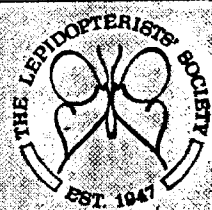


#27

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Inside: **Lepidopterists' Life Cycles --
Who We Are and How We Came To Be,
and Nourishing The Next Generation
of Lepidopterists**



**Cover photo: Andy Warren with Butterfly Adventure class
at base of Apex Trail, Jefferson County,
Colorado, 25 June 1993.**

Colorado Hairstreak, *Hypaurotis crysalus* (Lycaenidae), Declared Official State Insect of Colorado

by Andrew D. Warren, 9951 E. Ida Pl., Englewood, CO 80111 and Ray E. Stanford, 720 Fairfax St., Denver, CO 80220

The Colorado Hairstreak has been considered the unofficial state insect for nearly half a century¹. It was officially declared Colorado's state insect on April 17th, 1996. Colorado Senate Bill 122, making the Colorado hairstreak butterfly the state's official insect, was signed by governor Roy Romer in front of over 500 cheering schoolchildren at Wheeling Elementary School in Aurora, the original birthplace of the bill.

In 1992, Wheeling fourth-grade teacher Melinda Terry started the campaign to give the state an official state insect. Her preliminary research included a survey distributed to over 160 Rocky Mountain entomologists asking them for nominations for a state insect. The Colorado hairstreak received 110 nominations, while the runner up was the two-tailed swallowtail (*Papilio multicaudatus*), with 60 nominations. Other insects nominated included Glover's silk moth (*Hyalophora columbia gloveri*), one mayfly, one stonefly, a fossil wasp, the honey bee, a lady beetle, a dragonfly, and the plains lubber grasshopper. Despite an attempt in 1991 by another Aurora elementary teacher to name the yucca moth (*Tegeticula yuccasella*) as Colorado's official state insect, the yucca moth received very few nominations in Terry's 1992-93 survey.

Melinda Terry's classroom campaign, called The Great Learning Conspiracy, taught students civics, community service, and writing, which included hundreds of handwritten letters from students to Colorado legislators urging them to declare the Colorado hairstreak the state insect. Fourth-grade classes in over 60 schools across the state joined the campaign, and wrote numerous letters to legislators. The campaign intensified early in 1996 when the bill was finally presented to the Colorado Senate. At

that time, the choice of the Colorado hairstreak as state insect was challenged by a group of beekeepers arguing that the honey bee should be the state insect because of its contribution to the state's economy. They suggested that the honey bee should be named the state insect, and the Colorado hairstreak should be the state butterfly. Despite the late efforts by the beekeepers, the Colorado hairstreak was ultimately chosen as a more appropriate state insect.

The Colorado hairstreak has the colors of Colorado's major sports teams, orange and blue (Broncos), black and purple (Rockies), is native to Colorado, has not been named state insect for any other state, and has been found in 34 of Colorado's 63 counties. The total range of the species includes much of Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico, as well as one county in Wyoming (Carbon Co.), Nevada (Lincoln Co.), and Texas (Culberson Co.). It also occurs in the Mexican states of Sonora, Durango, and Nuevo Leon. It is found almost everywhere its larval hostplant, *Quercus gambelii* Nutt. (Gambel's Oak) is common. The Colorado hairstreak joins the Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, the lark bunting, the Rocky Mountain columbine, and Colorado blue spruce as official state symbols.

The only states that have not declared an official state insect are Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, North Dakota, Minnesota, Illinois, Michigan, West Virginia, Rhode Island, and Florida. All of these states have Lepidoptera species that would be excellent candidates, so lepidopterists in these states are urged to start campaigns to name Lepidoptera as state insects before the introduced honey bee continues its domination (twelve states have already chosen it as their official state insect). ●

Footnote

¹ Brown, F. M., Eff, D., & Rotger, B. 1957, Colorado Butterflies, Denver Mus. of Nat. Hist., Denver, Colorado, Part III, and Fisher, M. S. 1981, Superfamily Lycaenoidea in Ferris, C. D. & Brown, F. M. Butterflies of the Rocky Mountain States, Univ. of Oklahoma Press, Norman, p. 238.