

**Report on the Field Trip to Colorado,
July 8-15, 2015 - Submitted by Eric Shaw**

On July 8, 2015, eight members of the Hairstreak Chapter (Travis & Karen MacClendon, Brian & Sheena Lloyd, Virginia Craig, Amy Sang, and Eric & Cynthia Shaw) met on the outskirts of Denver to begin a week-long tour of the butterfly wonders of Colorado.

>Day One the group visited Rocky Mountain National Park on the first full day. The Cow Creek meadows provided an excellent introduction to the various blues, including Greenish Blue, Boisduval's Blue, Arctic Blue, and Dotted Blue. Other butterflies included Garita Skipperling, Common Ringlet, and Long Dash. Near the Alpine Visitors Center (quite cold!) the group watched as a group of male elk crossed the road in a hail/sleet storm. Further on, we had nice views of Yellow-bellied Marmot and Pika, as well as Common Alpine.

>Day Two found us once again at altitude (Loveland Pass), but the temperatures were too cold for most butterflies, although a few were seen, including Grizzled Skipper and Becker's White. As we traveled west, we stopped for lunch at a rest stop that provided nice views of Ruddy Copper, Field Crescent, and Queen Alexandra's Sulfur. Before we reached Delta, we found an obliging Weidemeyer's Admiral at another roadside stop. The next two nights were spent in Delta in the western part of the state.

>Day Three, the morning was spent exploring the wonders of Escalante Canyon. Less than half a mile down the road, we stopped to admire a White-tailed Prairie Dog colony with several Burrowing Owls in attendance. Further along, we had nice views of male Collared Lizard (breeding color!), Western Pygmy-Blue, Pale Swallowtail, and Peregrine Falcon. Later that afternoon, we climbed the switchback road up Grand Mesa, only to encounter a thunderstorm on the way. Before the storm hit, we stopped to have lunch and saw a cooperative Satyr Comma mineralizing in a roadside puddle. Afternoon thunderstorms proved to be the norm for the entire trip, so it was important to get in quality time early. After waiting the storm out atop Grand Mesa, we finally were able to get some butterflying in and had nice views of Large Marble and Silvery Blue.

>Day Four, the group visited Box Canyon Falls (town of Ouray) and saw nesting Black Swifts. As we headed south toward Durango, the weather worsened and we began retracing our steps to Montrose where we spent the night.

>Day Five, we visited Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park. We arrived early and were treated to up close views of Dusky Grouse, including a male displaying. The highlight of the visit, however, was superb views of Colorado Hairstreak at the Visitors Center. We also saw Two-tailed Swallowtail, Small Wood-Nymph, Rocky Mountain Duskywing, Russet Skipperling, Behr's Hairstreak, and Woodland Skipper. We drove some of the backroads south of Gunnison where the sagebrush dominated the landscape. The butterflies did not disappoint as we had nice views of Common Branded Skipper and Becker's White. As the weather inevitably worsened we headed toward our lodging in Dillon, stopping in the town of Buena Vista for nice looks at Lewis's Woodpecker.

>Day Six, we visited the high alpine meadows of Boreas Pass. As the temperature warmed up, the butterflies came out, including numerous Variable Checkerspots, Draco Skipper, and (finally!) great views of Chryxus Arctics. We ventured up the Mount Evans

road, but the weather had once again become unmanageable. After a comfortable night in our motels near Denver International Airport, we headed home.