

Winged beauties of summer

BY LINDA KAPPEN

Hoffman's Checkerspot

The wingspan of a Hoffman's Checkerspot (*Chlosyne hoffmanni*), a butterfly of the Nymphalidae family, is usually around one and three-quarters inches. The closed wing or underside of the hind wing spots are more of a creamy off-white color than bright white. Rows of spots have distinct thicker black outlines.

The Hoffman's has a narrow range of distribution in the Cascades through Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. South of Oregon the narrow range extends through the Sierra Nevada mountains of California.

This butterfly lives in various mountain habitats: meadows, streamsides, and openings at edges of forests, including old forest roads.

The larvae of Hoffman's Checkerspot feed on various native asters; adults feed on flower nectar. Eggs are laid in groups on the underside of host plant leaves. Young larvae overwinter (hibernate).

The butterfly can be seen in flight from May through September with June and July being peak months. They have been observed and counted at the summer Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument Butterfly Count. Last year a group of us saw one on a moist old logging road that ran through the forest.

The photo here was taken in July at Lassen Volcanic National Park, where I saw these butterflies on a few trails from highest to lower elevations. The butterfly pictured allowed me a lengthy and close-up photo shoot on the banks of a creek on a very warm but pleasant day. It was a nice end to a long hike.

Red-winged Wave Moth

The Red-winged Wave (*Dasyfidonia avuncularia*) is a moth belonging to the Geometridae family. Its wingspan reaches



Hoffman's Checkerspot Butterfly



Red-winged Wave Moth

up to 1.8 inches. The Red-winged Wave moth has a wide distribution in the forests of western North America. It can be seen in flight from April through July.

A known larval food plant for this moth in the Pacific Northwest is bitter cherry. Adult food is the nectar of fruit trees and ceanothus, as well as puddling. Puddling is a common behavior of moths and butterflies to obtain nutrients from wet or damp areas found on forest roads or anywhere a puddle of water or dried up puddle may be found.

The adult moth is day-flying (diurnal) and is not known to come to light, so the best chances of seeing it may be on a sunny part of a forest road. Because it is

a day-flying moth, with bright colors and a wing shape similar to a butterfly's, it is often mistaken as a butterfly.

I found the pictured Red-winged Wave puddling on a forest road with other day-flying moths and some butterflies. I have seen this moth only one or two times in the last five years. This year, however, there seems to be an abundance of them throughout the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest.

In spring sunlight, this stunning moth, with its striated lines and blend of colors, reminded me of a brightly colored metallic watercolor painting.

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Cultivate your sense of wonder

BY KATHLEEN PYLE

Ever notice reddish plumes blooming every April above that blind curve on Highway 238? How about the snag that hosts a flock of sun-worshipping turkey vultures near Cantrall Buckley Park? Our bioregion is full of natural wonders. Siskiyou Field Institute (SFI) offers a summer slate of field classes designed to answer the whats, whys and wheres underlying those wonders.

Classes exploring our Klamath-Siskiyou bioregion's botany, geology, birds, invertebrates, and watersheds vary in length from one to three days. Some include camping; most involve hiking. Two classes are priced especially for family budgets. All promise to deliver authentic learning experiences that expand your understanding of how our mountains and valleys formed, what grows here and why, and how to identify the many birds visiting our area. We also offer classes that will build your confidence while embarking on your own wilderness adventures.

Embraced by mountains

The unusual east-westerly direction of the Klamath-Siskiyou mountain range and its lack of glaciation—plus relatively mild winters—has created protective habitats for old-growth forests and the animals and plants that depend on them. Harsher habitats, on serpentine slopes and canyons, have fostered rare plants that evolved in their tolerance for heavy metals and low nutrition.

Interested in helping to classify plants in some of these lesser-botanized areas? Then consider joining two SFI classes: "Botanizing Poker Flat and Bolan Peak" and "The Cryptic World of Red Buttes Wilderness." In the midsummer "Botanizing Observation Peak," we'll explore a high-elevation serpentine ridge with its own unique flora. In "Exploring Conifer Country in the Russian Wilderness," we'll trek to Little Duck Lake and see 17 different conifer species in a granitic area referred to as the bioregion's botanical "Miracle Mile."

How it all happened

The Klamath-Siskiyou bioregion is a geologist's delight. From the Josephine

ophiolite showing Illinois Valley geologic history in a visible layer cake and the green serpentine slopes of Smith River Canyon on Highway 199, to the volcanic splendors eastward in the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, there's a lot of rocky terrain to explore. Consider joining our tour of "Smith River Canyon's Serpentine Geology/Ecology," or hiking some geological history in "Geology of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument," or getting the whole-picture view of "Geology of the Recent Siskiyou" in a van trip from Selma to Port Orford. There's fun learning for the entire family in "Rock Hounding on Brown Mountain," Mt. McLoughlin's sister peak.

From desert to forest

Speaking of volcanic, SFI sponsors two 2015 field courses at Lava Beds National Monument (LBNM). The first, in early June, focuses on the Monument's flora and bird life in varied habitats including sagebrush steppe, cave, ponderosa pine forest, and grassland. Botanist Sean Smith has just published a book on LBNM flora, and all students in the class will receive a copy. Frank Lospalluto will guide us on the birding segment. In July, we'll return to the monument to study bats and cave ecology.

Two of our classes will study forests. "Spirit of the Forest in Words and Photos" combines photography and nature writing with coaching by two published artists: local writer Diana Coogle and Washington State photographer Mark Turner. As you learn to capture the spirit of the forest, you'll uncover your own creative spirit. In July, a one-day class on dendrology, the science of tree rings, will give you clues for unraveling the mystery of calculating tree ages.

Skill builders

If you have a summer goal of honing your outdoor skills, consider the one-day "Orienteering," a hands-on guide to using compasses, navigating by solar position, and reading maps. Two local herbalists will teach "A Beginner's Guide to Medicinal Plants," starting with some basic botany and ending with the formulation of your own herbal product to take home.

Looking toward fall, our class schedule offers a birding class that combines visual identification skills with smartphone apps for reference.

Siskiyou Field Institute has also scheduled a professional workshop for specialized study of plant groups, including willows, eriogonums (buckwheats), lichens, and graminoids (rushes, sedges and grasses).

If you're a Jackson or Josephine County teacher or classroom assistant, or nonprofit outdoor educator, a scholarship could help subsidize or pay your total tuition. These are made possible through the Rogue Valley and Siskiyou Audubon Societies. Contact SFI's program coordinator Kathleen Pyle

at programcoord@thesfi.org for more information.

For more details on our field course schedule, free Friday Night Learning events, or youth camps and wilderness trips, visit www.thesfi.org or call 541-597-8530.

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* That's Indian warrior (*Pedicularis densiflora*), a hemiparasitic plant that often parasitizes manzanita roots.

** Turkey vultures migrate from Northern California in the spring, often flying north in the thermals along the Rogue River. Any guess why they roost (not nest) near the highway?

Two crops for the price of one

BY JONATHAN SPERO

One advantage of smaller scale in farming is the ability to inter-crop—to have more than one crop growing in the same area. This past year I grew both sweet corn and kale for seed on the same plot.

Corn grows from spring till fall. Kale, for seed, is planted midsummer and overwinters to flower in the spring and make seeds the following summer. Once I harvest the corn, it is too late to plant the kale. So I decided to "double-crop"—to seed the kale in between the corn rows.

I plant my corn using a two-foot/four-foot spacing by planting two rows two feet apart followed by a four-foot space. The four-foot space is weeded with a rototiller, then seeded with a cover crop as the corn matures in August. Usually the two-foot rows I keep weeded with a wheel hoe, but this time I planted kale down the middle. Shade from the corn would slow down the kale, so I seeded in July instead of August, sprinkling seeds between the rows of corn.

The corn did indeed keep the kale suppressed. When I harvested the corn, the kale plants were small and stunted. But the corn harvest was in no way diminished by the kale at its feet. And when I mowed the corn and weeded and thinned, the kale jumped back, even though it was already



Siber Frill kale in bloom at the end of April.

October. By December the kale plants had recovered and were growing. The rows are six feet apart with corn "stumps" and a strip of cover crop clover down the middle. If all goes well, the kale will flower in the spring and go on to produce seed.

When people claim that "conventional" agriculture is more productive than organic methods of growing, they are only considering one crop at a time. Maybe the corn is a little less productive than corn grown with more chemicals, and maybe the kale quantity could be a little higher with a monoculture, but I have both crops at once, on the same ground, and I do not think any monoculture can match that.

The stand of Siber Frill kale is about 80 percent full and was in full flower at the end of April. In a few spots the weeds overtook the emerging kale. There was no loss in the corn from combining these two crops.

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