

Pollinator Field Note
MPG Operations
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MPG held its first “4th of July Butterfly Count” this year. The “Fourth of July Butterfly Counts” is a project of the North American Butterfly Association. This event occurs throughout the U.S. and compiles information about butterfly species and their abundance. Counts may occur on any single day in June or July.

Fourteen enthusiastic Lepidopterists, experienced and novice alike, accepted the fun challenge of identifying and recording as many butterfly species as possible on one July day. Using nets, portable observation chambers, cameras, binoculars, and field guides, the main group spent several hours cataloging the butterflies of Mount Baldy. A smaller group inspected Woodchuck Creek and Whaley Draw later in the day. We tallied 28 butterfly species during our Count.



Lepidopterists rely on field markings, when possible, to identify the insects to species. Hindwing eyespots with an uncentered black pupil confirm this individual above as an Old World Swallowtail (*Papilio machaon*). Unsilvered spots and a “wine-colored” basal disc on the hindwing usually discern the below-pictured butterfly as a Hydaspe Fritillary (*Speyeria hydaspe*).





Gilding the lily: A Coral Hairstreak perfects this showy milkweed near Tongue Creek (*Satyrium titus* on *Asclepias speciosa*). This tail-less hairstreak sports a row of bright red spots on its hindwing. Below, a stag party of Melissa Blues (*Plebejus melissa*) congregates on a clump of mud in Whaley Draw. This “mud-puddling” behavior by male butterflies may increase their chances of reproductive success.





A well-worn Blue Copper (*Lycaena heteronea*) on Mount Baldy nectars on yarrow (*Achillea millefolia*). Sulphur buckwheat (*Eriogonum umbellatum*), a larval host plant for this gossamer-wing butterfly, abounds on Mount Baldy's summit.

Common Branded Skippers (*Hesperia comma*) dominated the Butterfly Count this year (below, on showy fleabane - *Erigeron speciosus*.)





A Lorquin's Admiral, poised for flight, perches on a Rocky Mountain maple (*Limenitis lorquini* on *Acer glabrum*). This species' wings and body displays delicate and elaborate patterning.