

# NJMC welcomes summer with butterfly guide



## Butterfly Day details

The second-annual Butterfly Day will take place Sunday, July 25 at DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst. From 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., adults and children can enjoy nature walks, contests and a scavenger hunt to find a host of butterfly species. The latest butterfly pamphlet from the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission will also be available, free of charge.



PHOTOS, NEW JERSEY MEADOWLANDS COMMISSION

Those in the local area who attend the second-annual Butterfly Day Sunday, July 25 stand a good chance of spotting a Fritillary (top), Summer Azure (left) or maybe a Black Eastern Swallowtail (above).

By Jennifer Vazquez  
REPORTER

**LYNDHURST** — The colorful and plentiful flowers in the local area combined with the warm weather are the perfect recipe for beautifully delicate yet majestic butterflies to emerge and flutter about. In order to inform locals of their splendor and which species can be found nearby, the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission is offering a brand-new free guide to the butterflies of DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst.

NJMC Communication Officer Jim Wright, who also runs the Meadowlands Nature blog (*meadowblog.net*), has spent approximately two years taking pictures and surveying the butterflies commonly seen in the area in order to put together an up-to-date brochure on these diverse creatures.

"When I first started in the Meadowlands, I didn't know much about butterflies, but I take a lot of nature photography and I kept seeing more and more butterflies," he said recently in an interview with *The Leader*. "I started to learn to I.D. them and I said, 'We need to do a butterfly guide to DeKorte Park.' We did

have one but it was out of print and it's out-of-date so we definitely could use a new one."

This newly updated pamphlet features photos and information on 18 butterfly species and two moth species common to the Lyndhurst park area. The guide also includes sections on the basics of butterflies, advice on watching them and a list of helpful Internet links, among other tidbits.

"It has color photographs of 18 butterflies and two types of moths we see around here," Wright said. "You'll certainly see Budwing Skippers, Eastern Tiger Swallowtails, a whole lot of Cabbage Whites — they are everywhere. We also get Black Swallowtails, but the Monarch, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail and the Black Swallowtail are the nice big show-stopping butterflies that people love. When they think butterfly they think of those three. We have a lot of other cool ones with great names like Pearl Crescent and Painted Lady."

One of the recent trends regarding the butterflies in the area is that this year they appeared much earlier than expected.

"This year we are seeing more butterflies earlier,"

Wright said. "I think it's because the spring wasn't quite as wet and it got warmer earlier, too. It's been a good year for butterflies. We have seen all kinds — Emeralds and there's a little one called the Silver Spotted Skipper."

DeKorte Park is a great location to spot these assorted winged beings, according to Wright.

"I did a nature walk (a couple of Sundays ago) and, I think, we had seven species without really looking for them," he said.

Since butterflies are less threatening and are usually able to stay on a flower or plant for a prolonged period of time, in comparison to birds, for example, they prove to be more approachable and easier to photograph. Wright shared a few quick tips to those interested in capturing butterflies with a camera lens.

"Come to DeKorte Park and get a free butterfly guide," Wright said. "I would use that and go to any park that has flowers — you could start with the Butterfly Garden here at DeKorte Park. We have many here."

The NJMC has other butterfly projects in the works as well. The guide was cre-

ated in time for the DeKorte Park's second-annual Butterfly Day, hosted this year Sunday, July 25 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Butterfly Day will feature activities for children as well as adults, including nature walks, contests and a scavenger hunt to find a host of butterfly species, according to Wright.

This year also marks the 10th anniversary of the Jill Ann Ziemkiewicz Butterfly Garden — a garden in DeKorte Park dedicated to the memory of a 23-year-old Rutherford resident and flight crew member of TWA Flight 800, which crashed in the Atlantic right off Long Island in 1996.

Despite their small stature, Wright believes that butterflies hold a vital role in society, besides just being aesthetically pleasing.

"Butterflies are a great way for, kids especially, but adults as well, to get closer to nature, and appreciate nature," he said.

Those interested can pick up the free guide at the Meadowlands Environment Center or the NJMC's administration building, both located in DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst.

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