

Citizen-Based Monitoring Program Report

Regal Fritillary Monitoring (The Prairie Enthusiasts)

July 1, 2010 - Aug. 15, 2011

PURPOSE

The purpose of this project was to engage citizen volunteers in the long-term monitoring of regal fritillary butterfly populations across a large number of sites in an effort to assess the butterfly's response to management methods over time.

ACTIONS TAKEN

With the CBM funds TPE hired Ruth Kearley to

- 1) establish permanent survey transects
- 2) develop a standardized survey protocol and survey form
- 3) solicit volunteers
- 4) train volunteers
- 5) compile the initial survey results

Ruth worked with TNC, TPE, and DNR ER in selecting sites, laying out the transects, developing the protocol and forms, and soliciting volunteers. She worked independently in training the volunteers and compiling the results.

CBM funds were also used to acquire wind meters and clip boards, and to cover Ruth's mileage.

Survey Transects

A total of 68 quantitative survey transects were established (marked in the field) across 17 sites. GPS coordinates were taken and aerial digitized maps created of the survey transects. Two examples are attached. Another 16 locations at these sites were identified and visited for simple presence/absence of regal fritillaries. If regal fritillaries are consistently found at these locations, they will eventually have survey transects established across them as well.

Survey Protocol & Forms

Working with experienced surveyors, Ruth developed new survey forms and a standardized survey protocol for all participating organizations to use. These are attached.

Solicit Volunteers

Ruth solicited volunteers to participate in the monitoring program, and she matched them up with transects that they will be responsible for doing over multiple years. Notices were placed in newsletters and sent via e-mail to members of The Prairie Enthusiasts, The Nature Conservancy, Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association, and WI Entomological Society. An example article is attached.

Train Volunteers

Ruth pulled together, from various sources, training materials (images) on how to identify and count regal fritillaries in the field. She produced sets of laminated photos to use in the field. She also went over the survey protocol, and how to use the forms and record data. In both 2010 and 2011, she gave both class room and in field training to all new participants and refreshers to 2010 participants. Ruth spent time assisting the less experienced crews do their initial surveys. Each transect was surveyed 3-4 times in a season.

A total of 27 surveyors were trained and directed. A total of 125 volunteer hours were contributed in 2010 and 206 hours were contributed in 2011. Inexperienced people were paired up with the most experienced observers until the inexperienced became comfortable working on their own.

Summary Results

The maximum number of regal fritillaries seen on the transects add up to a total of 472 butterflies detected in 2010 and 519 seen in 2011.

Richard Henderson
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