
CHRYSALIS

The Occasional Newsletter of the Vermont Butterfly Survey

October 2004

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The butterfly season has come to a close. So here's another issue of CHRYSALIS, an irregular e-mail newsletter about the Vermont Butterfly Survey. You're getting this because you have signed on as a VBS volunteer. If you'd rather not receive this newsletter, please reply to this e-mail and let us know. Thanks for joining the survey.

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1. CALLING ALL DATA, COME IN DATA....

It is that time of year...data processing....and we have begun here. Data has been rolling in from volunteers, thank you! It would be great to have your data here in the office as soon as you can get to it so we can begin working on it.

Our goal is to catch up on anything left over from previous years and have all the data identified, entered, and error checked for the entire first three field seasons. We only have two seasons left, so we all need to know exactly where we are now, and where we need to go!

We are continuing to add historical data from museums that we visit and from private collections. If you know of anyone that has such historical collections or sight records, please let us know.

2. NEW SPECIES AND RARE SPECIES FOUND BY SURVEY

Dusted Skipper (First state record)

Cobweb Skipper (First state record)

Black Dash (First state record)

West Virginia White (Additional sites and clarification of status)

Bog Copper (New populations discovered)
Spicebush Swallowtail (First state record)
Pipevine Swallowtail (First state record)
Two-spotted Skipper
Broad-winged Skipper
Mulberry wing
Dion Skipper
Jutta Arctic (New population discovered. Only two known in Vermont)
Hackberry Emperor and Tawny Emperor (first state records)
Buckeye (first state records)

Stay tuned for more as we go through the 2004 data!

3. WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR DATA?

The data you collect represents some long field hours and often a lot of sweat. Many of you wonder just what happens to that box of data when it arrives at VINS. The quick answer is – we treat it like gold!

Your data ends up in our tiny office where it is quickly opened and filed. Electronic pictures are downloaded and placed in several locations. Voucher envelopes are filed in archival quality boxes by year and card number. Data sheets are filed by volunteer last name and year.

Each piece of data is examined and entered into an MS Access database that was designed for the project. We have over 15,000 records entered so far and we still have data from this season to go! We have almost 2,500 historic records entered.

After it is entered we check each identification and correct it if necessary. We also make sure there were no data entry errors. Last year a group of volunteers helped us to greatly speed up this process. Any species or individuals that are taxonomically difficult or beyond our abilities are flagged to be sent out for review by a specialist for final determination.

The database is then passed to the USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center (<http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/>) where the database is uploaded to the internet for viewing (http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bba/VTBfly2002_index.cfm). This Butterfly Survey Viewer is 'piggybacking' on the larger Breeding Bird Atlas site at center. They provide the Butterfly Survey Viewer (along with the Breeding Bird Atlas Manager in cooperation with the Vermont Institute of Natural Science and the National Biological Information Infrastructure (<http://www.nbi.gov/>)). In the future we hope to have maps and other information for each species available via the web too.

When the survey is finished all of the vouchers will be housed at the brand new Biological Collections Facility at the University of Connecticut (<http://collections2.eeb.uconn.edu/collections/chp.html>). They will be curated and available for study deep into the future.

4. OTHER NEW ENGLAND BUTTERFLY SURVEYS

Maine is just beginning a butterfly survey. Phillip deMaynadier and Reggie Webster from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife are just in the process of wrapping up phase 1 of the Maine Butterfly Survey. This is a compilation of all existing Maine data from museums and private collections throughout the Northeast, published literature, and selected rare species surveys. This preliminary atlas and conservation assessment of Maine's butterfly fauna will be complete sometime this winter. They have an annotated Maine checklist of butterflies that has 114 species with 5 of those species believed to be extirpated from Maine.

They envision phase 2 to be a statewide volunteer-atlasing initiative to fill in existing data gaps, similar to what VBS is doing now, probably beginning in 2006 following successful receipt of grants.

Connecticut is finishing publication of a book from their atlas that was completed from 1995 – 1999. This book will apparently have detailed life history photos from many species that volunteers snapped during the atlas. We should all keep this in mind for our final publication.

The fieldwork phase of the Massachusetts Butterfly Atlas Project was completed from 1986 to 1990. Unfortunately, it has not been published.

5. FEATURED WEB SITE – BUTTERFLIES OF CANADA

This site is one-stop shopping for everything you might want to know about Canada's butterfly fauna. Species maps, natural history, systematics, gardening, and a whole lot more!

http://www.cbif.gc.ca/spp_pages/butterflies/index_e.php
