

Phaëton

The Official Newsletter of the
Maryland Entomological Society

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Meeting Announcement

The Maryland Entomological Society's 267th regular meeting will be held **Friday, March 20, 2009**; beginning at 8:00 P.M., in **Room 004** (one floor below the street level), Biological Sciences Bldg., University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). Bring a friend and specimens/observations to share. Refreshments will be provided. Presentations are scheduled to begin about 8:15 P.M.

Speaker: Dr. Wil Hershberger

Hershberger Nature Photography & Nature Images & Sounds
Hedgesville, WV

Title: “ The Songs of Insects.”

Wil Hershberger works for the USDA as a molecular biologist studying the genetics of fruit tree diseases. He has been an avid naturalist most of his life and photography has become an extension of this passion. His nature photography has received many awards and much acclaim through publication in many journals and books. He has published in Nature Photographers Magazine, Adirondak Explorer, National Parks, Appalachian Trail Conference, and Oasis Magazines, Media Books, Gladstone Calendars as well as various books and CD's produced by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. He recently published “The Songs of Insects;” a full color book and audio CD coauthored with Lang Elliott. Wil has thousands of sound recordings archived in Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology, Macaulay Library of Natural Sounds ranging from birds to bugs and has taught Bird Identification classes for the Potomac Valley Audubon Society for over 20 years. He has been an active member and officer of several regional and national Ornithological and photographic societies. He has mainly focused on the Potomac Valley region. Tonight, he will give a brief history on the study of insect song in the U.S. and the natural history and songs of numerous native U.S. species of orthopterans and cicadas.

If you want more information concerning this meeting, contact one of the following people:

Annapolis Area - Harold Harlan (410) 923-0173 (Home) “haroldharlan@comcast.net ”
Baltimore Area - Phil Kean (410) 944-4630 (Home)
Fred Paras (410) 374-0425 (Home) “bugandrockman@msn.com ”
Bob Platt (Biol. Sci., UMBC x-2261) “platt@umbc.edu ”
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Minutes of the February 2009 MES Meeting

The 266th general meeting of the Maryland Entomological Society was held Friday, February 20, 2009 at UMBC and was begun at 8:34 p.m. Several students from Fred Paras' ecology class at Baltimore Community College were in attendance. The meeting began with a business segment in which the November 2008 meeting minutes were read and approved. Secretary Dick Smith commented that a great number of extra copies of the society journal *The Maryland Entomologist*, Vol. 4, No. 1, had been secured in December 2008 during his visit with past journal editor and current MES Historian Bob Bryant. A copy of the current issue, Vol. 4, No. 4, had also been mailed to long-time society contributor Dr. William Andersen, and a copy will go to past treasurer Jay Sinha. Dick now has a large supply of most (but not all) of the past issues (Vols. 1-4) of the society journal, and those in large supply will be brought to the March 2009 meeting for distribution to society members who may need extra copies or replacements of lost copies. Next, Ed Cohen presented the treasurer's report showing that the society funds now total \$2278.32. Ed announced that the Articles of Revival to avoid future taxes on our journal publication had been approved by the state of MD, but we need to add to our charter a state required "dissolution clause" whose one-time filing will cost \$121. This action and cost were approved by the society officers present. Journal editor Gene Scarpulla then gave a report on journal publications. Of the 300 copies of Vol. 4, No. 4; September 2008, 89 went to MES members, 145 were sold to MD Environmental Service members and Hart-Miller Island tour group participants, and 21 were sold to nonmembers (all sales at \$8.50 per copy). Only 45 copies remain. Six manuscripts have already been received and are being reviewed for Vol. 5, No. 1, which is projected to be published in September 2009. Two manuscripts, one 30 pages in length, have been received also for Vol. 5, No. 2, which may be published in 2010. The meeting continued with the main program summarized below and was followed by a period of fine refreshments and discussion. The speaker displayed a representative collection of many Alaskan and northern Canadian Lepidoptera, and Phil Kean displayed a collection that included European butterfly species.

The main program for the meeting, titled "Long days and sunny nights: an 11,000 mile collecting trip into Alaska and western Canada," was presented by Mr.

Steve Johnson, a long-time, active member of several Lepidoptera and Entomological societies, including the Entomological Society of PA and the Lepidopterists' Society. Steve's trip to Alaska and Canada covered the period from late June to July 10 in 2006. He started from his home in PA and reached Alaska in about four days covering over 1000 miles each day. His first novel collecting stop was in Summit Lake and Stone Mountain, British Columbia, where he saw many stone sheep and blues butterflies (*Polyommata*). The single lane highway north from there had continuous 50-ft. cleared buffers on either side, presumably for sight distance to avoid moose collisions. Once in Alaska, the Eagle Summit range southeast of Denali was investigated and found to harbor red-dotted Eversmann's Parnassians (*Parnassius eversmanni*). Northeast of Fairbanks, large dragonflies were seen flying 24 hours a day when temperatures were above 50° F, since evening light was only slightly dimmer than midday light in the June-July period. The Dalton Highway from Fairbanks to Prudhoe Bay was an alternating pavement and gravel roadway for its 450 miles. Ravens were often victims of vehicular traffic there. The main intervening town is Coldfoot, which offers a local nature and historical museum. Recently burned areas with dense patches of newly sprouted Fireweed (*Epilobium angustifolium*) were a common sight. Open tundra conditions occur from the Brooks Range north. Prudhoe Bay, located above the Arctic Circle, is the name of the oil field area in north Alaska whereas the adjacent town is called Deadhorse, the name being inherited from the name of an early gravel hauling company there. The permanent population is 25, but 2000-4000 temporary oil field workers also stay there in the warmer months. Steve found that Hecla Sulphur (*Colias hecla*) butterflies, which tilt their wings perpendicular to the sun's rays as soon as they perch, were common there on the tundra. He also found Disa Alpines (*Erebia disa*), arctic foxes, and numerous caribou. It was difficult to find sunny periods, which are absolutely essential for butterflies, but 50 miles south at Franklin Bluffs, the conditions were much better, and Freija Fritillaries (*Boloria freija*) were found. As for biting insects, during mild sunny days, *Aedes* Mosquitoes filled the air, and one's mouth was best kept shut to avoid inhaling them. An insect net could be filled with mosquitoes in a few swipes. However, Steve asserted that Deep Woods Off with DEET worked perfectly adequately to limit bites. The densest mosquito days and plentiful butterfly days always coincided. Along the highway, Steve soon met

up with Jack Harry, a researcher from Utah who had been studying Alaskan *Colias* for many years. Jack gave Steve many tips on local Lepidoptera sites. Caribou were notorious for trampling his Lepidoptera study cages. Tips from Jack included IDs of difficult-to-distinguish species and locations of the newly described Coppermine or Johansen's Sulphur (*Colias johanseni*) and the Sentinel Arctic (*Oeneis alpina*). He also gave tips on how to spot herds of Musk Ox. Steve later found the Magdalena Alpine (*Erebia magdalena*) and the Reindeer Nose Bot Fly (*Gasterophilus haemorrhoidalis*) at the Adigan Pass. This fly species lays eggs on or in the noses of caribou, reindeer, and similar animals, and the larvae grow in the sinuses and throat of the host animal and are sneezed out in the spring. They do not parasitize humans. Dragonflies were very dense in some areas. Arctic butterflies were found to be notorious at "hilltopping," and the most productive areas were hilltop crests easily accessible from the highway. Steve then passed through customs and entered the Canadian Yukon at Dawson City, thence proceeding along the Dempster Highway, a treacherous roadway and travel route of the infamous Ice Road Truckers. The Theano Alpine (*Erebia theano*) was found along this stretch. Steve then passed through Eagle Plains (population 8), the Arctic Circle, and entered the Northwest Territories and the town of Inuvik, which claims to have 57 successive days of daylight from May 24 to July 19. He then passed through Watson Lake, Yukon, and retraced his route down through Summit Lake in British Columbia. Steve ended his talk with many fine images of Alaskan and northern Canadian wildflowers, including Fernleaf Lousewort (*Pedicularis cystopteridifolia*), Dwarf Fireweed (*Epilobium latifolium*), Capitulate Lousewort (*Pedicularis capitata*), Mountain Avens (*Dryas octopetala*), a larval host of the Polaris Fritillary (*Boloria polaris*), Common Groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*), and Cotton Grass (*Eriophorum* sp.). During questions, Dr. Platt asked if any species that were biennial (adults appearing every other year) were notably missing. Steve did not notice major absences of any expected species; thus, the biennial phenomenon apparently may alternate from one local region to another.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard H. Smith
MES Secretary

Announcements

1. Gene Scarpulla, Editor of the MES' journal, *The Maryland Entomologist*, has reported that he already has received six (6) articles for potential inclusion in the next issue of the journal, which is projected to be published in September 2009. He also already has two (2) additional articles received for publication in the next issue, tentatively planned for publication in Sept., 2010 (see the first paragraph of the Feb. '09 meeting minutes, above). Please contact Gene directly if you wish to submit an article for consideration for a future journal issue. Members whose MES dues are current, at the time of publication, will be mailed a free copy of each given *Maryland Entomologist* issue. Please contact Gene and thank him for his past and current editorial efforts on behalf of the MES.

2. Regular MES meetings are held the 3rd Friday of each of 6 months each year: Oct., Nov., Feb., Mar., Apr. & May (parallel to UMBC's academic year). The remaining meetings for the 2008 "MES year" include:

| month | date | speaker (if known) | topic |
|---------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Mar. 09 | 20 th | Wil Hershberger | (See Front Page) |
| Apr. 09 | 17 th | TBA | TBA |
| May 09 | 15 th | TBA | members' "pot-pourri" |

3. Distributing this newsletter by e-mail saves costs of printing and mailing, and allows quick distribution. Members with no current e-mail address will still to be sent hard-copies for the foreseeable future. If you have questions, please contact any person listed at the bottom of the front page. **ALSO** please provide your current e-mail address. Dues for 1 Oct. 2008 through 30 Sep. 2009, are still **\$10.00 / year**. Please send dues and any address change, or other corrections to:

Edgar Cohen, Jr., MES Treasurer Phone: (410) 740-0481
5454 Marsh Hawk Way
Columbia, MD 21045 e-mail: edcohenfam@yahoo.com

4. **Job Opportunity.** MES member Jennifer Frye has asked that we announce that the Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources is currently seeking applicants for two seasonal employees to work on bees and ants on the lower Eastern Shore. Please feel free to share this open announcement. For more details, or to get an on-line application, go to: www.dbm.maryland.gov, or www.dnr.state.md.us; or contact Ms Frye at: MD DNR, Natural Heritage Program, P.O. Box 68, Wye Mills, MD 21679. Phone: (410) 827-8612 ext. 101.

5. The **Audubon Naturalist Society** (ANS) offers various nature events & experiences for all ages. They are currently featuring their “Bloomin’ Birdathon” (Apr. 17th - May 17th); many summer “camp(s)” or other nature education events. Their website also has information on local & regional conservation issues & education outreach programs. Some classes, events, & bird walks are free; most require pre-registration & a fee. For more, or to register, call 301-652-9188 ext. 10, or go to: www.AudubonNaturalist.org.

6. The **Washington Area Butterfly Club** (WABC) is active in local & regional nature, conservation, & education. Their meeting for March will be at 7:30 P.M., Thursday, Mar. 26. Dr. Ed Barrows will speak about “the butterflies of Japan & the gardens designed for them.” Their web site features butterfly gardening, wildlife habitats, & related youth education. It also has articles, plant sales, & “links” to other resources. For more details, directions, or to apply to join, go to: <http://users.sitestar.net/butterfly/>, or contact Pat Durkin at: (202) 483-7965, or at: “plusultra@aol.com”. They offer a new Butterfly Photographer’s Handbook by Bill Folsom, & you can buy it on-line for about \$24.00 .

7. The National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) still features a pair of Nature programs: “**Butterflies + Plants: Partners in Evolution**” at 600 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC. This is free & addresses how insects & other animals have co-evolved w/ plants; & **The Butterfly Pavilion**, a fee-based (ticket required) live butterfly experience next to it. The joint exhibits are open 10:00 AM-5:00 PM. You can buy tickets in advance by phone: (202) 633-4629 or at: www.butterflies.si.edu . Go to their website for current hours, prices, and further details about these events.

8. The **Entomological Foundation** is active in promoting science education, especially via use of insects or insect models. They have a great website for educators to access a considerable body of information, fact sheets, images, *etc.* To reach their youth web site for grades 3 & 4, go to: <http://www.cipm.info/entfnd/> . They offer mini-grants, research grants, scholarships, recognition awards, *etc.*, For further details, go to: http://www.entfdn.org/awards_scholar_fellow.php .

9. The Patuxent Research Refuge is offering a number of Springtime programs, nature walks (day & night) & fun outdoor activities. They will hold their Wildlife Art Show & Sale on Sat. & Sun., Mar. 28th & 29th. The

research refuge is administered by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. For details, specific programs, times, directions, & to register, call: 301-497-5510, or go to: <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/patuxent/> .

10. A recent note on “Promed” detailed a unique outbreak of food poisoning in Thailand. A total of 118 people became ill, 60 of them had to be hospitalized, after they ate “fried silkworms” bought at a particular market. Their symptoms were nearly identical to those of scrombioid fish poisoning, which is caused mainly by a build-up of concentrations of histamine in the muscle tissue of certain fish (which usually have not been kept chilled well enough after they had been caught). Concentrations of histamine, determined by lab analyses, in some of the still uneaten silkworms was as high as 875 mg/Kg. The U.S. food standards allow no more than 50 mg/Kg in fish. A Thai Public Health Ministry epidemiologist, Anek Mongoomklang, stated that, as far as he knew, this was the first time that an insect has been found to be contaminated with histamine to levels great enough to cause human illness.

11. The Weather Channel now has a **Mosquito Forecast**. It predicts how active mosquitoes in an area will be, based on environmental factors, temp., wind, humidity, time of day, and time of year. It cannot detect how many mosquitoes may be present, only how active they are likely to be. Go to the following link and type in the zip code in which you are interested: <http://www.weather.com/activities/homeandgarden/home/picnic/?from=secondarynav>

12. More places / websites worth checking include:
- the National Aquarium (in Balto.), “www.aqua.org”
 - the Maryland Science Center, “www.mdsci.org”
 - the National Zoo, “www.nationalzoo.si.edu”
 - the Maryland DNR, “www.dnr.state.md.us”.

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| | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
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