Phaëton

The Official Newsletter of the
Maryland Entomological Society

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WISHING ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE MES A SAFE AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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*****DON'T FORGET TO RENEW*****

*****IT'S MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME*****

OCT 2020 – SEP 2021 MEMBERSHIP YEAR

Membership renewal forms were inserted in the front of the September 2020 issue of The Maryland Entomologist that was mailed out in September. If the date on your address label reads 2020, it is time for you to renew for the "October 2020 – September 2021" membership year. Please check that your contact information is correct and return the form along with your check (made out to Maryland Entomological Society) to: Edgar A. Cohen, Jr. (MES Treasurer), 5454 Marsh Hawk Way, Columbia, MD 21045.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

MES welcomes the following new members to the Society:

Tobi Adelaja – Baltimore, Maryland
Vinicius S. Ferreira – Bozeman, Montana
Albert Greene – Greenbelt, Maryland
Sawyer Lai – Ellicott City, Maryland

HONORING MEMBER DONORS

MES wishes to honor the following members who made charitable donations along with their recent membership renewals. These donations help with the printing and mailing of *The Maryland Entomologist*.

John F. Carroll
Albert Greene
George H. Harmon
Mark J. Hepner
Sawyer Lai
Frances B. Pope
Brent W. Steury
Elissa M. Weidaw
Harold B. White

MINUTES OF THE 333RD MEETING OF THE MARYLAND ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY

16 OCTOBER 2020

The 333rd general meeting of the Maryland Entomological Society convened via "ZOOM". The new and different meeting format was necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting restrictions on group gatherings. Also, due to the pandemic, the March, April, and May 2020 meetings were cancelled. At least 40 people were in attendance at the recent meeting; a precise count was difficult to determine, due to people joining and leaving throughout the meeting. It was also difficult to tally the number of members present. However, the virtual format enabled distantly located members to attend, including some from New York, West Virginia, and Indiana. Members of the Natural History Society of Maryland were also in attendance. It appears that a virtual format will be in use for the foreseeable future.

Treasurer Ed Cohen reported a balance of $5,423.06 in the Society's account. President Fred Paras reported that he obtained a paid ZOOM account for our meeting, as we would exceed the time allowed for free.

Journal editor Gene Scarpulla reported that he has received more submissions than will appear in the upcoming issue; the others will be held over for the next issue.

The speaker for the evening, Mr. Warren Steiner, is a Research Collaborator, Department of Entomology, Smithsonian Institution. His biography and lecture abstract appear in the October 2020 *Phaëton*.

The meeting commenced at 7:00 PM and the lecture ended at 8:45 PM. A question and answer session followed, and numerous members engaged in conversation about Djibouti and its wildlife. During the conversations about Djibouti, some conducted internet searches and commented about wildlife tours that such searches revealed. The meeting ended at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet A. Lydon, MES Secretary

MINUTES OF THE 333RD MARYLAND ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY

16 OCTOBER 2020 MES LECTURE

Speaker: Warren E. Steiner, Jr., Research Collaborator, Department of Entomology, Smithsonian Institution

Title: On some insects associated with our local Apocynaceae, with side trips to the Caribbean and Horn of Africa

The speaker discussed the Apocynaceae family of plants with respect to associated insects as the title indicates. He commenced his talk with slides of various species of monarch butterflies, their different life stages, and of migration clusters. The slides following were one displaying the definition of aposematic coloration, the milkweed leaf beetle, the milkweed tussock moth (commonly known as the 'toothbrush' caterpillar), and the milkweed stem weevil. He commented that the milkweed leaf beetle and milkweed tussock moth possess the orange/black color patterns of the monarch while the third, the stem weevil, has an appearance resembling monarch larva frass.

Mr. Steiner discussed and showed slides of other species which feed on milkweed: *Oncopeltus fasciatus*, *Lygaeus kalmii*, *Tetraopes tetrophthalmus*, *Liriomyza asclepiadis*. He

then discussed and showed slides of other plants of the Apocynaceae family and the insects they host, including dogbane and *Chrysochus auratus*, *Cycnia tenera*.

The speaker concluded the New World portion of his talk with slides of *Pentalinon luteum* in the Bahamas, and *Calotropis procera*, an Old World native, in Aruba.

In May, 2014, Mr. Steiner traveled to Djibouti, on the Horn of Africa, as part of a team to survey the biota in the area surrounding the U.S. Navy base and airfield at Camp Lemonnier. The base is located adjacent to the Djibouti airport. The Navy operates a 'Bird Aircraft Strike Hazard' program, acronym BASH, and contracts with natural history professionals to identify wildlife that pose collision hazards to aircraft, and to propose solutions. He showed a map and satellite photo of the area in which the base is located, and discussed the habitat, which is primarily desert scrub along with some dune habitat and mangrove clumps. Mr. Steiner's focus was entomology, others were there to survey mammals, birds, plants, and reptiles.

He showed slides of the following:

- *Adesmia miliaris* and other darkling beetles
- Lab preparations for genomics studies
- Abdim's stork from which he collected lice
- *Calotropis procera*
- Weaverbird perched on African mesquite and acacia
- Madagascar periwinkle and euphorbia
- Market scenes and a large amount of plastic roadside litter

The speaker discussed the difficulties of surveying and collecting in the area around the base. As noted above, the trip happened in May. The base is situated at 11° North latitude in a semi desert habitat. Most plants had flowered earlier in the year and most bird and insect life were less active and somewhat reclusive during the day. Nighttime collecting was limited; the few nights that he was able to tend a black light sheet were the most productive, and yielded the newly described darkling beetle species (discussed below). A combination of hand-netting, pitfall and yellow bowl traps, and one Malaise trap were utilized. Much of the vegetation near the base was surrounded by barbed wire fencing and was inaccessible to the natural history group. Many of the insects he collected were gleaned as external parasites or gastrointestinal remains harvested from collected birds and mammals. They collected over 5,000 specimens in two weeks; he estimates that number could be collected in a Maryland yard over a weekend.

The group visited Lac Assal and a nearby hot spring from which they collected minnows. Lac Assal is situated at 438 feet below sea level. The temperature at the time of the group's visit was about 115 °F.

He concluded his talk with slides of non-entomological biota viewed and/or collected by other group members. They included baboons, camels, and gazelles, *Vulpes rueppellii*, *Xerus rutilis*, *Cardioderma cor*, and a carpet viper. He indicated that treatment for a carpet viper bite was not available at the base nor anywhere in Djibouti. If bitten, one would need to be evacuated. Birds seen and photographically shown included barn swallow, sacred ibis, a cattle egret containing 34 grasshoppers in its crop, and a crab plover bearing 2 species of lice.

The group saw 4 or 5 species of odonates, some arachnids, and a few mosquitoes (none of which were *Anopheles*). The speaker briefly discussed the presence of *Apis florea*, a dwarf honeybee about half the size of the European honeybee. This bee is native to Asia, has appeared in Africa and is moving south through the continent.

Our speaker, during this survey in Djibouti, identified and described a new species: *Philhammus ambouli.* He and co-author Wolfgang Schawaller published this finding in March 2018. Subsequently, the speaker shared a tally list by order, of numbers seen, which appears below. He (Steiner) indicated in a post-meeting communication, that the specimens are housed at the Smithsonian.

The final slide was that of a beautiful sunset.

A question and answer session followed. Some attendees provided commentary about their garden milkweed and monarch populations during the recent summer in contrast with prior summers. The speaker, in conversation with other members after many attendees had signed off, commented that some biodiversity areas exist in Djibouti and there was brief talk about that and the fact that tourism to those areas is possible.
Respectfully submitted, Janet A. Lydon, (MES Secretary)

CINCINNATI CBP FINDS PRAYING MANTIS EGGS SMUGGLED IN TOY FIGURES

Release Date: November 25, 2020
CINCINNATI–- A shipment of plastic toys turned out to have something a little more alive inside them at the Cincinnati Port of Entry last Tuesday. Agriculture Specialists were inspecting incoming freight from Barcelona, Spain, when they noticed some unusual padding around a particular toy character. Specialists opened the packaging and realized the oddly shaped items were smuggled praying mantis egg cases.Manti

Mantids naturally occur in the United States, but some foreign species are illegally traded as pets. Mantid smuggling has been on the rise lately, and previously this year CBP found other shipments of live mantids and egg cases transiting through Cincinnati. Several months ago, officers and agriculture specialists in Philadelphia found smuggled mantid egg cases in a computer gaming mouse. In late February, agriculture specialists in Louisville, KY found egg masses and larvae

concealed in Xbox controllers.

"Our officers and specialists are dedicated to protecting America and our agricultural and natural resources," said Cincinnati Supervisory Agriculture Specialist Barbara Hassan. "They are trained to locate and identify anything that might threaten those valuable and beloved sectors of our economy and our national assets. They also work closely with other agencies to protect illegally trafficked and threatened or endangered species."

"Wildlife trafficking is a serious crime that impacts a variety of species throughout the world," said Aurelia Skipwith, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "In this case, mantis eggs were illegally smuggled and hidden in a box of toys. Fortunately, our partners at USDA APHIS apprehended the package and worked closely with our Wildlife Inspectors to seize the shipment. I would like to thank the USDA and CBP for their assistance with this case. Together, we can conserve species - and protect our nation's natural resources - for future generations."

Cincinnati Port Director Richard Gillespie agrees. "Our agriculture specialists excel at pinpointing shipments that deserve a closer look."

FREE BEGINNER BUG COLLECTION AVAILABLE

If you'd like to claim a small beginner bug collection setup with box, pinning board, pins and collection jar from BioQuip, please contact Gene Scarpulla at ejscarp@comcast.net to be put in touch with the owner.

NORTH AMERICAN BUTTERFLY ASSOCIATION SEEKING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The North American Butterfly Association (https://www.naba.org), the largest group of people focused on butterflies and their conservation, seeks an Executive Director.

The incoming Executive Director will partner with the President and the Board of Directors to build on NABA's strong foundation of conserving butterflies and their habitats throughout North America, both by direct action, and by educating the public about the importance of butterflies and their habitats. There is tremendous opportunity for an energetic and focused conservation leader to build on and expand the scale of a relatively underleveraged national organization that is accomplishing incredible results for the conservation of butterflies through a small team of devoted staff and committed volunteers.

Location: This position is ideally based in Morristown, New Jersey; remote candidates will be considered.

See attached PDF for more details.

2020/2021 PROPOSED MES EVENT SCHEDULE

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, regular MES lecture/meetings are currently being held virtually on Zoom at 7:00 p.m. on the 3rd Friday of each of 6 months coinciding with UMBC's academic year. Proposed events for the current MES membership year are:

Date	Speaker	Topic
Oct 16	Warren Steiner	Insects Associated with Local Milkweed
Nov 20	Sam Droege	State of Wild Native Bee Populations in MD
Feb 19	Samuel Ramsay	Despicable Mites: Recent Findings in the study of *Tropilaelaps mercedesae* and Varroa destructor
Mar 19	TBD	
Apr 16	TBD	
May 21	Members & Students Presentations & Elections	
TBD	Survey/Field Trip	
Sep 18	Member's Picnic	

OCT 2020-SEP 2021 MES MEMBERSHIP YEAR OFFICERS

President	Frederick Paras
Vice President	Philip J. Kean
Secretary	Janet A. Lydon
Treasurer	Edgar A. Cohen, Jr.
Historian	(vacant)
Faculty Sponsors	Frank E. Hanson
Journal Editor	Eugene J. Scarpulla
E-newsletter Editors	Aditi Dubey

SUBMITTAL DEADLINES

January 2021 issue of the ***Phaëton***:
Please send member news items by 15th January 2020.
Send e-newsletter drafts to Addie at aditid26@gmail.com.

September 2021 issue of *The Maryland Entomologist*:
Please send first drafts of articles and notes by 1 April 2021.
Send drafts to Gene Scarpulla at ejscarp@comcast.net.

YEAR'S END
By Richard Wilbur

Now winter downs the dying of the year,
And night is all a settlement of snow;
From the soft street the rooms of houses show
A gathered light, a shapen atmosphere,
Like frozen-over lakes whose ice is thin
And still allows some stirring down within.

I've known the wind by water banks to shake
The late leaves down, which frozen where they fell
And held in ice as dancers in a spell
Fluttered all winter long into a lake;
Graved on the dark in gestures of descent,
They seemed their own most perfect monument.

There was perfection in the death of ferns
Which laid their fragile cheeks against the stone
A million years. Great mammoths overthrown
Composedly have made their long sojourns,
Like palaces of patience, in the gray
And changeless lands of ice. And at Pompeii

The little dog lay curled and did not rise
But slept the deeper as the ashes rose
And found the people incomplete, and froze
The random hands, the loose unready eyes
Of men expecting yet another sun
To do the shapely thing they had not done.

These sudden ends of time must give us pause.
We fray into the future, rarely wrought
Save in the tapestries of afterthought.
More time, more time. Barrages of applause
Come muffled from a buried radio.
The New-year bells are wrangling with the snow.