

NHFGC PROJECT: "PLANT NATIVE FOR BIRDS AND BUTTERFLIES" WILL BE THE '08 PROJECT TO FOLLOW THE '07 THEME OF "GOOD ALTERNATIVES FOR BAD PLANTS - ELIMINATING INVASIVES".

WGC "Bird and Butterfly Project Committee"

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Summary of Project Guidelines:

1. Identify and list specific native plants needed by our bird and/or butterfly (*which has already been done, and is attached to this handout*).
2. Description of a garden planting which was started or revamped, utilizing those native plants.
3. Submit at least one photograph of the project/garden.
4. Submit a list of the invasive plants which were removed, and the native plants which replaced them.

Compile a report not to exceed 4 pages (2 pages back to back), and submit before Sept. 15, 2008 to the NHFGC for an Appreciation Award. Include a digital photograph of bird and butterfly.

* As our Club will be involved in hosting the NHFGC Semi-Annual Meeting on 9/15/08, our Committee would like to wrap this up just after Labor Day 9/2/08.

NHFGC will compile all club projects to the NER as an addition to their theme Project "Future Choices-Seeking Regionally Native Alternatives to Invasive Plants". The report will also be sent to NGC in line with the theme "Nurture the Earth-Plant Native".

WGC SPECIES - Both have declining populations due to lost habitat.

WGC BIRD: WOOD THRUSH

WGC BUTTERFLY: RED SPOTTED PURPLE

CLUB MEMBERS - WINTER OBJECTIVES:

THINK ABOUT YOUR GARDENS. DO YOU HAVE A SITE TO OFFER?

Both species require woody settings, with moist soils, near water, having mixed sun and shade, abundant composting materials, and native plants.

Can we dig out invasives, and plant natives to encourage habitat?

Can we take before and after pictures of your garden?

Can you watch for the bird/butterfly, and try to get a picture?

Ideally we would have four gardens - A bird and butterfly for WGC and a bird and butterfly for the Jr. Garden Club.

WGC BUTTERFLY: THE RED SPOTTED PURPLE, (*Basilarchia Astyanax*)

This shimmering purplish-black butterfly belongs to the tribe of the Sovereigns. It gets its name from the few conspicuous red spots on the underside of the hind wings, which are brown with a submarginal row of red spots - two at the base of the fore wing and four at the base of the hind wing.

HABITAT: Deciduous or mixed forests, moist uplands, valley bottoms, often found patrolling the edges of forest clearings, and perching on low branches to sun itself, or at the edge of mud puddles to get moisture. Co-habitates with the Pipevine Swallowtail butterfly to gain protection from predacious birds. Wide range, Rockies to Atlantic, most frequently seen in the Eastern States and the Mississippi Valley. In recent decades the population is declining, and scientists note The Red Spotted Purple is interbreeding with The White Admiral.

THE ADULT STAGE:

The adult butterfly will feed upon carion, dung, rotted fruit, sap flows, and is often seen on the ground near mud puddles. Occasionally feed on nectar from small white flowers including privet (*ligustrum*), spirea (*spirea*) and viburnum (*viburnum*). I have also seen them on "sweet pepper bush". Occasionally visit Butterfly Bush (*buddleia davidii*) and Pentas (*pentas lanceolata*) and fruit tree blossoms. Is territorial, not liking other males close by. Approachable by humans to a reasonable degree.



Variations in adults, with wings down and up, and mottling with out breeding

PROCREATION:

EGGS: In early summer, the eggs are small and are deposited one by one on the points of the leaves of the food plants; when first laid they are yellowish-green, but turn brown when they are about to hatch.

CATERPILLARS: The caterpillars are brownish, slightly variegated with white and cream color on the sides, greenish-gray on the back; on the second segment are two long, slender brown horns which are thickly barbed. On the fifth segment and along the back are dorsal prominences, giving these caterpillars an odd appearance. When full grown, the caterpillars are about an inch and a quarter in length. At times, the caterpillars look more like bird guano than a caterpillar.



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Red-spotted Purple



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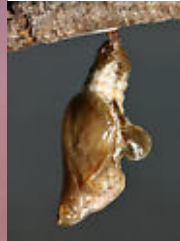
The caterpillars feed upon the leaves of oak (querus), birch(betula), willow, currant, apple (malus), crab apple, wild choke cherry, wild plum (prunus Americana), hawthorne-hornbeam(carpinus), aspen, cottonwood, poplar(populus), basswood (tillia), deerberry(vaccinum), and many others. It has been noted that if in captivity, the caterpillars will eat almost any leaf that is offered. They do not devour the midrib of the leaf they are feeding upon, using it as a resting place. They fasten bits of chewed leaf together with a silk web, and attach this irregular packet to the mid-rib by strands of silk.



Hibernaculum



hibernaculum
On a cherry tree



chrysalis



butterfly on cherry
blossom

CATERPILLARS PREPARE FOR WINTER:

When they have completed the second moult, each begins to construct a tube-like shelter to be used as winter quarters. This tube like shelter is called a Hibernaculum. They eat away the point of a leaf, cutting it off in a straight line, leaving the mid rib untouched; the leaf is securely fastened to the twig with silk so it cannot fall or be blown off; then the leaf is rolled to form a tube by drawing the edges together and fastening them with silk web. It is then lined with web, and in this snug hideaway the caterpillar spends the winter months.

THE FOLLOWING SPRING

The following spring, the caterpillars leave these retreats and feed upon the new leaves until they have completed their development. Then they form their **chrysalids**, which are fully as curiously humped as the caterpillars are, and are marked with similar colors - brown, greenish gray, deep cream color and white.

THE ADULT:

The **chrysalids** dangle from leaves for about eleven days. Then the butterflies emerge, their richly colored purple-black wings - which show a slight iridescence in the sunlight - have an expanse of from three to three and a half inches. Near the outer edge of both wings are violet-blue and black markings, and a series of white crescents along the outer margin.

WGC BIRD: THE WOOD THRUSH (*Hylocichla mustelina*)

POPULATION:

The Audubon Society states the **Wood Thrush** has become a species of conservation concern, and it has **been established as the symbol of the decline of Neotropical songbirds in the forests of eastern North America**. The population is in the decline, due to loss of habitat and other reasons. The number of wood thrush counted in their winter home in Mexico declined by 70% from 1960 to 1985, and has continued to decline at a rate of 1.7% per year since.

FAMOUS FOR ITS FLUTE LIKE SONG:

“And where the deepest shadows fell, The wood thrush rang his silver bell”, John Greenleaf Whittier. “Whenever a man hears it he is young, and Nature is in her spring; wherever he hears it, it is a new world and a free country, and the gates of heaven are not shut against him”, David Thoreau.

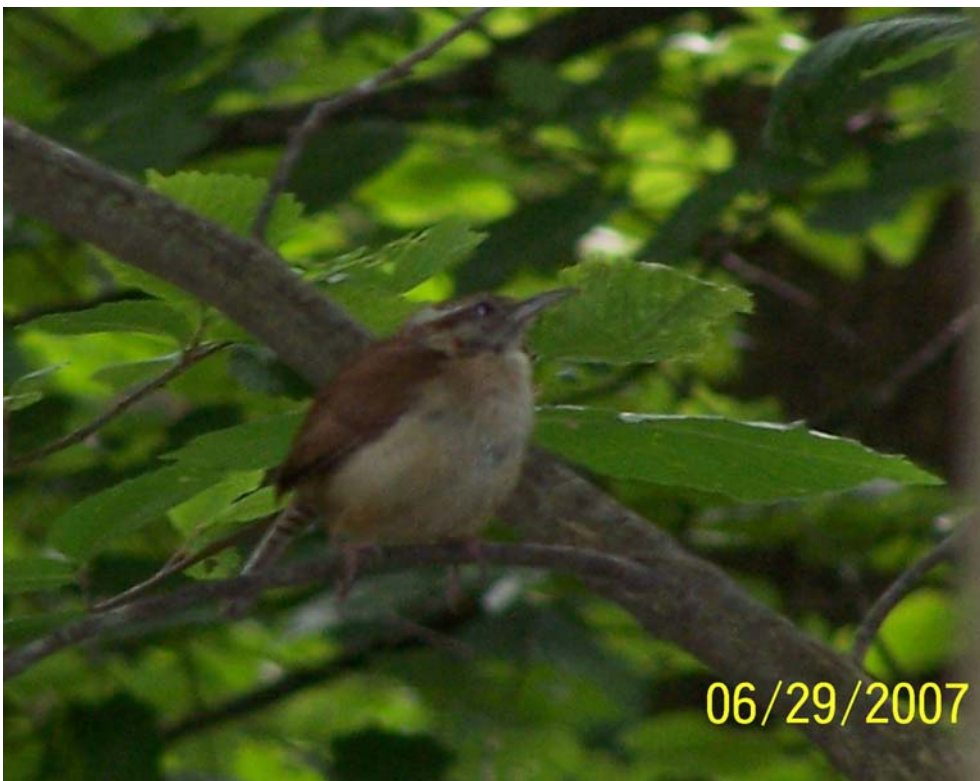
IDENTIFICATION:

The sexes look alike in this robin-sized bird. Distinct features include the warm reddish-brown color of the crown and nape (fading to olive-brown on the back and wings), the white underparts, and the bold dark spots on the throat, breast and flanks. The wood thrush also has pink legs and a white eye ring.



MIGRATION: Arrives in springtime with the robins, and leaves late August, feeding on ripe orchards as it flies to Central America (Mexico to Panama) for the winter months. Has a distinctive migratory bird call, heard at night when it flies.

HABITAT: Breeds in the interior, as well as the edges, of deciduous and mixed forests, near water. Prefers low lands and avoids mountains. It needs moderate to dense understory of foliage, shade, moist soil, decaying leaf matter. Thrush nesting pairs will sometimes choose shrubby second growth forests or dense shrubbery in urban parks. They forage for food on the ground, eating worms, slugs, ants, caterpillars, moths, millipedes, etc. during breeding season. They will also feed upon fruits and berries as they become available in the summer. Very often the thrush can be heard, but not seen as it perches in tree foliage.



NESTING:

A nest, similar to a robins made of grass and twigs and rootlets, but lined with a smooth layer of mud. Almost like an earthenware cup, built within 6 feet of the ground, the thrush lays 4 pale greenish blue eggs, which are incubated by the female in about two weeks. Both parents feed the babies, and they are ready to fledge in about another two weeks. BROWN HEADED COW BIRDS sneak their eggs into the Wood Thrush nest, and the larger babies overpower the thrush infants. The cow birds carry a parasite that is lethal to the thrush, thereby decreasing reproductive success, even though most thrush pairs attempt to raise two broods per summer.

