

This blog is all about the joys of experiencing and learning about nature in the Lowcountry. We believe the best way to create support for protecting our local natural resources is to share our passion for it through education and stories. In particular, we'll be tracking the seasons of nature, telling what to look for and where you might find it. Because we live in an area that is so rich in diversity of animals and plants, there is always something happening nature-wise nearby - even if you're in downtown Beaufort or at a shopping area in Hilton Head! By following our blogs we hope you will be encouraged to become more observant of what is around you and come to appreciate why it is here.

So here goes!

Monarchs are not the only butterflies to migrate through our area this time of year. Actually, there are two other species that are more visible and much more common.

The bright yellow butterflies are called *cloudless sulfurs*...



and the bright orange butterflies with silvery under-wings are called *gulf fritillaries*.



In the spring, southern populations of these two species breed prolifically and their offspring move northward breeding as they go. By late summer they can occur as far north as New York. These two species overwinter as adults, and so, in late fall, they fly southward to winter in the Deep South where they won't freeze. Cloudless sulfurs and gulf fritillaries are regularly seen in the Lowcountry through December and may be found throughout the winter if it is mild.

If you want to have butterflies in your yard or property, think about having a wild corner where you allow host plants for butterflies to grow. Each species of butterfly has its own unique preferences for the plants on which it lays its eggs. The leaves of the host plant are the food for the rapidly growing caterpillars. For example, cloudless sulfurs lay their eggs on partridge pea and sicklepod (common roadside "weeds") whereas gulf fritillaries lay their eggs on passionflower vines.

To learn more about species of local butterflies go to <http://149.168.1.196/nbnc/index.html>

To learn more about butterflies in general consider joining the Carolina Butterfly Society- <http://www.carolinabutterflysociety.org/>