museum specimens. The species accounts include the subdivisions Description, Similar Species, Habitat, Natural History, Status, and Notes and/or Remarks. The Natural History provides excellent information about the butterflies' habits and life history.

The information in this division is great. The species accounts include a map of Illinois with shading, depending on the type of record being reported, within the various counties' outlines.

The last few pages of the book include a brief Glossary, Checklist with Ecological Ratings - an ingenious device to additional information about the status of the butterfly within the state of Illinois. For example, a butterfly, e.g. cabbage white, with an ecological rating of 1 is "an introduced species," and pipevine swallowtail is a 6, "a species of urban forests and woodlands, as well as forests."

An extensive list of Suggested Reading is provided, with the many references divided into categories such as Biology and Natural History, Butterfly Watching, Butterfly Gardens, and others. There is no mention of societies and clubs where like minded persons can find each other.

These two authors, along with James K. Wiker, in Athens, Illinois, told me another volume, covering the skippers, is preparation by all three persons. Jim's special knowledge of skippers, combined with the proven ability of the authors of this book, will make for an excellent second volume. I can hardly wait.

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## NEWSLETTER UP-DATE

We have the ability to print in color and beginning with this newsletter, all photographs will be in color. If you can write an article for the newsletter, include your color photographs. You can send articles, notes, book reviews, and field reports via the post office mail, e-mail with attachments, on a 3" diskette with photographs, or hand written or typed. Send in your article, notes and other items of interest, we will see that it is published in the newsletter.

We would like to figure all new state records or records of significance. The next newsletter will contain several photographs of species of significance. Some of these were collected during the spring field trip to Red River Gorge and the summer field trip to Big Black Mountain.

We want to begin publishing field reports as a regular feature in the newsletter. Send your reports directly to the Editor. Please include the county and any other information pertaining to the record. Host plant records are extremely important, as are photographs of immature stages, and adults. We encourage you to report your field activities. (Cont. on Pg.# 18)

(Cont. from Pg.#17) There will be two more issues of the newsletter this year. Volume 27 Number 4 will have reports from both the summer and the fall field meetings. A number of photographs of new state records, and there is always room for more. The size and content of the newsletter depends on you.

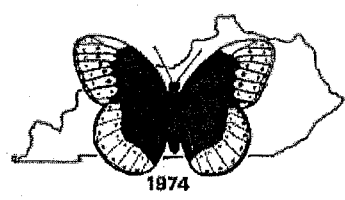
Do you know anyone who would be interested in becoming a member? If you would like some extra copies of the newsletter to send to potential members, please let me know.

(Cont. from Pg.#15) As an extra "goody" at the annual meeting, you will get a free Kentucky butterfly poster, recently produced by Jeff Hohman, Biologist at the Eastern Kentucky Power Cooperatives, from photos of butterflies by Loran Gibson, Tony Merkle and me. So see you at the Sept. field trip at Bill Black's, or in Nov.

Happy hunting!  
Cheers,  
Charlie

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The Kentucky Lepidopterists is published four times annually. Membership dues are \$10.00 annually. The organization is open to anyone with an interest in the Lepidoptera of the State of Kentucky. Information about the Society may be obtained from, and dues may be sent to: Treasurer, Les Ferge, 7119 Hubbard Avenue, Middletown, WI 53562  
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**THE SOCIETY OF KENTUCKY LEPIDOPTERISTS**  
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