

Massachusetts Butterflies



Fall 2015, No. 45

Massachusetts Butterflies is the semiannual publication of the Massachusetts Butterfly Club, a chapter of the North American Butterfly Association. Membership in NABA-MBC brings you *American Butterflies* and *Butterfly Gardener*. If you live in the state of Massachusetts, you also receive *Massachusetts Butterflies*, and our mailings of field trips, meetings, and NABA Counts in Massachusetts. Out-of-state members of NABA-MBC and others who wish to receive *Massachusetts Butterflies* may order it from our secretary for \$7 per issue, including postage. Regular NABA dues are \$35 for an individual, \$45 for a family, and \$70 outside the United States. Send a check made out to NABA to: NABA, 4 Delaware Road, Morristown, NJ 07960.

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THE BUTTERFLIERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

With this issue, we are beginning a new series for the journal, in which we will focus on some of the wonderful people who make up our butterfly club. Massachusetts is blessed with an extraordinary number of talented, involved, and hard-working expert naturalists, including some of the best butterflyers in the country. In this and future issues, we will start to get to know some of them a bit better. We are each an inspiration to those around us. Enjoy!

--Editor

BRIAN CASSIE

Founder, NABA-Massachusetts Butterfly Club



What got you started looking at butterflies?

I started looking at butterflies and silk moths and caterpillars when I was about five, living in Middletown, RI. I remember being especially excited when I found a cool caterpillar, such as a *Cecropia*. I kept

looking for caterpillars in my formative years. Then I took a big hiatus on lepidoptera until I was twenty-six, in 1979. My first son, George, was born that summer and he was most happy when he was outside, riding on my shoulder. So we started walking around Millis and looking at butterflies again and I, at least, haven't stopped since.

Can you share with us what it was like growing up? Were you always interested in natural history, and how was that encouraged for you?

As a young kid, I moved around the East Coast with my family, as my dad was in the U.S. Navy. I had three older brothers and a sister then (and very soon after that two younger brothers) and my mom pretty much encouraged us to spend our time outside, so when my big brothers roamed around the woods and fields of RI, VA, FL, and ME, I tagged along whenever I could....looking for turtles and snakes and caterpillars and mantises and black widows. It was great.

You've written a number of books about nature, for adults and for children. Can you tell us a little about your writing?

I grew up in a house full of books of all kinds and I have been a book lover and collector for as long as I can remember. I first got involved in book writing when I was asked to write *The Butterfly Alphabet Book*. Lucky me to have had other book projects come my way not long after that, and so over the past 20 years or so, I have written all or parts of fifteen books, including a number of National Audubon Society regional field guides, three National Audubon Society first guides, a book of animal poetry, a book on worldwide butterflies, the *NABA Checklist and Common Names of North American Butterflies*, a book on tornadoes, and a book on Southern New England shell beaches. My children loved when a new book came out because we ordered Chinese food to celebrate.

Please share with us what it was like to start the Massachusetts Butterfly Atlas Project and the Massachusetts Butterfly Club—how did these come about?

I asked Chris Leahy of the Massachusetts Audubon Society in November 1984 if he thought Mass. Audubon might be interested in sponsoring an atlas project for butterflies. He said “yes” and suggested that I personally get the ball rolling on it. So I was hired,

then Dick Walton and Chris came aboard, and the MBAP became a reality and was the first state butterfly atlas, running from 1986-1990.

The idea for the Massachusetts Butterfly Club was to take the great interest in the Commonwealth's butterflies that had developed over the five years of the MBAP and keep it alive. I wrote to all of the MBAP volunteers and whomever else I could think of (no internet in those days!) and in the first year of the Club's existence, forty-six members joined up.

I am very proud of my part in getting these noteworthy institutions started.

You have an awesome and tremendously broad range of natural history interests—for example, you've done a Big Mammal Year, you've spent a year finding an owl in every town in Massachusetts, you've spent time investigating the lichens of Massachusetts, and this year you've been concentrating on moths. Can you tell us what these Big Years are like for you, and why they're so special? Do you have other Big Years you're thinking about doing?

I do have a love affair with nature - it is profound - and there is just so much out there to experience that I thought years ago that I might start dedicating single calendar years to focusing a lot (but never all) of my field time in one specific direction to better appreciate and learn the subject at hand. So that was the genesis, and I have done "years" on MA butterflies, MA (mostly Foxboro) moths, Northeast mammals, New England orchids, New England islands, New England (mostly MA) trees, New England marine mollusks and their shells, MA birds, North American (mostly MA) owls, MA animal sounds, MA lichens, MA wildflowers, and MA biodiversity...and two wet autumns studying MA fungi.

I would say I learned most from the mammal, moth, lichen, and owl years. But, in truth, they have all been terrific fun. In the future, I may go after herptiles, animal structures, fishes, and natural smells. We'll see.

Do you have a favorite butterfly in Massachusetts? Why do you like that one the best?

My favorite Massachusetts butterfly is the Milbert's Tortoiseshell, and that is based on its looks. If the Falcate Orange-tip were here, it might bump the tortoiseshell from the podium.

You've seen most of the state in your natural history travels—do you have a favorite spot that you're willing to share? Why is it special?

I think that Provincetown is about the most amazing place in the state. The dunes are monumental, and the nearness to shore of deeper ocean waters, with year-round seabirds and whales and seals, makes every trip there special.

Do you have any conservation concerns about our Massachusetts butterflies?

I have to say that despite the efforts of the Massachusetts Butterfly Club and other conservation organizations, I still believe that almost everyone in our state knows nothing about butterflies and their ecology. And when that is the case, any species can disappear. I guess every butterfly in the state needs its own Facebook page....maybe someone would pay attention then.

You are very involved with children—in your writing, in your teaching—do you have any advice for us about how to get children more involved in butterflies and the natural world, and what works for you to spark their interest?

On the door of my classroom is a sign that reads.”Life is Three-dimensional.” I believe that with all of my heart. Butterflies on a flat screen are not really butterflies; they are just pictures of butterflies. It is essential for us - all of us - to realize that two-dimensional “realities” are virtual and not actual realities. It is incumbent upon us to understand the distinction and to make sure the

coming generations have real life, actual encounters with wildlife and people and the Earth and not just “in the palm of my hand” flat screen encounters.

Is there anything you can share about yourself that would be something new and different? Something that none of us knows about you?

I can tell you that I love the voices of Andrea Bocelli, Tommy Makem, Patsy Cline, Brook Benton, Nat King Cole; that I could eat grilled shrimp, fresh peaches, and good French bread every day and never grow tired of them; that I am a very big fan of New England professional sports; that I love road trips; that my heroes through the years have been John Glenn, Jim Ryan, Roger Tory Peterson.

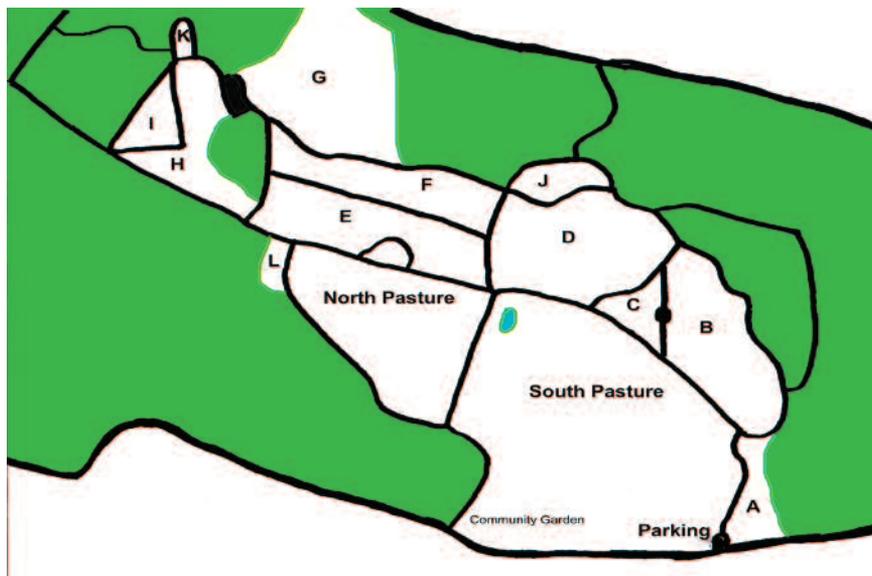


Massachusetts Butterflying Destination: Breakneck Hill Conservation Land, Breakneck Hill Road, Southborough, MA

By Dawn Puliafico

Breakneck Hill Conservation Land is a relatively quiet jewel of protected land located in Boston's Metrowest region. It is popular with local dog walkers. Owned by the Town of Southborough, BHCL boasts over 80 acres. Not that long ago, it was overrun with Oriental Bittersweet, but these days, nice walking paths are mowed through rolling meadows of grasses, wildflowers and orchards. Sometimes the grass on the paths can be high, so it is wise to guard against ticks. Forest edges the meadows, and you will also see a pond and a small wetlands area.

Besides butterflies, and depending on the season you visit, you may see wild columbine, spotted cranesbill, common and cow vetches, milkweed, and pink ladyslippers; eastern bluebirds, scar-



let tanagers, ruby-throated hummingbirds, and indigo buntings; rabbits and the occasional red fox, coyote, muskrat, or white-tailed deer.

Be sure to check for butterflies right in the parking lot, especially after a recent rain. If steep hills are a problem, park at the community gardens. Otherwise, the first hill in Section A is the steepest one.

Trails, marked in black on the map, may vary depending on the mowing done any particular year (Trails may be closed to protect nesting birds or to let an eroding area rest). Southborough Town Forest abuts the property, so you may extend your hike there to look for woodland butterflies.

As you walk through the property, watch for Eastern Tailed Blues, Gray Hairstreaks, and the occasional Eastern Tiger Swallowtail lifting from the clover right on the paths. Cabbage Whites, Clouded and Orange Sulphurs can be found flying over all the meadows. European Skippers are found by the thousands all through the meadows.

Section A is going to be in a state of flux for the next couple of years, as a butterfly garden is planned and underway for this section. It will probably not be that good for butterflies until that work is complete.

Section B is home to a variety of butterflies. Common Wood Nymphs, Common Ringlets and Little Wood Satyrs are often seen flying across the paths, or flitting close to the trail's edge, especially along the border of Southborough Town Forest. The trail splitting Section B from C boasts the best scenic view of the back meadows and is also a reliable location for spotting Black Swallowtails. A spring walk on the trail through the Southborough Town Forest (entered from Section B) will most likely provide multiple Mourning Cloak sightings.

Where Section B meets Section D is a good spot to look for Great Spangled Fritillaries and Monarchs. There is a nice wide patch of milkweed here right next to the trail. The same can be said where Section D meets Section F. Banded Hairstreaks and an occasional Striped Hairstreak are also common sightings, in season, among the milkweed.

Hobomok Skippers are sometimes found in Section E. Section F is the best area for Silvery Blues. Silvery Blues have also been seen less commonly in Sections B and H.

There is a picnic table near the corner of F and G, on the edge of a copse of trees. While passing through Section H, keep an eye out for Indigo Buntings that nest here.

The last section worth special mention, Section K, is popular with a variety of duskywings. Also, the back forest edge of Section K is a reliable spot for seeing Eastern Tiger Swallowtails and Mourning Cloaks, as well as multiple Banded Hairstreaks resting on oak leaves.

Belted Galloways graze in the North or South Pastures from spring through fall. (Don't forget to check the muddy area around their drinking trough and the fresh cow patties for butterflies!) There is electric fencing along many of the paths around the cows' pastures. The gravel trail between the North and South pastures down to the Wetlands is also another good place to look for puddling butterflies after a rainstorm. Oddly, the community gardens area seems to be the least interesting with respect to butterflies. Cabbage Whites are common there, but that is about it.

Butterflies to look for at Breakneck Hill Conservation Land:
A-abundant (10+/trip in season), C-common (6+/trip in season),
U-uncommon (1-5 trip/in season), and R-rare (not seen every year)

Swallowtails

Black Swallowtail -U

Eastern Tiger Swallowtail -U

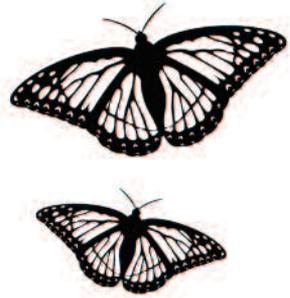
Spicebush Swallowtail -U

Whites and Sulphurs

Cabbage White -A
Clouded Sulphur-A
Orange Sulphur-U

Gossamer-Wings

American Copper -U
Banded Hairstreak -C
Striped Hairstreak -U
White M Hairstreak- R
Eastern Pine Elfin-R
Gray Hairstreak-U to C
Eastern Tailed-Blue- C to A
Spring Azure -U
Summer Azure-U
Silvery Blue-U to R



Brush-foots

Great Spangled Fritillary - C to A
Silver-bordered Fritillary - R
Pearl Crescent - C to A
Eastern Comma - R
Question Mark - R
Mourning Cloak - U
American Lady R
Painted Lady - R
Red Admiral - R
Red-Spotted Admiral - R
Viceroy - U
Little Wood-Satyr - A
Common Ringlet - C to A
Common Wood Nymph - A
Monarch - U to R (due to recent population troubles)

Skippers

Silver-spotted Skipper - U
Juvenal's Duskywing - C
Horace's Duskywing - C
Least Skipper - U
European Skipper -A
Hobomok Skipper - U
Peck's Skipper - U
Tawny Edged Skipper - U
Northern Broken-Dash - C

Little Glassywing - C
Dun Skipper - U
Northern Cloudywing - R
Common Sootywing - U
Dreamy Duskywing U

It's a safe bet that there are other species here that haven't yet been counted (especially if they are skippers!).

Directions:

Take Mass Pike to Exit 12. Then follow Route 9/Worcester Road West about 1.7 miles. Turn left onto Woodland Road. Follow Woodland Road for 1.0 mile. Breakneck Hill Road is slight right at a three-way intersection. The parking lot is about 0.3 miles on the right side of the road.

(If using GPS, 75 Breakneck Hill Road, Southborough, MA will deliver you across the street from the parking area.)

Overflow parking is available next to the community gardens.



Breakneck Hill Conservation Land, Southborough, MA, Dawn Puliafico

2015 NABA Butterfly Counts

Compiled by Tom Gagnon,
Vice-President West, NABA-Massachusetts Butterfly Club

Looking over the data for the 2015 NABA counts, I would like to give a big THANK YOU to the compilers of the counts, many of whom are very busy with full time jobs. This all takes a lot of time, and I would like them to know their efforts are appreciated.

The number of participants seems to stay about the same for the counts from year to year. As usual, the counts down on the Cape area always seem to need more people. Concord lead the way with 17 participants followed by Southern Berkshire at 16 people.

Central Franklin Count lead the way with individual butterflies at 4,332, more than doubling the runner-up Northampton at 2,083. The 3,015 Bog Coppers on the Central Franklin count is a new national high! Central Franklin also lead the way with a high count of 48 species followed by Blackstone Corridor with 44. Every count is just as important as the next, and everyone adds to our data base of information on our butterflies.

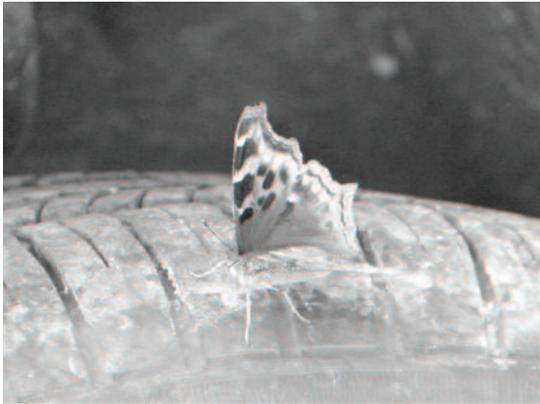
Looking at the individual species, there were 9 species seen on ONE count only. The Northern Berkshire Count claimed four of these: the Harvester, Atlantis Fritillary, Compton Tortoiseshell and White Admiral. The Central Berkshire Count claimed 3 with those being Mustard White, Acadian Hairstreak and Dion Skipper. The other two were Hoary Edge on the Central Franklin Count and a Painted Lady on the Northern Essex Count.

Highlight from the Brewster Count was 5 Juniper Hairstreaks. The only Tawny Emperors were found on the Northampton and Southern Berkshire Counts. Both Northern and Southern Cloudywing were found on only two counts each. These species seem to have taken a sharp decline in recent years. Nine Hickory Hairstreaks on the Northern Essex Count was a very nice high number along with 6 on the Northern Berkshire Count. Three Gray Commas found on the Central Franklin Count was a new

high count record for them, with one also found on the Northern Berkshire Count.

I would like to take this time to congratulate Rene Laubach for founding and compiling the Southern Berkshire Count for the last 24 years!!!! Retirement is his now to enjoy with his lovely wife Christina. May they have many happy trails to hike in the years to come.

Tom Gagnon, Vice-president West



Compton Tortoiseshell (*Nymphalis vaualbum*) on Tom Gagnon's car tire, 7/11/15, Berkshire Co., MA, Betsy Higgins



Tom Gagnon and friends, Northampton Community Gardens, 9/5/15, Florence, MA, Marjorie Watson

4th of July Count 2015											
Northern Berkshire		2			5			104	97	5	1
Central Berkshire		11			1		11	42	87	10	
Southern Berkshire		1		4	1			54	76	19	
Central Franklin		7		16		8		298	319	32	
Northampton		18		9		4		231	389	64	
Northern Worcester		3		19		3		233	76	15	
Concord		17		2		1		104	62	4	
Northern Essex		1		13				135	29	8	
Blackstone Corridor		1		4		2		18	54	17	
Bristol				1		2		4	3	5	
Falmouth		4						20	23	6	
Brewster		4		2		9		172	4	8	
Barnstable											
Truro		1		7		1		19	9	3	
Martha's Vineyard											
	Pipevine Swallowtail										
	Black Swallowtail										
	Giant Swallowtail										
	Eastern Tiger Swallowtail										
	Canadian Tiger Swallowtail										
	Spicebush Swallowtail										
	Mustard White										
	Cabbage White										
	Clouded Sulphur										
	Orange Sulphur										
	Cloudless Sulphur										
	Harvester										

4th of July Count 2015												
Northern Berkshire			19			62	6	19				
Central Berkshire		1	4	47		1	1	2				
Southern Berkshire		1				32		5				
Central Franklin	15		3015	2		33		2				
Northampton	32					6	1	4				
Northern Worcester	236			1		1		3				
Concord	18		15	4		8		6				
Northern Essex	4			1		81	9	19				
Blackstone Corridor	29			1		7		11				
Bristol	4			2		1		2				
Falmouth	13			4	7	2						
Brewster	95		2	17	5	7		3		5		
Barnstable												
Truro	111		103	6	12	1		9		1		
Martha's Vineyard												
	American Copper	Bronze Copper	Bog Copper	Coral Hairstreak	Acadian Hairstreak	Edward's Hairstreak	Banded Hairstreak	Hickory Hairstreak	Striped Hairstreak	Oak Hairstreak	Juniper Hairstreak	White M Hairstreak

4th of July Count 2015													
Northern Berkshire		15		80		100	7	26		50		5	22
Central Berkshire		5		16		26	4					27	10
Southern Berkshire		15		21		126	3			1			11
Central Franklin		28		26		149	12			8		2	24
Northampton		27		21		83	3		13	1		688	27
Northern Worcester	14	31		20	1	80	2						
Concord	4	25		23		100			24			99	
Northern Essex		5		21		142							13
Blackstone Corridor	7	75		7		89			1			68	13
Bristol	3	6		2		5			3			246	
Falmouth	3	8		1	1							1	
Brewster	2	3		1								95	
Barnstable													
Truro	2			2									
Martha's Vineyard													
	Gray Hainstreak												
	Eastern Tailed-Blue												
	'Spring' Spring Azure												
	'Summer' Spring Azure												
	Variegated Fritillary												
	Great Spangled Fritillary												
	Aphrodite Fritillary												
	Atlantis Fritillary												
	Silver-bordered Fritillary												
	Meadow Fritillary												
	Harris' Checkerspot												
	Pearl Crescent												
	Baltimore Checkerspot												

4th of July Count 2015														
Northern Berkshire		17	1	1	5				30			20	20	
Central Berkshire	1	1			2				7					4
Southern Berkshire	1	13			3		1		22					1
Central Franklin	1	12	3				4		15		6			1
Northampton		5					3		29		3			12
Northern Worcester	1	8			5		8		15		2			
Concord		6			2		3		44	2				
Northern Essex	1	10					7	1	19					
Blackstone Corridor	1	3			5		15		8	1	1			4
Bristol	1	1					2				1			1
Falmouth							2		1					
Brewster	1						8		11					
Barnstable														
Truro					1		7		17		1			
Martha's Vineyard														
	Question Mark	Eastern Comma	Gray Comma	Compton Tortoiseshell	Mourning Cloak	Milbert's Tortoiseshell	American Lady	Painted Lady	Red Admiral	Common Buckeye	Red-spotted Admiral	White Admiral	Red-spotted Purple	Viceroy

4th of July Count 2015													
Northern Berkshire			2	4			3	225	2	9			
Central Berkshire			4		2	1		170	5	5			
Southern Berkshire		1	1		7	26	22	143		21			
Central Franklin			6	5	12	26		1		112	2	2	2
Northampton		1	2		10	21	4	210	18	30			
Northern Worcester			12	1	3	66	7	1	16	44			
Concord				1	13	49	1	28		38			
Northern Essex				3	2	80	3	2	2	20			1
Blackstone Corridor			1	2	5	75		207	3	40		5	
Bristol			1		4	7		49	1	2			
Falmouth						1		34	3				
Brewster						3		57	16	7			
Barnstable													
Truro					1	23		36		11			
Martha's Vineyard													
	Hackberry Emperor	Tawny Emperor	Northern Pearly-Eye	Eyed Brown	Appalachian Brown	Little Wood-Satyr	Common Ringlet	Common Wood-Nymph	Monarch	Silver-spotted Skipper	Hoary Edge	Southern Cloudywing	Northern Cloudywing



Eastern Pine Elfin (*Callophrys niphon*), 5/16/15, Shawme-Crowell State Forest, Sandwich, MA, Bo Zaremba



Ocola Skipper (*Panoquina ocola*), 8/22/15, Northampton Community Gardens, Florence, MA, John Body



Pearl Crescent (*Phyciodes tharos*), 6/23/15, Dartmouth, MA, Cheryl Califano



Juniper Hairstreak (*Callophrys gryneus*), 5/15/15, Hingham, MA, Bruce deGraaf



Eastern Comma (*Polygona comma*), 7/23/15, West Concord, MA, David Newman



Baltimore Checkerspot eggs (*Euphydryas phaeton*), 3 days old,
6/23/15, West Bridgewater, MA, Garry Kessler



Baltimore Checkerspots (*Euphydryas phaeton*),
6/20/15, Attleboro, MA, Nancy Callahan



Clouded Sulphurs (*Colias philodice*), 9/12/15, Westport, MA, Michael Newton



Brian Klassanos examining a Striped Hairstreak (*Satyrrium liparops*), 6/30/15, Ware, MA, Wendy Howes

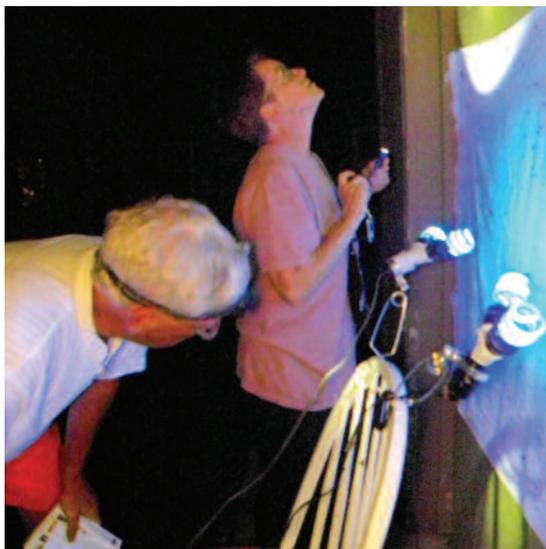


Striped Hairstreak (*Satyrrium liparops*), 6/30/15, Woburn, MA, Bruce deGraaf



Eastern Tailed-Blue (*Everes comyntas*), 6/21/15, North Brookfield, MA, Nancy Callahan

Brian Cassie and
Betsy Higgins at
the moth lights,
8/20/15,
West Whately, MA,
Sue Cloutier





Giant Swallowtail early instar caterpillar (*Papilio cresphontes*), 9/6/14, Williamsburg, MA, Carol Duke

Giant Swallowtail (*Papilio cresphontes*) molting into chrysalis, 9/5/14, Williamsburg, MA, Carol Duke



Giant Swallowtail (*Papilio cresphontes*) chrysalis, 10/3/14, Williamsburg, MA, Carol Duke



Giant Swallowtail (*Papilio cresphontes*), 5/24/15, Williamsburg, MA, Carol Duke

4th of July Count 2015												
Northern Berkshire						8	38		21	2	2	
Central Berkshire						1	4			15		1
Southern Berkshire		1				4	362		10	1		11
Central Franklin						5	17		4	2	2	3
Northampton				4	7				1		2	
Northern Worcester						1	88		6	1	3	1
Concord					4						2	
Northern Essex						4	319		13			1
Blackstone Corridor			1		1		9				12	
Bristol			1	4					3			
Falmouth			1	1						1	1	
Brewster						1			2		3	
Barnstable												
Truro							12				7	
Martha's Vineyard												
	Dreamy Duskywing	Juvenal's Duskywing	Horace's Duskywing	Wild Indigo Duskywing	Common Sootywing	Least Skipper	European Skipper	Indian Skipper	Peck's Skipper	Tawny-edged Skipper	Crossline Skipper	Long Dash

4th of July Count 2015												
Northern Berkshire	2	10		8	1							10
Central Berkshire	3	6		12	1			5				28
Southern Berkshire	2	19		2			1					24
Central Franklin	24	28		10		1						25
Northampton	31	8		4	10			2		2		41
Northern Worcester		29		1								
Concord	12	3		2	30			1		8		22
Northern Essex	8	13				1						1
Blackstone Corridor	13	15		40	34			1		3		19
Bristol	36									3		8
Falmouth	4		1									1
Brewster	52	1		2				3				24
Barnstable												
Truro	26			2				1				22
Martha's Vineyard												
	Northern Broken Dash	Little Glassywing	Sachem	Delaware Skipper	Mulberry Wing	Hobomok Skipper	Zabulon Skipper	Broad-winged Skipper	Dion Skipper	Black Dash	Two-spotted Skipper	Dun Skipper

Summary	No. of Individuals	No. of Species	No. of Participants	Party Hours	Date	Compiler
Northern Berkshire	1066	40	10	24.5	7-11	Tom Tynning
Central Berkshire	584	39	16	25	7-18	Tom Tynning
Southern Berkshire	1069	39	16	25	7-3	Rene Laubach
Central Franklin	4332	48	10	52.5	7-5	Mark Fairbrother
Northampton	2082	42	10	40.5	7-19	Mark Fairbrother
Northern Worcester	1083	38	11	34	7-5	Wendy Howes
Concord	787	37	17	20	7-11	Dick Walton
Northern Essex	995	36	7	17	7-3	Howard Hoople
Blackstone Corridor	928	44	6	18.5	7-11	Tom Dodd
Bristol	416	32	4	5	7-25	Mark Mello
Falmouth	144	25	6	n/a	7-18	Alison Robb
Brewster	625	32	7	14	7-25	Joe Dwelly
Barnstable	results	not	available			Ian Ives
Truro	454	29	3	n/a	7-11	Alison Robb
Martha's Vineyard	No count	this	year			Matt Pelikan



Mulberry Wing (*Poanes massasoit*),
6/12/15, Westboro, MA, Bruce deGraaf

Getting To Know and Raise Giant Swallowtails

Three years ago, while walking in our summer garden on a bright, warm honey day, I was startled by the unfailing fluttering and startling beauty of a large, creamy vision that got caught in a corner of my eye as it flashed by. Not able to place the apparition at that moment, I remember wondering, “What was that!?”

When in the garden, I am always on wildlife alert, so immediately went in search of this unknown streak of buttery yellow. Stepping around a towering and full blown hydrangea and a tall stand of Black snakeroot, I caught sight of a butterfly feeding on bee balm. I knew at once it had to be a member of the Papilionidae family, but it was not one of the usual swallowtails that frequented our land.

In the presence of this stunning butterfly, I was both bewildered and excited. An exotic being had entered the landscape I was quietly walking through, and the garden now felt charmed. The butterfly paid me little attention and continued feeding, allowing me to get a few shots before she flew away. I feared for the lovely creature, for I heard a Gray Catbird whining



nearby and knew the bird would be relentless in his pursuit. I did not see the butterfly again before going inside.

Once inside, I immediately looked through the species list on the Massachusetts Butterfly Club's website, and realized that I had been present and in the moment with a Giant Swallowtail (*Papilio cresphontes*.) This swallowtail was rare in our Western Massachusetts gardens.

Gracefully wearing a wingspan of over five inches, Giant Swallowtails are striking, and the largest butterfly found in the United States and Canada. Their brownish-black dorsal wings are dramatically laced with scales of the same pale yellow found covering their ventral wings and abdomen. Tiger Swallowtails are a similar soft yellow color, but I never mistook the many that fly here for a Giant. I was not favored with another sighting of a Giant Swallowtail that year.

In late September of 2013, I had one sighting of a tattered Giant feeding on sedum growing outside my barn studio. Then, 2014 brought an explosion of Giants to our area. Here in our Williamsburg gardens I had three separate sightings in August. One afternoon, I happened to look out my French doors at just the right moment to see a Giant Swallowtail on second blooms of a Korean lilac. I dashed outside with my camera in hopes that the flowers had a bounty of sweets to offer and occupy the butterfly so that I might get close.

Being near a Giant again was joyous and like a surprising event, took me out of the ordinary work day. My excitement made it difficult to remain steady. As I was clicking away with my camera, I began to feel giddy when another Giant arrived and joined in the nectar feast.

The butterflies did not seem to notice me or each other and, as with all butterflies, they seemed in a hurry so did not stay too long. I watched as one flew off to the West through the crabapple orchard

and the other southeast into the middle garden. I could not find either one again that day.

When I mowed the garden paths the following afternoon, I flushed out one Giant in the middle garden and one near the apple tree ‘gateway’ at the entrance to the blueberry field close to the South field. I assumed these to be the same two butterflies from the day before, and was glad that they had survived the catbirds and other hungry critters that prey upon butterflies here. The birds would have been as excited as I was to see the Giants in the gardens. Giants’ abdomens, like their wings, are larger than any other butterfly to be found here. A bigger meal for the birds. Ouch! It is difficult to love both predator and prey.

A couple of days later, I saw another Giant on the same lilac and once more raced out of my studio camera in hand. I was fortunate, yet another time, to get close to the butterfly and luckier that time in being able to follow the Giant Swallowtail into other parts of the garden. I photographed the Giant flying and then landing on a tall blooming oriental lily – two non-native beings caught in an embrace. The large red-petaled flower next to the large, creamy-yellow, swallowtail became a beautiful picture holding the magic of that memory. Towards the end of August, I saw another Giant in the garden relishing Joe-Pye-weed nectar.

People were reporting more numerous sightings of Giant Swallowtails across the state in 2014. One of my dear friends, who lives in Florence, had called and asked if I could help her identify a large yellow butterfly sighted in her garden fluttering around a rue plant. I had earlier shared my Giant excitement with her, and she had read a post from my blog. It was fun to sense the shared enthusiasm in her voice for she believed it might be a Giant. I asked her to describe the butterfly and then, convinced it was a Giant, asked her to look over the host plant for eggs and larvae.

A couple of days later, I got another call from Eva telling me she had a gift for me and asking could she bring it up right away.

Twenty minutes later, I was standing in my kitchen looking at a blue-green bouquet of rue bedecked with Giant eggs and cats.

Raising Giants can be more challenging than rearing Monarch Butterflies or Black Swallowtails. The primary issue is finding enough of the host plant for the Giant caterpillars. I did not have members of the Rutaceae family, no prickly-ash or the non native rue growing in my garden and only three small plants of *Dictamnus*, whereas, I always have an abundance of milkweed and wild carrot plants. Eva gave me a number of leafy rue branches along with my new wards, but she only had one plant in her garden and there were other Giant cats devouring them hourly.

So, I had the added task of seeking out food and found the help I needed at Magic Wings, our local butterfly house. The manager, Fred Gagnon, was very generous with his time and offered me both plants and housing for my wards. Not knowing the Giant caterpillars, I was not keen on raising them out in the open the way I do Monarchs. And, I would be traveling to North Truro during the larval stages of their life cycle. I was grateful to Fred for putting together a large mesh cage that held a good sized potted rue plant and a smaller one for the younger larvae and eggs. I felt lucky walking away with my receipts and needed material for a new Lepidoptera adventure.

There were several tiny eggs covered with an orange sugar-like coating placed near the top of the rue cuttings and on seed pods Eva had given me. Though I missed seeing the emergence from the egg, I did happen upon one first instar eating part of an egg casing that had been her home and noted her teeny setae and mostly brown body sporting a small white saddle.



Giant Swallowtail caterpillars are the most unusual I have known. Nature has unique ways of disguising her beasts, giving fragile critters protective armor in thousands of unique ways. Giants have been given an excrement disguise which would certainly make them unappealing to most predators. They look remarkably like bird poop but also have hidden red horns or osmeterium similar to all *Papilio* larvae. This added defense feature is packed with noxious chemicals that are dispersed when the caterpillars are feeling threatened. Once, I was on the receiving end of the not terribly threatening horns when I had to move a stem of rue a caterpillar was on.



I found the larvae somewhat unsettling. Being a bit circumspect in how I dealt with my wards, I never had the urge to hold one as with the monarchs. My reserved feelings had nothing to do with the disguise of bird droppings but more the mysterious manner of the novel, to me, caterpillar hidden beneath an impressive tapestry-like headdress. The “headdress” is more a thorax crown but whatever the description, the caterpillars projected, to this observer, a rather furtive nature. Aware that it was myself doing the projecting, I imagined, once I got to know them, the larvae would be as meek as any monarch. I hope to have another chance to rear them so I might find out. Perhaps, since they lacked animated tentacles with which the monarch larvae are equipped, I could not sense their moods.

As the Giant Swallowtail caterpillars morphed from one instar to another, their outer coats became more elaborate and handsome, even intimidating. Still, from a distance, a bird or squirrel might think they are looking at unappetizing poop. Taking a macro lens to the subject opened a more detailed picture of the striking fifth instar.

The little chocolate caterpillar head was buried beneath a bulky white-edged brown skin decorated with red-orange bands covered with crisp white circles mirroring the edging. There were faux eyes and sparkles of lavender blues along the elaborate helmet. The whole effect with different values and hues of black and brown and white was one of imposing beauty. Seeing the little guys munching or moving about the rue plant, brought to mind small snakes. Another clever trick nature plays on larger predators, while protecting the vulnerable.

A week later, while visiting North Truro, Massachusetts, I had about twenty giant caterpillars in various stages munching on rue leaves housed within mesh cages. For seven days the caterpillars consumed with purpose as I worked nearby and was able to observe their behavior.. With what I considered equal resolve, though my life did not depend on it, I sat, inches away from my caterpillar community, and wrote towards a forty page deadline. We were surrounded by whirling winds whistling up through the dunes, heath bowl, dwarfed pines and metal screens shuddering around the porch. The added sounds of the ocean slapping the shore was beguiling and made me wonder if these migrants felt the different wild environment and enjoyed the salty air as much as I did.

Returning home to Williamsburg with all my little wards, I found two caterpillars had stopped eating and were holding still. They emptied a good portion of their digestive systems and began to seek out a safe spot to pupate. Soon, I had two chrysalises hanging and one other cat about to split her caterpillar skin. I had not been able to witness that stage of their metamorphosis but later on set my camera up near a fifth instar holding onto a rue stem upside

down. The Giant was spinning her silk node and I got ready to witness the unveiling. That is what I had hoped to do. The caterpillar had finished the silk node, turned back around and secured her white hind end to it, then went right to work creating her silk lasso, which would hold her body upright. Well, it did not take long for me to notice something was wrong.



The caterpillar kept trying to get under the lasso but seemed to be making more than one loop and getting them all tangled instead of being able to get inside. She tried and tried but finally gave up and fell back so that she was perpendicular to the stem. Her rear connection to the silk node held tight,

but I was worried she would drop off. At one point, I held the caterpillar up and thought to tie her in place but then was not sure the chrysalis would be able to cast off the skin. In the end, I put my hand up to catch her in case she let go. Within a minute, I found myself holding the tiny body of the giant, who was more chrysalis than cat by this time. Just beneath her sagging caterpillar skin anyway. I thought the giant would die, that perhaps there was a virus. I placed her inside a small bird's nest and moved it away from the other caterpillars. It was a happy moment when, a couple of days later, I discovered a handsome and healthy looking chrysalis.

The chrysalis was stouter than other swallowtails and wore a multi-textured, soft brownish gray bark-like coat complete with dark nose and pointy ears more pronounced than on their cousins. When I put my pale nose closer to



the mini form I could see some of the subtle designs from the caterpillar exhibited on the pupa. The patterns and muted colors with speckles of moss green helped to camouflage the chrysalis. Days went by and the chill of late fall set in while the last of the caterpillars completed their larval life and entered into the still chrysalis state.

The little sleeping creatures, dotted along the rue stems, dreamt along with me throughout the long winter months. I placed the plants, now covered more with chrysalises than leaves, near a bouquet of *Cecropia* and *Polyphemus* moth cocoons that were resting near an open window and later moved them all into the front hall of our farmhouse, which remained cold all winter. I visited them daily and gave the plants a gentle shake to somewhat mimic the outdoors.

Checking on my silent little menagerie during the drawn out months of cold and ice, I tried to put my mind into their being — that of a pupal place of quiet, accepting and becoming what life intended. I had plenty of my own imaginal discs to cultivate and always walked away from my calm quiescent community of chrysalises feeling lighter and inspired. Winter is long; there is time for the imagination to stretch and create. And, time to appreciate the miracle of metamorphosis.



Fast forward to May of 2015 which brought days of 90 degrees and our gardens and hillside teeming with life. I brought the Giant chrysalises into the warm barn studio and within two weeks, I began to see movement and for several days after, when walking into the barn, I discovered Giant Swallowtail butterflies sharing my space. I never did get the chance to see one eclose, but found them hanging in their full splendor and nearly ready to go outside. Their more opaque and textured chrysalises were harder to read than the clear casings of a monarch, which easily gave me clues to when they would emerge. By the end of May, I had released all but one of my wards.

The butterflies were as aloof as the caterpillars had been. We had never connected and I could not, without causing panic, get near any of them except one, who stayed on my fingers, while I walked into the garden. I placed the more pliant Giant on a lilac topiary which stood near a stand of French lilacs and viburnums. Within



a couple of minutes a Tiger Swallowtail flew onto the same cluster of blossoms. It was only seconds before the not-quite-acclimated Giant was accosted by the Tiger. The force of the Tiger's assault

blew me away. The flustered Giant was pulled to the ground while the Tiger held her, as she flapped wildly to get free, and he attempted to mate. I felt bad for the female, who I had only just discovered was a female, and worked to free her once, but by the Tiger's second attempt I realized, that in nature, if she had survived the winter here, more serious attacks may have come her way.

Other than my wards, I had no encounters with Giant Swallowtails this year. We've had a cooler than normal summer and it seems the sightings were down in our area. When writing this article, I called Fred over at Magic Wings and during our conversation he told me that last year he had caught five or six Giants on any single day, but this year he caught only one over the entire summer.

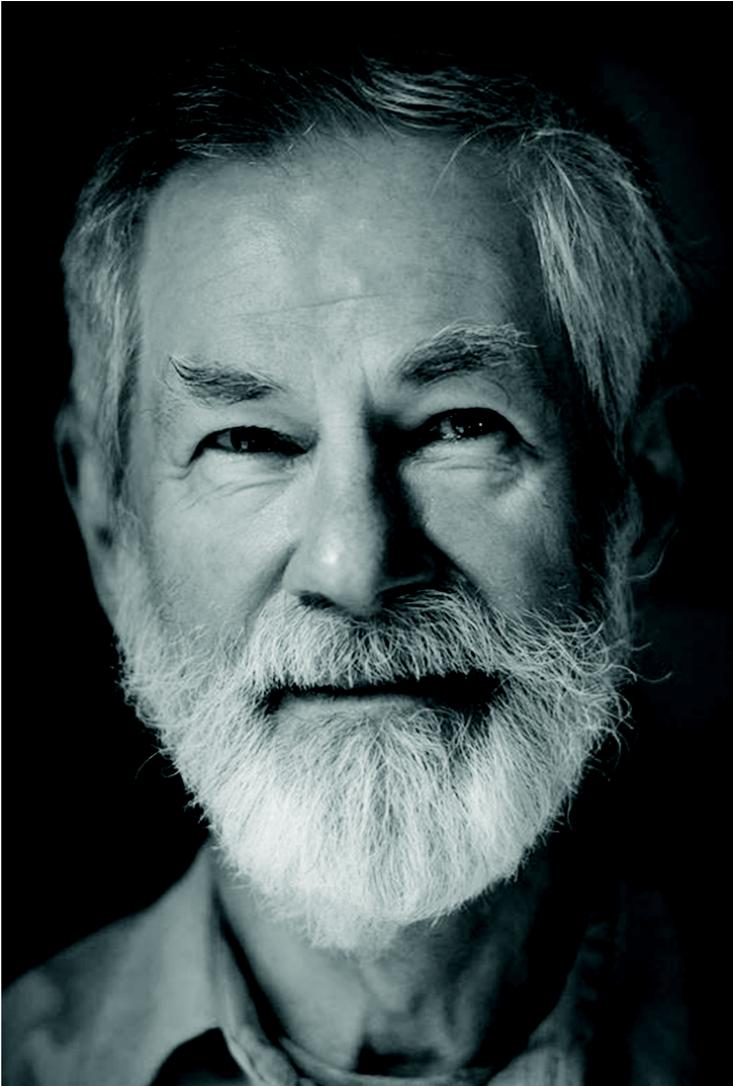
There is speculation that climate change will bring us more Giants in time. I will plant their host plants in my garden, and I hope to have the privilege of rearing the caterpillars again, so that I may get to know all about them, and even discover that they are as endearing as any Monarch caterpillar.

Photos and Article by Carol Duke
Flower Hill Farm Retreat
Williamsburg, MA

*(for more about Carol and her idyllic butterfly haven, see:
www.caroldukeflowers.com - ed.)*



Bob Bowker
May 6, 1941 - June 12, 2015



Bob Bowker, 74, of S. Natick, MA, died peacefully at home on June 12, 2015, no longer tormented by Alzheimer's disease. Son of the late Harold T. Bowker and Muriel F Bowker, he is survived by his sister Joan Bowker and partner Dan Close of Underhill VT, brother H. Thomas Bowker Jr. of Washington DC, and his wife of 46 treasured years, Lesley Stillwell.

Bob graduated from St Sebastian's Country Day School, Newton ('59) and Fordham ('64) BA, Literature/Philosophy, followed by advanced piano studies at Mannes College of Music, NYC. He was full of *joie de vivre* in a measured, intellectual way. He chose a career of restaurant management in Manhattan and began the pursuit of expertise in wine. Returning with Lesley to Newton, MA ('76), he was hired by fine Boston restaurants and hotels, appointed maitre d'hôtel at the Ritz Cafe and later, the Cafe Plaza, with 6 years as the Bay Tower Room's sommelier in between. He won several local and National awards for his wine lists. Now a prodigious scholar of wine, he delighted in sharing his knowledge with Wine History and Appreciation courses at Harvard Center for Lifelong Learning and conducting training sessions in wine service. He traveled to wineries of France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Chile, Argentina, the Finger Lakes region of New York, California, Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia, creating lasting friendships with winemakers. He was fascinated by the science of taste and the optimal pairing of wine with food, which inspired his forming the Sommelier Society of Boston and regularly conducting wine tastings, dinners and seminars. Teaching and sharing continued as he joined the sales force at Classic Wine Imports, coaching customers and their staff how best to taste, sell and serve the many wines in the portfolio in addition to guiding them to the perfect selection. Always gently elegant and sartorially correct, he was famous for his artful bow-ties and berets and insistence upon real glass, the correct shape, when showing his wines to customers.

Bob's spare time was filled with exploration of the natural world, inspired by summers in New Hampshire as a child, and spurred on by a course he took, early '70s, at Hunter College: 'Birding in Central Park'. He joined many Brookline Bird Club trips to AZ, TX, MS, LA, FL, Trinidad and Tobago. Upon moving to South Natick he embarked on a serious study of butterflies and dragonflies, becoming accomplished enough to give courses and seminars at the Broadmoor Audubon Sanctuary. He was apprenticed to Master animal tracker Paul Rezendes, and afterwards applied his knowledge leading winter field trips for Audubon. He

studied trees, ferns, wild mushrooms, beaver, crickets and katydids, frogs, toads and salamanders. He retired from Classic in 2008, relishing the time to turn his hobbies into even more passionate study. A member of the Massachusetts Butterfly Club since 1996, he monitored several butterfly sites, took careful census and led field trips for members and friends. After dark, if not leading a Woodcock Walk or Owl Prowl he'd be at the theatre, a concert or dance performance, attending a lecture, or giving one: no couch potato he! Early training gave him exceptional musical understanding, and he found music wherever he went. He loved to walk, bicycle, swim, discover, and was an avid reader with a huge book and poetry collection, but far too soon his cruel disease took his speech, knowledge and all his understanding. We are so sorrowful, but have many special memories.

—Lesley Stillwell

I think gentle, warm, focused, and generous with his time and knowledge are words often used and well suited to describe Bob. But, I believe his wife Lesley's loving tribute to him will add to the image, invoking awe and varying degrees of surprise at the range of Bob's interests and accomplishments. As she eloquently tells us, he was a man of arts, humanities, and sciences – studying, teaching, leading, and enjoying them. If you talked with him at length you'd learn about his abiding interests, but it would take some digging to learn a part of the extent of his accomplishments. He was gracefully unpretentious. And physically fit! Trying to keep up with him going up the Charlton power line would quickly prove that! He was very focused and tenacious when pursuing his passions. Watching him assert his intellectual tenacity was hugely inspiring. He displayed this till the end – battling his disease by studying and re-studying to try to retain what he used to know. I'm sure he will be missed by many in different ways for all that he was. I will miss him for very many things, among them - his short, soft chuckle when he was amused, and his genuine, very warm hug.

—Elise Barry

About five years ago this very enthusiastic, bright-eyed man approached me after a monthly Friends meeting and began to share how much he'd enjoy offering a program on dragonflies for the public at our three local refuges. This man was Bob, and boy did he have a passion for these tiny flying marvels. I of course, said sure! Having someone with Bob's natural desire to show others the joys of nature, specifically dragonflies, while being so well versed on their role for biodiversity was a treat. I so enjoyed getting to know him over those months planning for a program series and listening to his stories of being in the field. He truly lit up every time we talked. His love and dedication to helping others see the beauty that he saw in nature was not only infectious, but a real pleasure to listen to and learn from.

—Susan J. Russo

Visitor Services Manager, Eastern Massachusetts NWR Complex

Bob had such a kind and gentle spirit and was never one to brag, but what Tom and I remember about him was his enthusiasm that he brought to our butterfly counts. At the wrap-up meetings Bob always had very interesting observations and unique perspectives to share with us about the butterflies and other critters he encountered in the field that day. He was also very dedicated – often he would call days in advance to find out where his territory would be and would scout it out ahead of time so he could get as many wonderful bug sightings as possible. He loved being out among the wild things and sharing his experiences with his friends. We really miss him.

—Cathy and Tom Dodd

Bob spent a lot of time butterflying at Allens Pond. Especially in late summer and fall. Often I would be driving around in my Sanctuary truck and turned the corner to see Bob Bowker. No one knew that area better than him; no one spent more time looking for White Ms and Zabulons out there than him. He often would ask me if I had seen any Red Banded Hairstreaks, because he had a single recording of one there one year.

—Lauren Miller-Donnelly

Bob Bowker was the first person to find Bronze Copper in the Charles River drainage; he first reported it on 6/12/2008 in Boston's Millennium Park, a park constructed over an old landfill along the Charles River. Before that, it was only known from the Sudbury/Concord area and a few scattered reports from Berkshire Co. and Essex Co. Bob's mentor was Richard Hildreth; he learned about Sherborn power line from Dick. He visited Dick once or twice at his cabin in Steuben, Maine.

Bob was the first person to report Red-banded Hairstreak in Massachusetts: he reported one on 8/3/2011 at Gooseberry Neck in Dartmouth. Then, 2 weeks later on 8/20/2011, Bo Zaremba got the first Massachusetts photograph on Tom Gagnon's trip to Fannie Stebbins. Then on 8/23 Brian Cassie reported it from the Allens Pond field station.

Between 1998, when Bob's name first appears in the records, and 4/2013, when he apparently led his last trip to Sherborn Power Line, Bob Bowker may have contributed more butterfly records than any other person except Tom Gagnon and Brian Cassie! I first met him on the North Worcester NABA, back when the Walkers used to serve wonderful hamburgers, and while Bob was not a big talker or socializer, he was absolutely dedicated to finding those butterflies!

—Sharon Stichter

Silvery Blue
(*Glaucopsyche
lygdamus*), 6/6/15,
Windsor, MA,
Bo Zaremba



Submission of Articles, Illustrations, and Season Records

We encourage all members to contribute to *Massachusetts Butterflies*. Articles, illustrations, photographs, butterfly field trip reports, garden reports, and book reviews are all welcome, and should be sent to the Editor by August 31 for the Fall issue, and January 15 for the Spring issue.

Send NABA Fourth of July count results to Tom Gagnon tombwhawk@aol.com by **August 15** for inclusion in the Fall issue. Send your season sightings and records to Mark Fairbrother mark@massbutterflies.org by **December 31** (or earlier if possible!) for inclusion in the Spring issue. Records may now be submitted via the online checklist and reporting form, which is available for download from our website at: <http://www.massbutterflies.org/club-publications.asp>

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Baltimore Checkerspot caterpillar (*Euphydryas phaeton*),
6/23/15, West Bridgewater, MA, Garry Kessler



American Lady caterpillar (*Vanessa virginiensis*) on Licorice Vine,
6/17/15, Williamstown, MA, Pam Weatherbee



Painted Lady caterpillar (*Vanessa cardui*),
8/2/15, Holliston, MA, Garry Kessler