

Butterfly Field Note  
July butterflies, beetles, moths, and field trippers  
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A wing-worn Coral Hairstreak clings to a leaf edge.



Western Whites visit many mustard species including non-native Tumble Mustards on the floodplain.



The season's first Variegated Fritillary showed up in lower Tongue Creek in July. Irregular immigrants from the south, this species is absent in some years.





Prairie Sagewort on Mt. Baldy attracts large numbers of Small Wood-Nymphs.



Sometimes we must net butterflies to confirm identification. This Silver-bordered Fritillary strolled around the butterfly net after we released it at MPG North.





A flower chafer beetle reaches for a cluster of Cow Parsnip flowers. These hairy beetles feed on pollen and may mimic bees for protection.



An impressive Tile-horned Prionis crawls on a Top House deck chair.





About 26 species of metallic wood-boring beetles (*Buprestis* spp.) occur in North America. These two species (*B. confluenta* (top) and *B. langii*) are uncommon and prized by collectors.



Metallic wood-boring beetle larvae feed on wood of various tree species including poplars and conifers.





All insects have six true legs. Caterpillars “cheat” by forming “pro-legs” to assist with movement. The claw-like true legs are visible at the far left of this Spurge Hawkmoth caterpillar (arrow).



I photographed this Elegant Sphinx Moth near the Top House lights. There were no previous records in Montana on the BugGuide, Butterflies and Moths of North America, or Moth Photographer Group websites.





Named for it's black-and-white pattern, this Police Car Moth nectars on Nodding Thistle along Woodchuck Creek.



A common visitor to the Top House lights in summertime is this Forage Looper Moth. Larvae feed on clovers, alfalfa, and various grasses.





Dan Thompson, a visitor from Jump Trading, joined me for a day of butterfly monitoring. Here, he shoots a Lorquin's Admiral along Woodchuck Creek.



My daughter, Erica, helped me with transect surveys during her visit. In her net is the Silver-bordered Fritillary she caught, featured earlier in this field note.





Ecology Project International (EPI) intern Isabelle shows off her prize. All of the first session EPI interns assisted me with my coverage area of the annual MPG Butterfly Count.

