



MIAMI BLUE CHAPTER, NABA MAY 2019 E-NEWS

Above: Miami Blue on Blackbead. Courtesy of Jaeson Clayborn.

In this issue: Chapter meeting, butterfly field trip and counts, Schaus' survey results.

BIRDS, BUTTERFLIES, AND NATIVE PLANTS WALK

Key Largo Hammocks State Botanical Site
Saturday, May 4, 6:30 am - 2:00 pm

TAS president and bilingual speaker Joe Barros will lead a trip to the coastal tropical hardwood hammock in the Florida Keys.

Meet at 6:30 am at the Cracker Barrel restaurant at US1 and Palm Drive in Florida City before carpooling to the state park.

Bring water, insect repellent, and some money. There's an entrance fee to the state park, and lunch will occur at a restaurant in Key Largo. No preregistration is required.

UPCOMING EVENTS

5/4 Key Largo bird and butterfly walk

5/5 Chapter meeting

6/22 Coral Gables butterfly count

7/13 Shark Valley butterfly count

7/22 Loop Road butterfly count

CHAPTER MEETING

Sunday, May 5, 1 PM

Castellow Hammock
Preserve and Nature Center
22301 SW 162 Avenue
The Redland

Speaker and Program

Cliff G. Martin (presenter) and Zachary T. Brym

"Agroecology, plant diversity, and butterfly host plants at the Tropical Research and Education Center, University of Florida, Homestead"

The UF-IFAS Tropical Research and Education Center (TREC), Homestead, has been visited by NABA in annual surveys of butterfly species.

The mission of TREC recently expanded to include agroecology--the study of relationships between agriculture and the environment. We found that TREC has over 700 plant species in different habitats and abundances; they included larval host plants and adult nectar sources for nearly all the observed Lepidoptera species.

TREC and Leps

The UF-IFAS Tropical Research and Education Center (TREC) in Homestead provides research, teaching, and extension in natural resources, agriculture, and ornamental, vegetable, fruit, and biofuel crops.

The mission of TREC recently expanded to include agroecology, or the production, diversity, and resilience of agricultural systems relative to plant diversity and the surrounding areas.

As a first step in studying agroecological relationships at TREC, we found that it has 706 plant species including 240 native; 236 established, non-native; 190 non-established, cultivated; and 40 unknowns. For each plant species, we included its



Mangrove Cuckoo, a summer resident in Key Largo
John James Audubon, artist
Courtesy of HistoryMiami



Zebra Heliconian
Ron Nuehring, photographer



Gulf Fritillary
Ron Nuehring, photographer

uses, habitats, weediness, specific locations, and identification sources other than the authors.

Larval host plants and adult nectar sources for nearly every butterfly species that were found in NABA surveys occurred in different abundances and habitats throughout TREC.

The hammocks contained plants which supported giant swallowtails with wild lime (*Zanthoxylum fagara*) and Dina sulfurs with Florida bitterbush (*Picramnia pentandra*) and Mexican alvaradoa (*Alvaradoa amorphoides*).

The landscaped areas supported Orange-barred and Cloudless sulfurs with sennas (*Senna surattensis*, *S. polyphylla*, and *S. mexicana*); the pine rocklands had pineland croton (*Croton linearis*), which can support the rare Florida Leafwing and Bartram's Scrub-hairstreak.

One of the most prominent butterfly hostplants at TREC, the two-lobe passionflower (*Passiflora biflora*), is a weed (FLEPPC, Cat II), yet hosts four butterfly species: Zebra Longwing, Gulf Fritillary, Julia Heliconian, and Variegated Fritillary. This shade-tolerant vine appears to be a preferred host of these butterflies and often grows more vigorously than other *Passiflora* spp. It may therefore alleviate some of the pest pressure otherwise placed on native species such as Corkystem Passionflower (*Passiflora suberosa*) and Pineland Passionflower (*P. pallens*).

Our findings will help to further an understanding of butterfly ecology and other topics related to agroecology.

Refreshments, etc.

You are invited to add to the refreshment table! Finger foods preferred. Ice, drinks, cups, toothpicks and napkins are provided. Refreshments start about 12:45.

Come early and stay late to butterfly and bird.



Julia Heliconian
Ron Nuehring, photographer



Schaus' Swallowtail
North Key Largo
April 12, 2019
Courtesy of Linda Evans



Bahamian Swallowtail
North Key Largo
April 2019
Courtesy of Linda Evans

NABA BUTTERFLY COUNTS

We are looking for volunteers to survey butterflies, skippers, and day flying moths at these locations:

Coral Gables - Saturday, June 22
Shark Valley - Saturday, July 13
Loop Road - Saturday, July 27

The Coral Gables count consists of several simultaneous counts around town: Charles Deering Estate; Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden and the Kampong; Crandon Park, and Bill Baggs State Park.

The Shark Valley count covers the north entrance to Everglades National Park (Shark Valley) and areas adjacent to Tamiami Trail.

The Pinecrest/Loop Road count surveys the Loop Road section of Big Cypress National Preserve.

New butterfly watchers and NABA members are welcome to participate. Mingling with experts and visiting butterfly hot spots are the best way to learn and to enjoy leps. And, butterfly counts always need more eyes.

Contact [Linda Evans](#) or [Jaeson Clayborn](#) to join a count or three.

SCHAUS' SURVEYS

On April 12 the survey season started spectacularly. Linda Evans and Janice Duquesnel spotted the first Schaus', a male, on Old 905 North! Scott Tedford stated, "This is the earliest we've ever spotted a Schaus' on our surveys, so this year will hopefully be a successful one."

Scott Tedford (Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Environmental Specialist II) is looking for more volunteers to survey for Schaus' swallowtail butterflies and other species of interests. Contact him at Tedford@dep.state.fl.us or 772-402-9467.



Schaus' Swallowtail
Key Largo
Courtesy of Linda Cooper



Queen
Shark Valley
Ron Nuehring, photographer

ABOUT NABA AND THE MIAMI BLUE CHAPTER

Are YOU a NABA member? We are happy to send you this e-news and hope you will attend upcoming Miami Blue activities. If you aren't a NABA member, we'd be delighted to have you join -- or rejoin, if your membership has lapsed.

As a member, you will enjoy NABA's quarterly publications ([American Butterflies](#) and [The Butterfly Gardener](#)), regional and national meetings, and the news and activities of the Miami Blue Chapter (or your local chapter).

Better yet, you will help ensure that this national organization and its chapters will continue to work to increase public enjoyment and conservation of butterflies. You helped us petition the State of

Florida and the USFWS to declare Miami Blues an endangered species.

To learn more about Miami Blue, go to our web site at miamiblue.org.

To join (or renew), go to <http://miamiblue.org/> or <http://www.naba.org/>.

Not sure if you are a member (or current member) or need help? Contact NABA at naba@naba.org or the Miami Blue membership chair, Patty Phares, at pharespl@gmail.com.

Memberships start at \$35 (see NABA.org). Such a small amount to support big things, such as endangered species.