

Nectar News



Official Newsletter of the Southeast Michigan Butterfly Association

Winter 2017

Mission Statement:

It is our mission to share our knowledge to educate people about Lepidoptera and their habitats, to instill and foster a passion for nature in others, and to establish and preserve the environment for butterflies, skippers and moths.

Endangered species spotlight: Poweshiek Skipperling



Status: Federally endangered in the U.S. and Canada, threatened in Michigan

Poweshiek skipperling,

Oarisma Poweshiek

Family: Hesperiiidae,

Skippers

Subfamily: Hesperinae,

Grass Skipper

Wingspan: ~1 in (26-32 mm)

Coloration: dark above, pale gray below with white vein "stripes", light orange head, and light wing margins

Flight habit: low & slow

Local pop. range: ~.25-1 miles (males), but usually hover near a patch of nectar and host plants

Lifecycle: lives ~1 year, In adult form ~two weeks, active June to late July, 1 brood a year, females lay eggs singly near or on host plants.

Eggs hatch in 9-10 days.

Caterpillars feed & develop until a late instar, then **overwinter as caterpillars on a leaf or in litter.**

Board Members for 2017 :

- **President:** Carolyn Sohoza
- **Vice President:** Mark Bourne
- **Secretary:** Diana McCormick
- **Treasurer:** Carolyn Sohoza
- **Communications Director:** Lisa Denys
- **Event Committee Chair:** Brenda Dziedzic
- **Habitat Committee Chair:** Karen Jewell and Gary McMillin
- **Past President:** Brenda Dziedzic
- **Membership Committee Chair:** Megan Ellis

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Endangered: Poweshiek Skipperling by Lisa Denys

The story of the Poweshiek skipperling demonstrates the importance of SEMBA members and similar groups supporting prairie preservation and incorporating Poweshiek host and nectar plants in our gardens

Until about 12 years ago, these cuties were found in 8 U.S. states and Manitoba,



Canada. However, since ~2005 their populations have mysteriously declined to only the Manitoba group, a few individuals in Wisconsin, and a stronghold in Oakland Co. Michigan.

Poweshiek skipperlings require native host plants found in high-quality prairies for survival. Tragically, the U.S. has only ~4% of the tall-grass prairies it had in the 1830s.

The remaining high-quality prairies are referred to as remnants due to how fragmented they are in the landscape and their small size. Research on the Poweshiek Skipperling has found them to be weak fliers that would not be able to migrate to distant remnant prairies if their home was disturbed.

The Minnesota Zoo has a breeding program to support reintroductions and to one day establish new wild populations. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has defined areas as critical habitat, including several Michigan counties. To do our part, we can plant their native host and nectar plants, avoid using pesticides, and remove invasive shrubs.



Our knowledge and proximity to the Michigan stronghold

populations put us in an important position to do what we can to help the Poweshiek survive.

Larval host plants:

- Elliptic/Slender Spikerush (*Eleocharis elliptica*)
- Prairie Dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*)
- Mat Muhly (*Muhlenbergia richardsonis*)
- Big Bluestem/Turkey Foot (*Andropogon gerardii*)
- Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)
- Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*)

Adult nectar plants:

- Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)
- Upland white goldenrod (*Solidago ptarmicoides*)
- Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*, *E. angustifolia*)
- Smooth Oxeye (*Heliopsis helianthoides*)
- Palespike Lobelia (*Lobelia spicata*)
- Stiff/Prairie Coreopsis (*Coreopsis palmata*)





Updates and Reminders

SEMBA SWAG

March 31st is the deadline to order SEMBA Hoodies and Jackets for \$35 each.

Download an order form from: <https://www.sembabutterfly.org/calendars> and follow the instructions on the page.

Now only \$10, Calendars are still available for 2017. All calendar pages feature a butterfly photo taken by a SEMBA member and list several host plants for the caterpillar of that butterfly.



Calendars are available for purchase at our meetings.

MONARCH WATCH

Monarch Population and Migration Status

A total area of 2.91 hectares of forest were occupied by 13 overwintering monarch colonies.

While this is a decline over last year's 4.01 hectares, it is better than the record lows between 2013-2015. As a reminder, there was unusual sleet storm that hit monarch wintering grounds March 8-9th of 2016, but thankfully some of the monarchs had already migrated.

Visit: <http://monarchwatch.org/blog/> for more details.

Speaking of Migrations, Monarchs are on their way!

News from Monarch Butterfly Journey North report there has been a mass departure of monarchs from Mexico and monarch sightings in Texas.

Visit: <http://www.learner.org/jnorth/monarch/> to follow the migration.

How our love for Avocados could be harming Monarchs

If you have not been following updates from Monarch Conservation Specialist, Brenda Dziedzic, you should. An email was sent earlier this year on the growing concern of land being cleared to grow avocados near the Cerro Pelon Monarch Sanctuary. Avocados have exploded in popularity in the U.S.. The high demand has led to landowners near monarch habitat removing trees or forest to plant avocado crops.

Rather than let a U.S. food trend cause decades of disruption to the Monarch's winter sanctuaries and the people earning a living from the sanctuary, we can simply choose not to buy avocados. Or at least not until there is a way to verify the crops are not near the sanctuary and putting monarchs at risk.

Here is a New York Times article about the issue:

Avocados Imperil Monarch Butterflies' Winter Home in Mexico: <https://nyti.ms/2jDuO8d>

Monarch Waystation

Certification:

Monarch Watch is a nonprofit educational outreach program based at the University of Kansas that focuses on the Monarch butterfly, its habitat, and its spectacular fall migration. If you would like to certify your monarch habitat and help support Monarch Watch's conservation efforts, there is a \$16 non-refundable application fee. Sign is \$17. Application and sign bundle is \$33 purchased all at once.

Requirements:

Size- No minimum area requirement, however an effective Monarch Waystation will be at least 100 sq. feet. The total area may be split among several sites at your location.

Exposure- At least 6 hours of sun a day.

Plants, Drainage, and Soil Type are other interesting considerations for the Waystation.

More information at:

monarchwatch.org

Register your butterfly garden!

Contact Us:

sembabutterfly@yahoo.com

www.sembabutterfly.org

[Facebook.com/sembabutterfly](https://www.facebook.com/sembabutterfly)

Mail to: SEMBA

PO Box 851301

Westland, MI 48185

DUES: If you have not renewed your 2017 membership please do!

Calendar of Events



January 18, 2017

at Nankin Mills, 7:00 p.m.
10 Year Celebration

February 15, 2017

at Nankin Mills, 7:00 p.m.
"Growing for Wildlife"

Speaker John DeLisle - Owner/Ecologist at Natural
Community Services

March 15, 2017

at Nankin Mills, 7:00 p.m.

"Designing and Maintaining Residential
Native Landscapes"

Bill Schneider of Wildtype Nursery

April 1, 2017

10:00 AM Saturday at Nankin Mills
SEMBA Garden Clean Up

April 8, 2017

Meeting at 7:45 AM at Nankin Mills
for a Field Trip to Fredrick Meijer Butterfly Exhibition
in Grand Rapids to see their 50 different species of
butterflies and caterpillar room!

\$10 per person (if 10+ people n our group),
something to chip-in on gas if you're carpooling,
Money for your lunch (or pack it). There is a café.

April 19, 2017

at Nankin Mills, 7:00 p.m.
The Milkweed Community "

Don Drife, 'The Michigan Nature Guy',
will present the many organisms feeding on & among
the different species of milkweeds, and those making
passing visits.

May 17, 2017

at Nankin Mills, 7:00 p.m.

Movie Night: "Toward Harmony with Nature, Native
Plants, and Natural Landscapes" The value of having
native plants in our yards by Doug Tallamy.

We'll provide the popcorn and drinks!

June 21, 2017

at Nankin Mills, 7:00 p.m.

"Attracting Butterflies to Your Garden"

Author Brenda Dziedzic will give a talk on the plants
needed, to attract butterflies to your garden.. Then,
you'll have the opportunity to purchase butterfly host
& nectar plants at our annual plant sale.

Plant sale sponsor: Debbie Barson of Barson's
Greenhouse will bring plants to purchase..

July 8, 2017

At Brenda's Butterfly Habitat, 6:00-8:00 PM
6414 N Merriman Rd, Westland, MI

2nd Annual "An Evening with the Butterflies"

Charity Event to benefit Monarch Watch,
Admission is a \$10 donation

July 19, 2017

FIELD TRIP to Brenda Dziedzic's
and John Blair's gardens

We will visit not one, but two beautiful butterfly gar-
dens! Brenda Dziedzic will host visitors to her fantastic
garden nestled into a residential yard. Likewise, butter-
fly enthusiast, John Blair, will host guests to his gar-
den, which is a hidden treasure among the trees.

August 16, 2017

at Nankin Mills, 7:00 p.m.

Speaker Carolyn Sohoza - SEMBA President
"Maintaining Butterfly Gardens"

Learn the dos and don'ts of maintaining a butterfly gar-
den including mulching, deadheading, and dividing
your plants.

September 20, 2017

at Nankin Mills, 7:00 p.m.

Movie Night: "Wings of Life"

This intimate and unprecedented look at butterflies,
hummingbirds, bees, bats and flowers.

We'll provide the popcorn and drinks!

October 18, 2017

at Nankin Mills, 7:00 p.m.

Tea Cup Raffle & Dinner!

Celebrate another successful year of butterfly flying with a
meal and conversation with fellow butterfly enthusi-
asts. Proceeds from the Tea Cup Raffle raise money for
the grant fund.

