



Kentucky Lepidopterist

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THE SOCIETY OF KENTUCKY LEPIDOPTERISTS

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THE SOCIETY OF KENTUCKY

LEPIDOPTERISTS is open to anyone with an interest in the Lepidoptera of the State of Kentucky. Membership dues are annual: \$12.00. Dues sent to the Treasurer: Les Ferge, 7119 Hubbard Avenue, Middleton, WI 53562

SPRING FIELD MEETING REPORT

The spring field meeting was held on top of Black Mountain, Harlan County on April 29, 30 and May 1, 2011. John Hyatt, Bill Black and Leroy Koehn met at 9:AM on Friday, 29 April 2011. The weather was bright and sunny, the temperature was a brisk 49 degrees. Although somewhat cold the sun was warm, April in Kentucky saw record rain fall. It rained almost every day in April. The top of Black Mountain looked more like the end of March than the end of April. Our first stop was the Power Line Cut next to the FAA Radar Site. We walked the road towards the remains of the old fire tower. We found several Pieris rapae, Anthocharis midea and Papilio troilus.

As we walked through the maze of Cell Towers that now exist around the old fire tower, John Hyatt found a fossil. It appeared to be an eight inch piece of a Cycad Tree trunk. The bark surface was plainly visible (See Fig.#1). Black Mountain is the highest point in Kentucky at 4,145 feet. It is also a great location for fossils. Both Leroy Koehn and Bill Black have found fossils of giant ferns near the old ski slopes. We were not only looking for butterflies, we also kept an eye on the rocks at our feet. Leroy and Bill would find several more fossil during the meeting. We spent about a half hour on the top before traveling to the old ski slope area. A large apple orchard covers part of the slopes. To our surprise, we collected several specimens of Junonia coenia. They were fresh specimens. Several Pieris virginiensis were found and Colias eurytheme, Papilio glaucus, and Battus philenor were observed.

After an hour on the top of Black Mountain and a temperature of 51 degrees, we decided to visit a warmer location on the Virginia side of Black Mountain. This is a location known to both John Hyatt and Leroy Koehn. As we made the right turn onto Route 160 to begin our decent down the mountain and into Virginia, we noticed that something was missing, an entire section of a mountain was gone. A very large section of Stone Mountain was actually gone. The cause: Mountain Top Removal. The is the new name for surface mining coal. According to the law, the Company mining the coal must restore the mountain. They remove the top of mountain, then mine the coal, then pile the remains of the mountain back up and they call that restoration. What took billions of years to create, man destroys and piles up the remains, and a great big piece of Stone Mountain is no more.

The temperature down below was 68 degrees. We walked along a two track road that was originally used for logging and now used to service natural gas wells. Butterflies were abundant. Shortly after arriving, Leroy Koehn collected the lone Eroria laeta. It landed on the road at his feet. Although several more were seen, only one was collected.

KENTUCKY LEPIDOPTERISTS

We spent the remainder of the afternoon searching for Erora laeta. As we walked along the road, we noticed a number of Paulownia trees in bloom. Commonly know as the Empress Tree, Bill Black knew a great deal about Paulownia tree. It is an interesting tree with an even more interesting history.

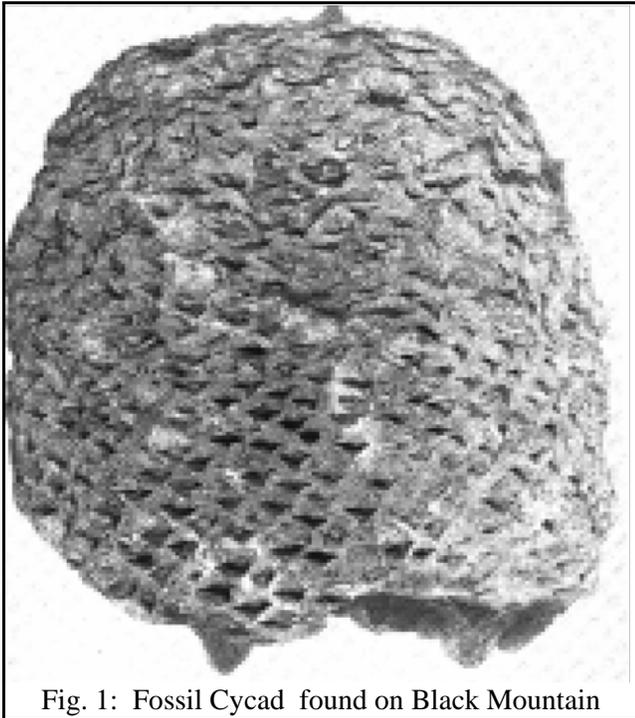


Fig. 1: Fossil Cycad found on Black Mountain

As the afternoon waned John Hyatt led the way to Big Stone Gap to a Pizza Parlor for dinner. After dinner John Hyatt returned to Kingsport, TN and Leroy Koehn and Bill Black set out light traps and spent the night at the Benham School House Inn.

Saturday morning Bill Black and Leroy Koehn met Jim and Suzanne Vargo on the top of Black Mountain. The temperature was in the upper 50's with a clear sky. We spent several hours on top and found more species. Leroy Koehn collected a worn male Celastrina nigra near the Fire Tower area and several more Junonia coenia were found. We found no Erora laeta on top. We returned to the spot on the Virginia side of the Black Mountain. Mud puddle clubs were numerous and butterflies in general were abundant. Leroy Koehn collected four larvae of Speyeria. (Two were Speyeria cybele and both produced parasitic Tachinid flies, one Speyeria aphrodite which produced an adult male and one Speyeria diana which produced a parasitic Braconid wasp). We collected several specimens of Amblyscirtes vialis and A. hegon.

As we walked farther down the road we discovered a huge rock that had recently broken away from a cliff face and fallen standing up. The photograph (Fig.# 2) illustrates this huge stone and where it came from. We believe it fell within the last three or four months. Leroy Koehn believes that if he had been here alone collecting and this monstrous stone would have fallen on him, he would never be found.

Leroy Koehn departed for home around 4PM and Bill Black, and the Vargo's returned to the top of Black Mountain to set up lights to collect moths. They spent the night at the Benham School House Inn and began their journeys home on Sunday morning.

List of the 38 species of Butterflies

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Epargyreus clarus | Calycopis cecrops |
| Erynnis icelus | Callophrys augustus |
| Erynnis brizo | Parrhasius m-album |
| Erynnis juvenalis | Strymon melinus |
| Erynnis baptisiae | Erora laeta |
| Amblyscirtes vialis | Cupido comyntas |
| Amblyscirtes hegon | Celastrina ladon |
| Battus philenor | Celastrina nigra |
| Papilio polyxenes | Glaucopsyche lygdamus |
| Papilio troilus | Speyeria diana (larva) |
| Papilio Glaucus | Speyeria cybele (larva) |
| Eurytides marcellus | Speyeria aphrodite (larva) |
| Pieris virginiensis | Polygonia interrogationis |
| Pieris rapae | Polygonia coma |
| Anthocharis midea | Nymphalis antiopa |
| Colias eurytheme | Vanessa virginiensis |
| Colias philodice | Junonia coenia |
| Feniseca tarquinius | Phyciodes tharos |
| Calycopis cecrops | Cyllopsis gemma |



Leroy Koehn, Bill Black & Jim Vargo on the top of Black Mountain

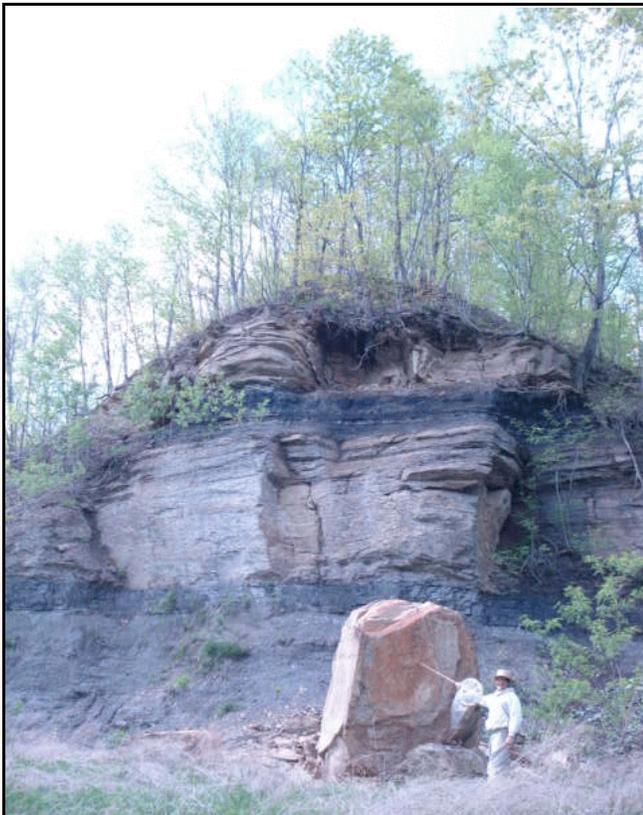


Fig. 2: The huge rock broke away from to of the rock face above and landed upright.



Bill Black did not have time to sort his light trap. He wrapped a shirt around it and placed his hat on the top to keep it cool. He drove around all day with it!

ANNUAL BUTTERFLY COUNT JULY 9, 2011 LED BY DR. CHARLES V. COVELL

The Annual July 4th Butterfly Count at Horner Wildlife Sanctuary in Oldham County, Kentucky, will be held Saturday July 9, 2011. We will meet at 9:30AM at the (Now Closed) Brownsboro General Store & Restaurant (The only business building) in Brownsboro, one mile east of Exit 14 of I-71. After briefing and assignment of teams, we will count butterflies from 10AM to 3PM. If it is a completely rainy day, we will hold the count on Sunday July 10, 2011 at the same time.

Please wear boots, long pants, long sleeve shirts and a hat. Bring repellent for ticks, jiggers and mosquito's. We will have some nets to loan. You are free to leave whenever you wish.

For additional information, contact Dr. Charles V. Covell at: 502-639-2691.

Dr. Covell will need some help from Society members. Please contact Dr. Covell if you would like to help.

Beginners and children are encouraged to attend.

SPRING 2011, GOOD FOR KENTUCKY BUTTERFLIES, WEATHER PERMITTING BY LORAN GIBSON

Spring of 2011 will be remembered throughout history for extreme weather events! In Kentucky, we experienced many severe storms and much heavier than average rains in April and early May. These storms resulted in flooding throughout the state, especially in the Jackson Purchase. According to Gerald Burnett, Ballard WMA was completely under water for many weeks along with lots of the other Mississippi River and lower Ohio River localities that we, as lepidopterists, have become accustomed to visiting. Hopefully populations of moths and butterflies will not be drastically affected by the unusual weather and flooding!

(Cont. on Pg.# 10)

Winter 2010-2011 provided lots of snowfall once again. Typically, Lepidoptera populations seem to benefit from above average snow accumulations. Maybe it is because heavy snows tend to insulate the surface of the ground and over-wintering stages of moths and butterflies from extreme cold. I have no data supporting this, but I have observed several years with above average numbers of butterflies and moths and greater diversity of species occurring after hard winters.

So far, spring of 2011 has provided few days with enough sun to actually get into the field and search for butterflies! On the few good days between cloudy and stormy ones butterfly numbers and variety of species present has been above average. Several new county records for butterflies have been reported. Numbers of several species have been much greater than average in some localities. Tiger, Spicebush and Zebra Swallowtails have all been present in huge numbers in Daniel Boone National Forest. Mud-puddle clubs with 50 or more Tiger swallowtails and larger than usual numbers of the other two species have been common. Ellis Lauder milk and I observed large numbers of Brown Elfins (*Callophrys augustinus*) along the Sheltoewe Trace Trail in Lee County on 5 April. The species had not been reported from Lee County previously. The Cobweb Skippper (*Hesperia metea*) was found in larger than usual numbers along a sandy ridgetop in Daniel Boone National Forest in McCreary County on 14 April. A substantial population of Dusted Skippers (*Atrytonopsis hianna*) was observed in Pulaski County on 20 May. This colony was discovered in 2010, but numbers of individuals were much greater in 2011. Ellis Lauder milk reported finding Olympia Marbles (*Euchloe olympia*) in a few new counties in the eastern Knobs by searching steep ridgetops and knobs which have power line cuts or gas line cuts crossing them. This seems to work well. Ellis and I found a new Olympia Marble colony on 13 April in Bullitt County using this strategy.

Some common species have been rare and species that are usually recorded have gone unseen by me this spring. I checked several good growths of Carolina Vetch in April, but Silvery Blues (*Glaucoopsyche lygdamus*) were not found around any of them. The Harrison County Silvery Blue population that feeds on Common Vetch was out in normal numbers on 17 April, but those were the only *G. lygdamus* seen by me this year! I have not found the Appalachian Azure (*Celastrina neglecta-major*) this year. Usually, that species flies in late April and early May. I was not able to get into the field during that period of time due to terrible weather.

Maybe someone will report seeing them. So far I have not observed the American Copper (*Lycaena phlaeas*)

this year. Again, this could be due to poor weather. I checked a good location for that species here in Boone County this morning (22 May) and none were seen. I suspect that I missed the first brood and the second has yet to emerge.

So far this spring I have spent at least part of eight days in the field, beginning 6 April through 22 May. These days were spent in the following counties: Lee, Estill, Wolf, Powell, Menifee, Clinton, Elliott, Rowan, Robertson, Bullitt, McCreary, Harrison, Laurel, Pulaski & Boone. Fifty six species of butterflies have been recorded so far. This seems to be one of the best springs for diversity in recent years, although time-in-the-field has been limited by poor weather. Hopefully weather will improve so that we can see how good 2011 might actually be.

“RARE SPRING MOTH”

BY

LORAN GIBSON

Roger Ziebold collected the first known Kentucky specimen of the “Rare Spring Moth”, *Heliomata infulata* (Grote) in Knott County on 19 June 1987 (just barely in spring). I captured two additional specimens on 14 April 2011. They were on a Forest Service road in McCreary County. The road lead along a sandy ridge top where I was searching for tiger beetles. As I approached a large mud-puddle I saw a small insect flying quickly and erratically near the water in the puddle and then around nearby vegetation. When the moth alighted I could see that it was a “Rare Spring Moth”. I captured it. As I continued along the road the most common butterfly encountered was *Hesperia metea*. The location is savannah-like with lots of *Andropogon* grass and, no doubt, Little Bluestem, *Schizachyrium scoparium*, although the latter grass species was not apparent. Trees were scarce along the ridge with a few oaks and pines nearby. On the return trip I saw another *H. infulata* near the same mud-puddle. This one was captured as well. I could see nothing unusual about the mud-puddle location.

I think the common name of this species is appropriate. I have spent much time in the field in all parts of Kentucky over the past forty years and these were the first individuals of this species I have encountered.

(Cont. on Pg.# 11)



Photo above shows Heliomata infulata on the left and "Common Spring Moth" H. cycladata Grote & Robinson on the right for comparison.

SOCIETY OF KENTUCKY LEPIDOPTERISTS ACTIVITIES MARK YOUR CALENDAR

9 & 10 September 2011 - Late Summer Field Trip to Far Western Kentucky. Trip leader Gerald Burnett

11 & 12 November 2011 - Annual Meeting in Lexington, Ky. Organizer: Leroy Koehn.

The date is an away game for Football. The University of Kentucky's football scheduled is now confirmed. There will be meeting activities all day on Friday 11 November. Including a Friday night "Get Together".

There will be more information about these activities in future newsletters.

DUES REMINDER

Please check your dues status, the year following you name on the address label indicates the last year for which dues were paid. Send payment to Les Ferge whose address is listed on the front cover. Those in arrears after 1 July 2011 will no longer receive the Newsletter.

NEWSLETTER UP DATE

As we look forward to the late summer field meeting in Western Kentucky this coming year, please plan on joining us. It is always a great weekend in the field and Gerald Burnett and Bill Black provide excellent accommodations and great locations to visit. Mark your calendar: 9, 10 & 11 September 2011.

Your Editor needs short articles, field reports and anything that may interest the membership. Did you take any photographs of interesting species this season? Send them to the Editor.

BLACKLIGHT & GOLF?

During one of my trips to Perry County, Indiana in May searching for Lepidoptera, I stopped at a Waffle House in Corydon, IN for breakfast. After enjoying a tasty meal of Steak & Eggs, I headed for my car when I noticed the building behind the restaurant. A single word in the sign identifying the business caught my eye: "BLACKLIGHT". Here it was, an Indoor Blacklight Golf Course. An Indoor Put-Put Golf course. I figured that all of the UV light would attract a moth or two. I visioned windows and door ways covered with Moths. But a walk around the building produced not a single moth.

I returned a week later at 4AM on my way to Illinois and again found not one moth. (It did not improve my golf game either). To say the least, I was disappointed. But all that UV???



"In Door Black Light Golf Course"

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