

Elegant Sheepmoth is a prize to observe

BY LINDA KAPPEN

The *Hemileuca eglanterina*, also known as the Elegant Sheepmoth, is a diurnal (day-flying) moth of the Saturniidae family of moths, and often is mistaken for a butterfly.

Elegant Sheepmoths are found in northern California and southern Oregon. Banded with bold black markings, the background color on the forewing looks wine-colored to pink, with hind wings yellow to orange in color. However, background colors can vary. On some moths, the black markings can be absent altogether with rosy-pink forewings and yellow hindwings. The wingspan of this moth can reach close to three and a half inches.

The moth can be seen in flight from summer to fall. It has a wide range throughout the Pacific Northwest from British Columbia to California, stretching over to northern Arizona to west of the Rockies in Colorado. Its wide range makes this subspecies highly likely to be encountered.

Mid-elevation to high montane forests provide habitat for the Elegant Sheepmoth. Host plants in the forest can be of the Rosaceae family, such as serviceberry, rose, and bitter cherry. The moths lay eggs in a ringed

pattern around a stem of host plants or other plants nearby. Eggs overwinter and hatch in spring. Fully grown caterpillars pupate into a cocoon in loose soil or leaf litter near the host plants. Adults emerge in summer to fall. The adult does not feed. Sometimes it may take up to two years to complete its cycle.

An interesting fact about the sheepmoth is that the hairy spines of the caterpillar urticate, which means they emit a chemical that can cause irritation or stinging if not handled carefully. I experienced this first-hand when I stopped on a forest road to move a caterpillar out of the roadway.

The accompanying photos were taken at different locations and years in southern Oregon, with some years producing more of this moth than others.



In August 2011 a sheepmoth was found laying eggs on a stem of a plant on the roadside near Dutchman Peak on the Siskiyou Crest. Another photo shows a pair mating on Mount Ashland in August 2010. The sheepmoth pictured on the hand was being observed below Little Hyatt Reservoir in June 2015 during a butterfly course through Siskiyou Field Institute.



Elegant Sheepmoths can be a real challenge to net and observe as they fly erratically a few feet off the ground, bobbing along in an up-and-down pattern, then disappearing into the bushes. Catching one to observe is a real prize!

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Linda earned a naturalist certification from Siskiyou Field Institute, and hosts two-day butterfly courses there.

Photo, left: Elegant Sheepmoths mating on Mt. Ashland. Photo: Jill Hamilton.
Photos, top right: Elegant Sheepmoth in hand. Photo: Linda Kappen. **Center right:** Sheepmoth with eggs. Photo: Jill Hamilton.
Bottom right: Elegant Sheepmoth caterpillar. Photo: Linda Kappen.



ATA year in review

BY DIANA COOGLE

2015 was a great year for the Applegate Trails Association (ATA), culminating in the award of a Title II grant for \$12,000 through the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Those dollars, coupled with several thousand more from fundraising events, a grant from REI, and generous donations, will enable us to begin actual trail construction for the Jacksonville end of the Applegate Ridge Trail (ART), a proposed non-motorized trail to extend from Grants Pass to Jacksonville. It looks like BLM is (at last) moving on the surveys and paperwork necessary for construction to begin. We have set our sights on turning dirt by next fall!

Measured by fervent response, our Call of the Wild fundraising event last September was a huge success. The enthusiasm more than compensated for the small turnout, so much so that we are planning a second Call of the Wild outdoor seminar on October 1, 2016, at Cantrall Buckley Park. Once again we'll have great food, lots of kids' activities, and interesting workshops on nature topics relevant to the Siskiyou Mountains and our valley. Plan to be there! And if you have expertise in an outdoor topic that you

would like to share in a workshop for that event, let us know.

We were sorry to lose Michelle LaFave as a board member in 2015. She had been such a vital part of the organization, bringing to it such energy and attention to detail, that we feel her absence keenly. Maybe it takes two people to fill her shoes because now two new people dedicated to non-motorized trails in the Applegate have joined the board. Alexandria Weinbrecht brings the equestrian point of view, and Luke Ruediger brings his intimate knowledge of the area's trails and ecology, along with an understanding of the workings of the BLM and US Forest Service in protecting these lands. We are so fortunate to have these two people on the board!

We are fortunate to have the other board members, too: David Calahan, board chair; Mike Kohn, treasurer; and Josh Weber, long-time board member. We are especially fortunate to have many strong supporters among non-motorized-trail users. We are looking forward to an exciting year—the beginning of the East ART trail and ATA-led hikes.

Diana Coogle • 541-846-7447
ATA Board Member

ATA Hike and Event Schedule

Visit www.applegatetrails.org for more details.

DATE	HIKE	MEET	LENGTH	RATING
Saturday April 23	Cantrall Buckley Park Maintenance Lunch provided; bring loppers, digging tools. Some tools provided.	Cantrall Buckley Park, 9 am to 1 pm. Assemble 8:45 am.	4 hours	Moderate to difficult
Sunday May 15	East Applegate Ridge Trail (East ART) Off-trail thru hike with shuttle.	Bunny Meadows Staging Area. Forest Creek Road at Longanecker. 9 am	6 miles	Moderate to difficult
Sunday June 4	National Trails Day Equestrian trail ride, Four Creeks/East Fork Trail, Williams.	Trailer pool at Pacifica, 14615 Water Gap Road 9 am	7 miles	Easy to moderate
Sunday June 19	Wildflower hike to Frog Pond with Luke Ruediger, local naturalist. Location depends on snow levels.	Swayne Viewpoint Applegate Lake 9 am	4 miles	Difficult

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