

THROUGH THE LEPIDOPTERAN LENS

The distinctive Arctic Skipper

BY LINDA KAPPEN

The Arctic Skipper, *Carterocephalus palaemon*, is a skipper of the Hesperidae family of butterflies. There is no mistaking this skipper as its colors and spots are very distinctive.

The Arctic Skipper is a very small skipper with a wingspan of one inch or less. It is boldly marked on its dorsal and ventral. The dorsal view has a dark brown background with many cream-colored spots. The ventral hindwings show an

amber background with cream- to yellow-oval shapes outlined in black.

This skipper is single brooded (one brood a year). Females will lay their eggs singly on host plants. A silken nest is built on the grasses where the larvae will overwinter. As spring arrives, the larvae will resume feeding and forming the pupae. In our mixed conifer forest region, Arctic Skippers use grasses and possibly species of grass

in the genus of Calamagrostis as their host plants.

A boreal species, it is common in the far north, reaching Canada then becoming rarer south of Canada. It occurs in the Pacific Northwest from Alaska to Northern California.

In our region the butterfly prefers moist habitats usually around a 4,000-foot elevation and above, near streams, mountain meadows with grassy areas, riparian mountain trails near water, and possibly lower in very moist areas where habitat conditions are prime.

They are usually seen flying alone with other butterflies rather than in large groups of their own. They can be seen in flight from mid-May through July. The males will visit mud spots and

both sexes will nectar on composites and visit broad leaves of Avens, which are various plants of the genus *Geum* in the Rose family.

My own experience with the Arctic Skipper is local. We have it well documented in the Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve (OCNMP) from our butterfly surveys performed within the monument. These surveys are done with the OCNMP staff, their interns, entomologists, lepidopterists, and biologists from around the region.

It can be a hard butterfly to follow, but when you do see its unique looks, you will always recognize it. It is for sure a pleasure to encounter!

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Linda Kappen

Arctic Skipper butterflies in the Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve in the western Siskiyou Mountains.



Ventral view



Dorsal view

Photos by Linda Kappen

The old Forest Creek cabin

BY JACK DUGGAN

In 1871, a successful cloth merchant from San Francisco invested in gold mining on Forest Creek in southern Oregon. The operation grew to two hydraulic sites and two shafts (adits), according to the 1904 edition of *Southern Oregon Mineral Wealth*.

It wasn't always easy. From the "Forest Creek News" in the *Medford Mail*, August 20, 1897: "Our mines are at a standstill on Forest Creek, except for quartz."

That same column contained this item: "Forest fires are raging on Forest Creek." On August 27 the column reported "Forest Creek is dry."

In 1898 W.A. Knapp was operating the mines and was assisted by John Winningham when "putting in a larger reservoir for W.A. Knapp of the Knapp & Dugan (sic) mine." February 18, 1898: "John Winningham will farm the Dugan (sic) ranch this year. He intends to raise grain and some vegetables." Winningham was also described as the "pipe owner" for the mine.

By November 1899, the *Mail* reported that all Forest Creek miners were planning a good year with lots of water. Hope was stronger still in 1900: "John Winningham, superintendent of the Dugan (sic) mine, informs us that Mr. Dugan (sic) intends to make that mine a paying proposition



1970 photo of Forest Creek "shotgun" cabin built in 1910.

this winter." By October 6, 1900: "Mr. Dugan (sic) of San Francisco is here looking after his mines. He will operate his hydraulic plant more extensively this season than ever before."

Forest Creek was a busy agricultural area as well. The April 24, 1903, *Mail* reported that: "Ira Coffman has sold his hay to McGall at the Duggan mine." By the next month Ira Coffman was working at the Duggan mine. The reports indicate that

Mr. Duggan, my great-grandfather, was a frequent visitor to the area. In 1910 he hired a man named Joe Broad to build a cabin. (Joe Broad is most likely related to John Broad, who operated the Oregon Belle Mine for a number of years. Joe Broad was also a boarder at the Duggan home in San Francisco.)

The cabin was a "shotgun" cabin, meaning you could stand at the front door, fire a shot, and there would be nothing to stop it from going cleanly out the back door. In the 1920s, a sitting room and two bedrooms were added. Construction on both sections was "thin wall" with no insulation, and the foundation was log rounds. During the Depression of the 1930s, a quick shelter of poles and board (without foundation) was added.

In the 1940s a caretaker lease was signed, and the cabin was occupied by



Refurbished cabin using the original 1910 wood to finish the front.

the caretaker. The caretaker logged the property far beyond what was allowed in the lease, and he was forcibly evicted in 1966, the same year I entered the military. For the next few years, a succession of family friends occupied the old cabin. When Grandmother Duggan passed in 1970, I had been home from Vietnam about a year and took up residence. A few years later, a new, conventionally framed house was built on the land.

Following my career move to Seattle, the cabin was rented out. Having settled some, it was fondly known as "The Tiltin'

Hilton." In 1999 I moved back to Forest Creek and lived in the cabin for a few months while building a new home. At that point the old cabin was used for storage.

Having seen better days, by early in the 21st century it was slowly sagging into the ground. It was decided to rebuild, on the same footprint, a pole barn structure. Using old, discarded mining pipe for footings, the pillar

and post superstructure was completed in little better than five months. The cabin was reborn to live another 100 years.

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Note: All excerpts are from "Forest Creek News" in the Medford Mail at the turn of the century. Forest Creek was a thriving community with mining, agriculture, and timber being the primary sources of income. The clippings are full of such Applegate names as Vickeroy, Pearce, Davies, Winningham, Black, and others. A prominent family named Armpriest was regularly featured in the reports.

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