



The Sky Island News

Vol. 1 No.2

April 2010

April is the one month that is Spring in southern Arizona. Sandwiched between the cool temperatures of winter and the heat of summer, April is a great time to be outdoors. In the past couple of days, I have seen my first Zebra-tailed and Side-blotched Lizards of the year and the first Canyon Treefrog of the season was spotted in Madera Canyon yesterday. Black-chinned Hummingbirds, Swainson's Hawks, Hooded Orioles, and many other birds are arriving on their southern Arizona breeding grounds or are passing through on their way further north. Butterfly and dragonfly activity is still pretty low, but that will change in the next couple of weeks. In short, April is a great time to be outdoors in southern Arizona.



Side-blotched Lizard. Saguaro National Park East.

April Tours

Desert Birds of Saguaro National Park.

Friday, April 16, 8-11AM. Meet at the Hope Camp trailhead at the end of Camino Loma Alta. We will be searching for resident birds as well as passing migrants. Email Jeff@SkyIslandTours.com to register. Cost \$10.

April Classes

Detailed class descriptions are available on my website (www.SkyIslandTours.com).

Taste of the Tropics: April 6. 10:00AM-12:00PM. Las Campanas (565 W. Bell Tower Dr.). Call 648-7669 to register.

Butterflies and Moths. April 6. 6:00-8:00PM. Tucson Botanical Gardens. (2150 N. Alvernon Way). Call 326-9686 X19 to register.



Marvelous Moths. April 7. 10:00AM-12:00PM. Tucson Junior League (2099 E. River Rd.) Call 322-5627 or go to oasisnet.org to register.

Desert Ecology. April 14. 9:30AM-12:00PM. Tucson Botanical Gardens (2150 N. Alvernon Way). Class is for Tucson Botanical Gardens' docents.

Arizona's Sky Islands. April 19. 12:00-2:00PM. Mission Branch Library (3770 S. Mission). No registration required.

Beautiful, Bountiful Butterflies. April 22. 7-9PM. Brandi Fenton Memorial Park (3482 E. River Rd.). Call Pima County Department of Natural Resources to register (877-6000). **YOU MUST PREREGISTER FOR THIS CLASS!**

Marvelous Moths. April 21. 10:00AM-12:00PM. Villa Hermosa. (6300 E. Speedway Blvd.). Call 322-5627 or go to oasisnet.org to register.

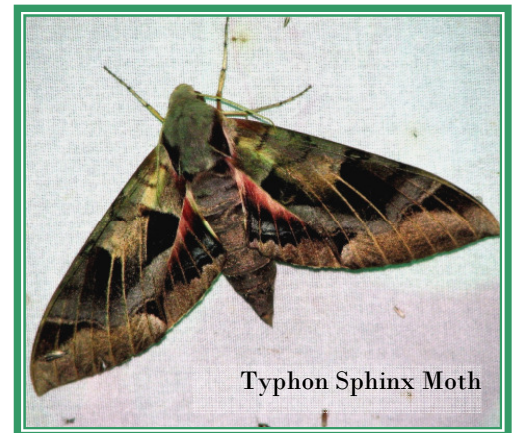
The Dazzling World of Caterpillars. April 27. 6:00-8:00PM. Tucson Botanical Gardens (2150 N. Alvernon Way). Call 326-9686 x19 to register.

Moths- The Overlooked Nocturnal Cousins of Butterflies

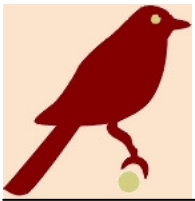
As you may have noted in the calendar, I am offering a couple of classes this month that feature moths. As a prelude, I thought I would offer a short article as an introduction to these insects.

Moths, like butterflies, are in the order Lepidoptera. Some people are surprised to learn that there are roughly 12,200 species of moths known to science in North America and "only" 800 species of butterfly.

Many moths are nocturnal. This is the norm for the group. However, there are many that fly with butterflies during the day and often rival them in their beauty. Especially prominent among the day-flying moths are the tiger moths.



Typhon Sphinx Moth



Moths are divided into more than 120 families (compared to six families of butterflies).

Moths can be divided into two broad groups:

- ❖ microlepidoptera, or ‘micros’ for short. Despite their name, not all micros are small- some have wingspans of four inches or more. Micros are the most primitive of living moths, meaning that their origin is closer to the beginnings of all the lepidoptera.
- ❖ macrolepidoptera- the higher moths. Butterflies fall into this group also. These are the moths that most people think of when they hear the word ‘moth’. Hawk moths, silk moths, tiger moths, and inchworms belong here.



New moth species are being discovered all of the time, even in relatively well-studied North America. For instance, in June of 2007, Dr. Bruce Walsh of the University of Arizona, discovered a new, bright pink, moth in the Chiricahua Mountains!

Inside tip: The easiest way to attract a lot of moths in a short time is to turn on the outside light on a summer’s night. If you can identify the moths that you see, you are doing great! Moths can be pretty hard to identify to species. But that does not detract from the fun.

Moths are important components of our ecosystems and deserve more attention than they generally receive. So turn on that patio light, grab a beverage of your choice, sit back, and see who comes calling.

Sky Island Tours is on Facebook and I need “fans”!

I have joined the social networking mainstream by adding a Sky Island Tours page on Facebook! The address is <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Tucson-AZ/Sky-Island-Tours/110934757893>. The best part is that you do not need to be a Facebook member to access the site!

C’mon, become a fan of Sky Island Tours. Post photographs and sightings, ask questions, answer questions that others may post, comment on classes, whatever you like. See you on Facebook!



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Schedule a Tour or Program!

I offer classes and tours for several local organizations. However, I also lead private tours. Whether you are interested in birds, butterflies, dragonflies, or nature in general, I would be happy to take you on a tour! I also can give presentations to your church, community, gardening, or social clubs! Contact me at jeff@skyislandtours.com or call (520)-488-8551 for details.