

## Activities of the Toronto Entomologists' Association

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In 1967 a need was seen for an organization directed at amateur entomologists, to be based in Toronto. This was to be distinguished from the existing organization of professional entomologists, the Entomological Society of Ontario (ESO). Originally this new organization was planned to be a branch of the Michigan Entomological Society, but those plans were never carried out. In 1970 the club became the Toronto Entomologists' Association (TEA). Fifty years later, in-person monthly meetings continue to be held in Toronto, but now more than two-thirds of the 230 members are from other parts of Ontario and can only attend our Zoom meetings. I am vice-president. In that role I hope to bring about an ongoing flow of information between the MES and the TEA.

A newsletter of about 30 pages is published 3 times per year, which members can receive in either print form or pdf. The newsletter is posted on the TEA's website ([ontarioinsects.org](http://ontarioinsects.org)) after 2 years have elapsed. A seasonal summary of butterfly observations was published annually from 1970 to 2019, and the club is currently struggling to revive it. It is called "Ontario Lepidoptera," and moth observations appear in some years. There are also occasional monographs, most notably a book entitled the "Ontario Butterfly Atlas" published in 1991. The TEA does not publish an academic journal.

In 2011, with the advent of better technology, the "Ontario Butterfly Atlas" was launched as an online resource ([ontarioinsects.org/atlas](http://ontarioinsects.org/atlas)). The goal of the online

Atlas is to combine butterfly data for all years and all sources (iNaturalist, eButterfly, museum records, and records submitted directly to the TEA) to produce a map of each species and allow display of the underlying observations. There are 560,000 records, and about 30,000 are added each year. The TEA would welcome the use of its Javascript/PHP software to produce web-based maps of other species and from other localities – perhaps Michigan butterflies. All that is required is a database of observations with latitude and longitude for each. An ongoing commitment to keep the database up to date would make these maps especially helpful.

The TEA is a registered charity, and donations and bequests are in some years as large as membership revenue. An annual lecture series, the Hess lecture, has been sponsored by the family of a long-time member and is held in collaboration with the Royal Ontario Museum. Similarly, family and associates of a former president have contributed donations to greatly expand the TEA's program of research grants for students (currently about US\$600 per year for each of two students). Donors have also supported an Ontario butterfly conservation fund.

In the last couple of years, many people have joined the TEA for the purpose (at least initially) of being part of the TEA's group permit for the rearing of Monarch and swallowtail butterflies. Ontario law requires a permit for this activity, although the vast majority of people are unaware of this law. This law has indirectly become a gateway through which the large community of people rearing Monarch butterflies has developed a broader interest in insects.

