

OBSERVATIONS OF *LYCAEIDES ARGYROGNOMON NABOKOVI* IN  
THE GREAT LAKES REGION (LYCAENIDAE)

The presence of the northern blue, *Lycaeides argyrognomon* Bergatraesser, in the Great Lakes Region was first cited by the late Louis Greiswich (1953, Lepid. News 7: 54), based on a long series of specimens collected in Oconto and Marinette counties, 1-15 July 1952, in northern Wisconsin. The Greiswich specimens were examined by Professor V. Nabokov and found to be an undescribed subspecies of *L. argyrognomon*. It wasn't until 1972 that this population was recognized as a new subspecies, *nabokovi* Masters (1972, J. Lepid. Soc. 26:150-154), occurring in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Masters (op. cit.) indicated that the new subspecies may also occur in northern Michigan. In 1979 James Parkinson (pers. comm.) reported the first capture of *L. argyrognomon nabokovi* on 15 July, from Dickinson County, Michigan, thus establishing its range in the western portion of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Parkinson (pers. comm.) again collected specimens of the northern blue on 2-4 July 1980, near Iron Mountain in Dickinson County.

The foodplant of *nabokovi* was unknown to the authors until 1980, when Les Ferge, 'Mo' Nielsen, and Jim Parkinson discovered females ovipositing on the stems of dwarf bilberry, *Vaccinium caespitosum* Michx., on 4 July, in Florence County, Wisconsin. Several females were observed at close range ovipositing on the dwarf bilberry in a trailside opening in a wooded area of aspen, oak and jack pine. Oviposition took place in the late afternoon between 1500-1730 CDT. The immediate habitat consisted of miscellaneous low plants, including grasses and sedges (*Carex* spp.), creeping blackberry (*Rubus* sp.), bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum* L.) with large patches of *V. caespitosum* on a sandy soil (see Fig. 1). The males were more commonly found flying along the adjacent trail and 'puddling' at moist spots in the trail. Females were collected in close proximity to dwarf bilberry, where they were ovipositing or resting on various low plants (see Fig. 2). Farther south along the same trail in Marinette County, several northern blues of both sexes were also collected nectaring on Alsike clover (*Trifolium hybridum* L.). On 14 July 1979 at mid-day, females were found nectaring on dogbane (*Apocynum androsaemifolium* L.) and yarrow (*Achillea millefolium* L.) in Florence County.

Ova collected in the field and obtained from a captive female in 1980 remained dormant the rest of the summer, indicating that *nabokovi* eggs overwinter. An egg was also found unhatched in the wild on 1 September 1980 by the junior author.



FIGS. 1-2. 1, habitat of *Lycaeides argyrognomon nabokovi* Masters, Florence Co., Wisconsin; 2, *Lycaeides argyrognomon nabokovi* female ovipositing on *Vaccinium caespitosum*.

The authors have since learned from Robert Dana (pers. comm.) that he also observed females of *L. argyrognomon nabokovi* ovipositing on *V. caespitosum* in St. Louis County, Minnesota. His observations occurred on 5 July 1976 when several females were ovipositing on dwarf bilberry, or on debris immediately beneath; a few additional ova were found by searching the foodplant. Dana also noted that males seemed to concentrate their 'patrolling' over patches or mats of dwarf bilberry.

The northern blue, *L. argyrognomon scudderi* (Edwards) has been reported from Ontario, Canada (1979, Toronto Entomol. Assoc. Occ. Pub. 11:48), with a flight period and habitat similar to that of *nabokovi*. Dr. Nick Escott (1979, *ibid.*) reported *scudderi* also ovipositing on *V. caespitosum* on 17 July 1977 in northern Ontario. Is it possible that the Ontario population may be synonymous with *nabokovi*? Until a long series of each population can be thoroughly examined, we cannot be certain that the two subspecies are actually the same.

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#### OUTBREAK OF *ASTEROCAMPA CLYTON* (NYMPHALIDAE) IN LOUISIANA

In the area adjacent to and including East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana, the tawny emperor butterfly, *Asterocampa clyton* (Boisduval & Le Conte), has at least 3 broods a year, occurring in early June, mid-July to early August and early September. Adult specimens have been taken from April through November. This species is usually extremely local but can be common in colonies in bottomland forests. In mid-July 1980, an unexpected population outbreak occurred in an area observed to extend as far north as Hamburg in Avoyelles Parish and as far west as Port Barre in St. Landry Parish. Tens to hundreds of butterflies (females were more conspicuous) could be seen daily within the city limits of Baton Rouge, where none or few had been previously recorded. Large numbers were observed flying across highways and many were killed by automobiles. The species was noticed in West Feliciana, West Baton Rouge, Avoyelles, Point Coupee, St. Landry and Iberville Parishes surrounding Baton Rouge. It was found to be especially common in areas where its food plant, hackberry (*Celtis laeviga* Willd.) occurred.