

21ST ANNUAL BRAZOS BEND BUTTERFLY COUNT REPORT

By Rich Jespersen, Leader

It was a beautiful day for a walk in the park as 53 observers arrived for the count. It was especially gratifying to see five families with children and a total of 34 people who were participating in the Brazos Bend Count for the first time. To assist newcomers with identification, our seven parties included Brazos Bend Volunteers, Master Naturalists and other experienced observers.

About 60 percent of the park was flooded in early spring and again in summer, but plant life recovered well and many wildflowers were available for the nectaring butterflies.

This was the 11th count since we switched the event from June to October. Observations of six **Pipevine Swallowtails**, 225 **Little Yellows** and 509 **Pearl Crescents** each set new records for the October counts. We were also excited to see **Zebra Heliconian** and **Large Orange Sulphur**, both for only the 2nd time in the 21 years of our count. One species that may have been affected by two consecutive years of flooding is the Broad-winged Skipper. It's host plant is the Southern Wild Rice that grows in the lakes. When present, **Broad-winged Skippers** are usually widespread. This time, most parties saw none, while the party whose area included Creekfield Lake found them in abundance.

SWALLOWTAILS	BRUSHFOOTS	SKIPPERS
6 Pipevine Swallowtail	3 American Snout	3 White-striped Longtail
16 Giant Swallowtail	1 Zebra Heliconian	5 Long-tailed Skipper
1 Eastern Tiger Swallowtail	199 Gulf Fritillary	1 Dorantes Longtail
1 <i>swallowtail species</i>	7 Variegated Fritillary	2 Horace's Duskywing
WHITES & SULPHURS	34 Phaon Crescent	24 Common Checkered-skipper
69 Cloudless Sulphur	509 Pearl Crescent	31 Tropical Checkered-skipper
2 Large Orange Sulphur	3 <i>Crescent species</i>	15 <i>Checkered-skipper species</i>
225 Little Yellow	4 Red Admiral	1 Turk's-cap White-Skipper
3 <i>sulphur species</i>	50 Common Buckeye	3 Neamathla Skipper
HAIRSTREAKS	6 Viceroy	20 Clouded Skipper
20 Gray Hairstreak	15 Hackberry Emperor	5 Least Skipper
1 Dusky-blue Groundstreak	55 Tawny Emperor	1 Fiery Skipper
1 <i>hairstreak species</i>	5 <i>Emperor species</i>	1 Little Glassywing
BLUES	2 Gemmed Satyr	2 Sachus
1 Ceraunus Blue	111 Carolina Satyr	37 Broad-winged Skipper
1 <i>blue species</i>	10 Monarch	20 Dun Skipper
	45 Queen	1 Brazilian Skipper
		2 Ocola Skipper
		3 <i>Skipper species</i>
		6 <i>unknown butterfly</i>

Total 1589 individuals / 41 species

Thanks to observers Wesley Brown, Leah Schlater-Brown, Haley Burns, Chris Carey, Julie d'Ablaing, Chuck Duplant, Jerry Eppner, Sudhaa Gade, Surya Gade, Linda Heinicke, Sandy Henderson, Lucy Herrsen, Madelyn Herrsen, Richard Hlinsky, Nancy Huffman, Sandy Jespersen, Clint Lacy, Julie Morgan Lock, Jacquelyn Marquez, Jim Murphy, Christine Pao, Montana Patin, Frances Pham, Christopher Price, Staci Price, Rowan Price, Warren Pruess, Lynne Ray, John Rickel, Emily Rickel, Roxanna Rickel, Kelly Rhodes, Johnny Rhodes, Taina Rhodes, Gavin Rhodes, Dustin Rhodes, Fred Robinson, Betsy Robinson, Robert Schwartz, Julian Sillero, Maria Sillero, James Smith, Barb Tucker, Debra Walker, Mary Waters, Nathan Whittle, Garrett Zylitz and Fatima (sorry I did not get your last name or the names of your family members).

The next count will be held on October 1, 2017.

Rich and Sandy Jespersen are members of the TMN-COT Class of 2001. They have been leading the BBSP Butterfly Count since 2006.



Broadwing Skipper

Photo: Jerry Eppner