

Early Spring Butterflies

Our overwintering adult **Mourning Cloaks**, **Question Marks** and **Commas** start flying on warm days in March and continue through June, take a rest through the hot weather and reappear in September. Remember to check on which type of Cloak you are seeing -- reddish brown or dark brown.

The **Cabbage White** is the first to emerge from its overwintering chrysalis. Look for the **Checkered White**: females especially will appear "chalky"/darker with more extensive black/dark brown wing markings. The last sighting of a Checkered White (J.B. Churchill, June 28, 2008) was at Long Corner, PRSP.

Azures - Spring and Spring Form Summer --- both appear in April. By the end of May all azures are Summer Azures. All "Spring" Azures must be verified by experts from extremely good pictures of the dorsal/upper view. Otherwise we are labeling all April azures as "Azure species."

Falcate Orangetips - live for about 2 weeks between L Apr and E May. They have been found in open woods along the Middle Patuxent and Patapsco river areas such as the Wincopin Trails, Savage Park and Trail and Gorman Natural Area and PVSP. They are also regularly found in fields at Gateway off Sam Morse Blvd, but be aware that this area is HEAVILY invested with ticks and chiggers! This is truly a case of "Enter at your own Risk."

Eastern Pine Elfins - L Apr to E Jun in open scrub pine groves and nearby fields. Historically they have been found at Rockburn Branch Park on the trails off Landing Rd: enter from Landing Rd, drive to the end of the park road and park. Take the trail into the woods; as soon as you cross the bridge and go up from the brook you will see pines on your left. Look in this area. The beech grove along the right of this path is where Bonnie found the aphids associated with Harvesters last year. Jim Wilkinson also finds them at the Trinity Cemetery in Elkridge. They are also flying with the Juniper Hairstreaks at the Hipsley Mill Meadow (woodcock area) in PRSP.

Juniper Hairstreaks - L Apr to M Jul in Fields with Red Cedar. Three locations are reliable --- Mt Pleasant, Hipsley Mill Meadow (PRSP) and the Gateway area off Sam Morse (see the Orangetips above). In July they nectar on the flowers in the garden plots at Mt. Pleasant.

Juvenal's Duskywings occur M Apr to L May and are common but can be confused with 2 other common Duskywings which occur throughout the summer: **Horace's** and **Wild Indigo**. Take photos of both upper and lower views of all duskywings and send them to Dick for verification of species if you are not experienced telling them apart.

By the beginning of May we should also start seeing some of the common (and not so common) butterflies that will be with us all summer: **Eastern Tailed-Blues**, and **Orange** and **Clouded Sulphurs** all over in fields of clover and other legumes, **Zebra Swallowtail** in PVSP and near rivers & host Pawpaw, **American** and **Painted Ladies** in fields and meadows, and the uncommon **White M. Hairstreak** (host Oaks, nectar on goldenrod, boneset, viburnum) in woods clearings and edges & fields (Sharp's farm, Gateway Industrial Park).

And our first skipper appears --- **Silver-spotted Skipper**, big and unmistakable, which occurs pretty much everywhere.

The **Meadow Fritillary** is also suppose to occur in April and June although the Howard County sightings are in late summer. They occur in grassy wet meadows with their host wooly blue violets. We have found huge numbers in private meadows on Jennings Chapel Road as well as occasional sightings at Mt. Pleasant, the Elkhorn garden plots, Gorman NRA, and Font Hill, Alpha Ridge, and Western Regional Parks.