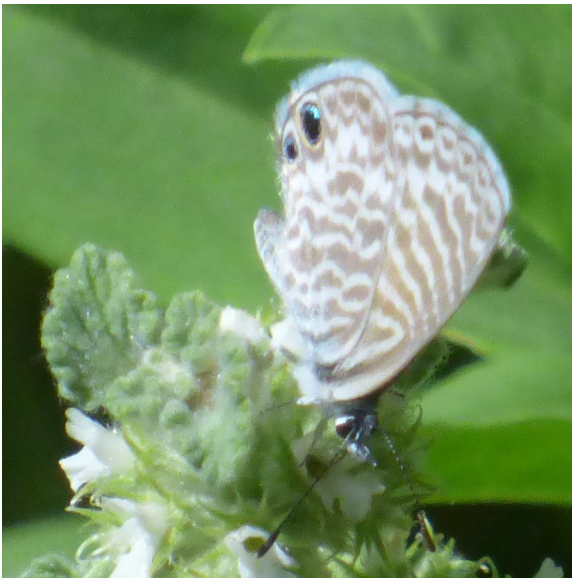


Las Vegas, NM Flora: and Some of the Associated Butterflies

**Thanks to the severe eight month drought now mitigated by the monsoon there was little new flora to engage me this year. But there are always BUGS!
--PJW, 10/Jul/2018**

Butterflies were my first collection obsession. I was about eight years old living with my family in the North Woods of Wisconsin, my mother had outfitted me with net, killing jar, mounting board, the whole works. Off I went on safari through the tall grasses the mowed acres, the flower gardens and woods. I had quite a collection, the prize being a Luna Moth (*Actias luna*). The first winter the collection was stored on the upright piano, later when looking at it I discovered only some wings and bare pins. Mice had found it and eaten all the bodies. That was the end of my Butterfly collecting until now when I use a camera, it is more to my taste. So far this year I have identified 45, three being only caterpillars of moths.

Here are some of my favorite butterflies, one from each family.



**family: Gossamer-wing Butterflies (LYCAENIDAE)
Ceraunus Blue (*Hemiargus ceraunus*) 13 May 2018**

1st new species and 2nd butterfly of the season feeding on Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*) in my garden where I was reading when I saw this tiny, inch across butterfly, got my camera *et voilà!*

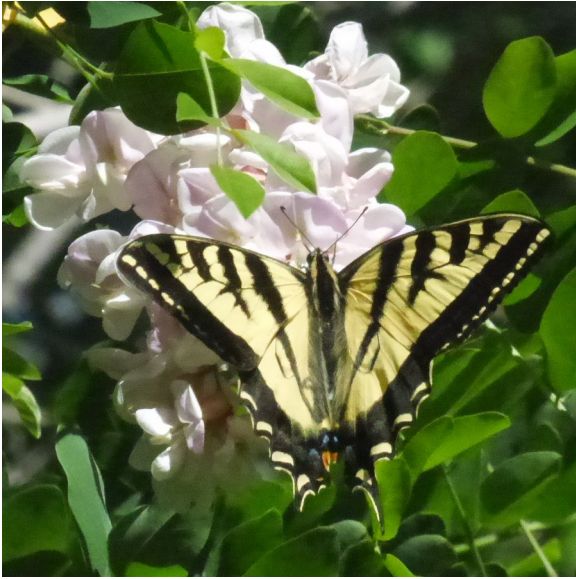
A caterpillar host, locust trees, live about my house, I'll now pay more attention to those tiny butterflies with the intriguing blue eyes. And so started my current obsession with the bugs of my environment.



**family: Brush-foot butterflies (NYMPHALIDAE)
Mourning Cloak (*Nymphalis antiopa*) 11 Mar 2016**

The first butterfly of the season because they hibernate all winter in some protective cranny, though they freeze they are not killed. Being early risers, before flowers are blooming they drink sap from trees injured by winter storms or woodpeckers searching for succulent bark beetles or park tree trimmers.

...some more favorite butterflies



family: Swallowtail butterflies (PAPILIONIDAE)
Western Tiger Swallowtail (*Papilio rutulus*)

On 16 June 14 seen supping on a the sweet scented flowers of the New Mexican locust (*Robinia neomexicana*), another favorite of mine. Those large yellow butterflies can put the finishing touch to a fine summer's day by their flittering in the sunny openings amongst the trees while looking for that perfect one.



family: Whites-and-yellows (PIERIDAE)
Dainty Sulphur (*Nathalis iole*)

She was one of the last new species seen this year on Aug 11, 2018 near the Gallinas Bridge. There was only one photo and it without the distinctive black spots on underside of fore-wing, I had to look for more. It didn't take long, but she found me, landing c.1 ft. in front of me on a Cow-pen Daisy at Villanueva SP, on 16 Sept. She is our smallest sulfur at c.1 inch.



family: Skipper butterflies (HESPERIIDAE)
Common Checkered-Skipper (*Pyrgus communis*)

on 19 Oct 2015 with a Painted lady (*Vanessa cardui*) in the background . The skipper is maybe the most common butterfly here as I see them all though the year. One was in my wild garden on 29 Oct 2018, also with a... what do you call a male Painted Lady? Transvestite?

I have seen the Common Checkered-Skipper laying an egg on Cheese-weed (*Malva neglecta*), which would make *Malvaceae* the caterpillar's host and might explain some of the holes in our Hollyhocks which I generally blame all of it on the grasshoppers.

The Painted ladies are quite common here in the fall also as they are migratory and pause here to refuel on their way south.

...and now some favorite moths



**family: Giant Silk, Royal moths (*SATURNIIDAE*)
Polyphemus moth (*Antheraea polyphemus*)**

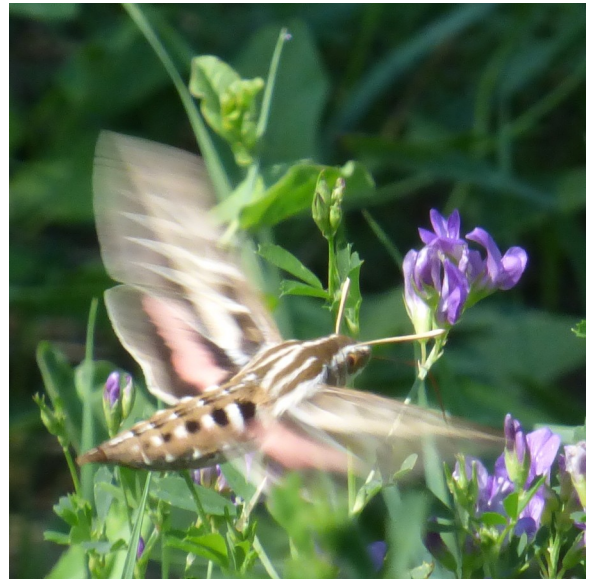
4-6in; male antennae more plumose the better to detect females pheromones; female abdomen larger for eggs, neither has a working mouth so they do not eat and live as only about a week as adults.

Walking down my street Jul 7, 2018 I saw a large fluttery shadow cross before me. I turned and saw this beautiful moth just as he landed in a neighbors bushes.

**family: Sphinx moth (*SPHINGIDAE*)
White-lined Sphinx (*Hyles lineata*)**

They usually fly at dusk, during night, and dawn, but also during day. Caterpillar Hosts: A great diversity including willow weed (*Epilobium*), four o'clock (*Mirabilis*), evening primrose (*Oenothera*) which all grow nearby..

On 1 August 2018 9am, the Riverwalk-south I heard a hummingbird-like buzzing. Twas this fellow necturing on alfalfa who I followed all over that meadow to get this photo.



**family: Owlet Moths (*NOCTUIDAE*)
Dart Moth ? (*Copablepharon? sp.45*)**

On 13 Oct 2018 10AM 2 days before our first frost. It is most likely the last new butterfly of the season as the next day it snowed and the night was in the low 20s and I still have to make wood. She is feeding on *Gaillardia puchella* (Indian Blanket flower) flitting from flower to flower in my wild garden.

The ID is only tentative and I have 4 other similar ones , but I shall persevere in the attempt to ID the questionable ones. I have seen on the Internet a large file of dead similar Owlet moths but they do not look like live ones. We shall see.

