

## Butterflies and Clouds, Oh Oh '08

Butterflies don't like to get out of bed when it's overcast and chilly. At about 70°, more or less, is the threshold above which butterflies become active. During our 2008 "4<sup>th</sup> of July Butterfly Count" day, which fell on July 6 this year, temperatures crawled slowly up to 69° but barely higher except briefly during occasional sun breaks.

As a result, Vashon counted only four species and only 43 individuals, in eight hours of looking. The roving team counted in the vicinity of Country Store, along a muddy unpaved segment of 103<sup>rd</sup>, around Island Center Pond, and on Maury Island above Dockton and Sandy Shores. Four parties of garden watchers augmented the count with observations from their local neighborhoods. But the butterflies were mostly tucked away under leaves, bark, and branches, dozing and dreaming of nectar and sunshine.

Counters set a record for the lowest number of species in all thirteen years of counting on Vashon. We saw only four: 29 Western Tiger Swallowtails, two Pale Tiger Swallowtails, seven Cabbage Whites, and five Lorquin's Admirals. Had we been able to include dragonflies and damselflies we'd have done much better. With Alan Warneke's help, we saw Western and Pacific Forktails, Bluets, Common Whitetails, Eight-spotted Skimmers, and a White-faced Meadowhawk.

We weren't weighed down by a heavy burden of disappointment, despite our results. We were too busy enjoying the dazzle of dragonfly wings and the hunt for frogs in puddles along 103<sup>rd</sup>, the songs of Common Yellowthroats and the thrilling flights of Cedar Waxwings snatching insects over the pond in Island Center Forest.

Submitted by Rayna Holtz

### Vashon Butterfly Counts

Species	1996 unofficial July 7	1997 July 7	1998 July 17	1999 July 10	2000 July 2	2001 July 22	2002 July 6	2003 July 6	2004 July 3	2005 July 3	2006 July 1	2007 July 1	2008 July 6
	sunny	sunny	sunny	sunny/ hazy	cloudy some rain	sunny	mostly sunny	hazy/ sunny	cloudy am 90°-pm	Sunny & clear 70-75°	Sunny & clear 68-80°	sunny / clouds @ 4 69-80°	Overcast & some sun 65-69°
	1:40-6:15	1:20- 5:20	12:15- 4:15	10-4:45	12:15-3	12-6:30	10-6:30	9-8:30	9-8	9-8	9:30-8	9:30-6	9:30- 5:30
<b>Western Tiger Swallowtail</b>	19	13	17	9	3	1	27	37	8	27	71	112	29
<b>Pale Tiger Swallowtail</b>	1	1	1	1	1		5	4			6	2	2
<b>Anise Swallowtail</b>								1					
<b>Cabbage White</b>	14	11	3	4		26	11	52	22	44	88	16	7
<b>Purplish Copper</b>					1								
<b>Spring Azure</b>				1	1			16	91	2	1	3	
<b>Lorquin's Admiral</b>	7	9	8	15	9	3	15	47	47	24	19	25	5
<b>Red Admiral</b>	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	15	3	5	2	1	
<b>Painted Lady</b>			1			9		1	3	69			
<b>West Coast Lady</b>								1		9			
<b>Misc. Ladies</b>										21			
<b>Milbert's Tortois</b>					1				1	1	1		
<b>Satyr Anglewing</b>		1	1		1			2	15	2	8	5	
<b>TOTAL SPECIES</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>TOTAL INDIVIDUALS</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>43</b>