



Cincinnati Nature Center Community Science News 2021 Season



Greetings Community Science enthusiasts!

As autumn transitions into winter we are wrapping up most of our Community Science (CS) projects. In this first of a two part winter wrap-up Community Science newsletter, we will be sharing highlights from the 2021 season.

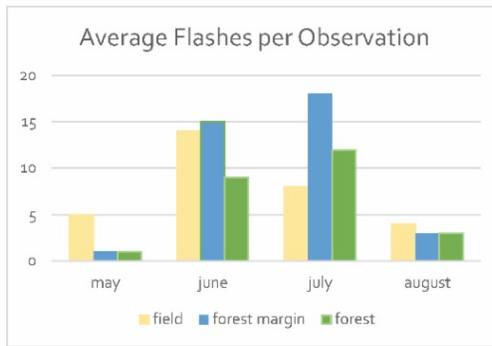
A new and exciting addition to our CS projects is Firefly Watch. This project was spearheaded by one of our dedicated volunteers Linda Romine and staff member Sheila Cox-Riley. They began their project on the evening of May 19th and wrapped up August 18th. It is possible to monitor well into September, but we had an extended dry spell with high temperatures which hastened the end of firefly season.

How does one monitor fireflies you ask?

Volunteers count the number of firefly flashes they see in three 10-second counts taken from the same spot facing the same direction each week. Data about weather, habitat and light sources are also recorded. Simple enough for you to do in your own backyard. Data was then recorded in the Massachusetts Audubon Firefly Watch website. To view the data click on the included link: [Massachusetts Audubon Firefly Watch](#) This site records CS data from all over the country. So, if you are a data geek, get your geek on!

There were a total of 9 species recorded including 2 that had never been recorded at Rowe Woods, (Marsh Flicker and Marsh Imp). The most unusual sighting was of a Woodland Lucy, a diurnal species that does not flash, however this one glowed which is a rare occurrence for this species. If you are a more visual person the following are some fun graphics that one of our interns, (Olivia Bautch), created based on the recorded data. Feel free to use your handy touch screens to enlarge the graphics to better appreciate the glory of fireflies!

Activity Levels

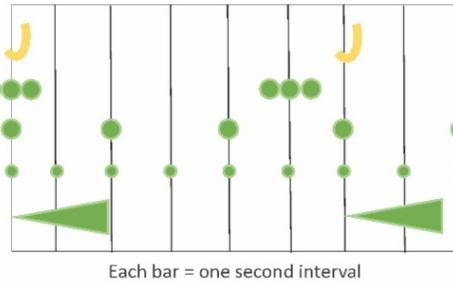


Six ten-second entries were taken every week. "Average flashes" shows the activity levels of fireflies in various months and ecosystems.

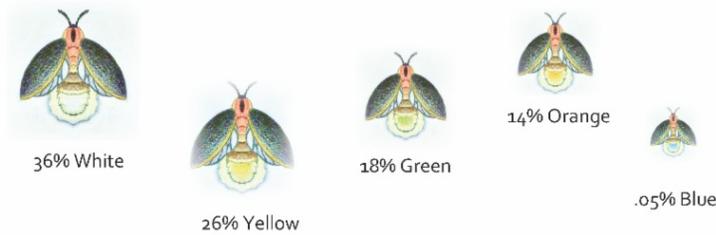
There was not any found correlation between time of night and firefly activity.

Flash Patterns

- Big Dippers (*Photinus pyralis*)
- Spring 4-Flashers (*Photuris quadrifulgens*)
- Christmas Lights (*Photuris tremulans*)
- Heebie Jeebies (*Photuris hebes*)
- July Comets (*Photuris lucicrescens*)



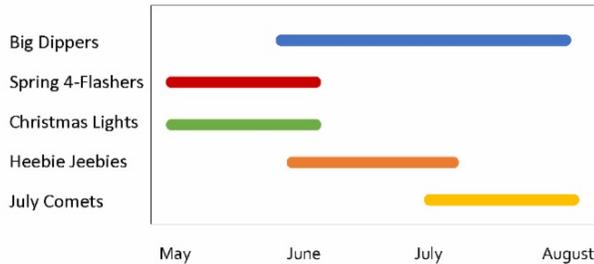
Flash Color



When asked what they enjoyed most, the firefly group said being at the Nature Center after dark serenaded by frogs and katydids, and watching bats swoop across the fields while counting flashes in the night. The group was surprised by how many species of flashing fireflies they found and how each species appeared at the same time each night. On the last night after counting the few remaining fireflies, they stopped at Matt's pond to observe the multitude of glowing firefly larvae promising next year's firefly show.

Firefly Watch Graphics

Time of Year



Species

Big Dipper
(*Photinus pyralis*)
Found in all locations
June-August

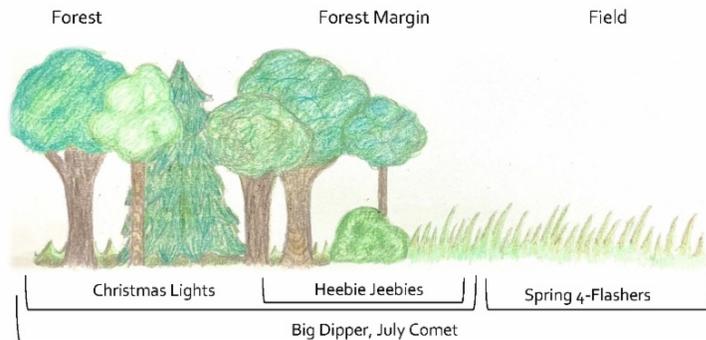
Spring 4-Flashers
(*Photinus quadrifulgens*)
Found in field only
May-June

Christmas Lights
(*Photuris tremulans*)
Found in forest/forest margin
May-June

Heebie Jeebies
(*Photuris hebes*)
Found in forest margin
June-August

July Comet
(*Photuris lucicrescens*)
Found in all locations
July-August

Habitats



Our **Butterfly Monitoring program** began in 1999 as a collaboration between former naturalist Harriett Clark and dedicated volunteer Yvonne Mohlman. Yvonne eventually took it over. Yvonne monitored a 1.75 mile route (called the transect) for 11 years, which involved identifying, counting, and recording the butterflies along the transect. Yvonne gave up the lead in 2009 and Steve English took over the lead in 2011.

The transect is monitored weekly from the first week of April through the end of October. Butterflies are counted, identified, and recorded. Low count weeks

in April and October may be 5 species and 10-20 individuals. These numbers can increase rapidly during June, July, and August and reach around 30 species and over 300 butterflies per week in late August or early September. We have identified 66 species over the last 11 years and this year recorded 46 species and 2,989 butterflies, the most ever for one year!

There are 10-12 active members of the butterfly monitoring team. All enjoy being outdoors, building teamwork, and exercising their brains and bodies while trying to identify these elusive creatures.

2021 Highlights

- most butterflies ever recorded in one year...2,989
- 162 Monarchs recorded-the most ever
- First Juniper Hairstreak ever recorded on April 13
- Most numerous butterfly was the Little Wood Satyrs

Keep an eye out for part 2 of this winter wrap-up where we will highlight the history and exploits of our Blue Bird and Vernal Pool monitoring programs. A heartfelt thank you to all our Community Science volunteers for your continued hard work and support!



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