A Treasure Hidden in Plain Sight: 
*Aphrissa neleis* is a resident in Southern Florida, USA (Lepidoptera: Pieridae: Coliadinae)

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Last year, we (Warren & Calhoun, 2011) reported on historical Florida records of the Pink-spot Sulphur, *Aphrissa neleis*, documenting this species for the first time from the United States. Our earlier report was based on five specimens of *A. neleis* in the collections of the McGuire Center for Lepidoptera and Biodiversity, Florida Museum of Natural History, Gainesville (MGCL). They were collected in 1959 (1 female), 1982 (1 male) and 1985 (2 males, 1 female). Although the most recent records known to us at that time were from 1985, we speculated that *A. neleis* might be a current resident in southern Florida.

Since the publication of our note, word about the discovery of *A. neleis* in southern Florida has quickly spread among butterfly enthusiasts. It even became the subject of a newspaper article in the Ft. Lauderdale Sun Sentinel (Flesher 2011). As a result, a number of additional records of *A. neleis* have been documented from Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties, including several from 2011. Thus, it is now apparent that *A. neleis* is a current breeding resident in southeastern Florida, and likely has been for at least several decades. The continued examination of older specimens and photographs may reveal that the butterfly has actually been present in Florida for much longer. Records of *A. neleis* that have come to our attention since the publication of Warren & Calhoun (2011) include the following (in chronological order):

1985: Dade Co., Miami, Castellow Hammock, SW 165 Ave., 29 June, William D. Patterson (2 males, specimens) (Figs. 7, 8); 1986: Dade Co., SW Miami, Kendall Drive, 21 September, William D. Patterson (2 males, specimens) (Figs. 9, 10); 1992: Palm Beach Co.: Delray Beach, June, David Fine (1 female, specimen); 2006: Broward Co.: Davie, Flamingo Gardens & Wildlife Sanctuary, 25 September, Charles Weber (males, photos) (Fig. 1); 2007: Miami-Dade Co.: Homestead, Mary Krome Park, 20 May, Susan Hengeveld (male, photo); same locality, 3 June, Mary Ann Friedman & Linda Cooper (1 male, photos) (Fig. 2); 2010: Broward Co.: Hollywood, 4912 Cleveland St., 19 September, Stephen Baig (1 female, photo) (Fig. 3); 2011: Miami-Dade Co., Deering Estate, 21 May, Lucienne Bruce (1 male, photo); Palm Beach Co., W Boca Raton, Effingham Butterfly Sanctuary, 20 July, EJ Haas (males, film clip) (Fig. 5); Broward Co., Hollywood, 4912 Cleveland St., 1 August, Stephen Baig (1 male, photo) (Fig. 4); Broward Co., Coconut Creek, 19 September, David Fine (1 female, specimen); Miami-Dade Co., Miami Beach Botanical Garden, 4 December, Frank Model (mating pair, photo) (Fig. 6).

As indicated by the recent records from southern Florida, *A. neleis* occurs mostly within urban areas around the greater Miami area. While we have not yet confirmed the local larval foodplant(s), this evidence strongly suggest that *A. neleis* is exploiting ornamental legumes. It is truly astonishing that such a large butterfly has literally "flied under the radar" in Florida for so long. This underscores the importance of closely examining specimens and photographs for unexpected surprises.

We urge lepidopterists to remain on the lookout for *A. neleis* in southern Florida and recommend that anyone who seeks this butterfly review our prior article (Warren & Calhoun 2011) to understand the primary differences between *A. neleis*, *A. statira* and *P. sennae*. *Aphrissa neleis* remains very poorly understood throughout its range and its life history is virtually unknown. This discovery provides an extraordinary opportunity to document its life history, as well as learn more about its distribution in Florida and seasonal patterns of abundance. Please inform us about any additional records and observations of *A. neleis* in Florida.

Acknowledgments

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Literature Cited


**Jasper National Park**

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Author's Note: Before our backpacking trip, we stopped briefly at the Jasper NP information building in the town of Jasper. A book caught my eye, “Alberta Butterflies” by C.D. Bird, G.I. Hilchie, N.G. Kondla, E.M. Pike & F.A.H. Sperling, and I browsed it briefly. This was one of those lepidoptera/natural history books, that even after only a cursory examination, you know you must have for your library. After our backpacking trip, I made sure that happened. This book contains excellent text, excellent photos of set specimens, excellent habitat photos, excellent botanical drawings, in effect, excellence in everything. I highly recommend it to anybody interested in the Nearctic fauna, the fauna of Alberta and especially the fauna of the Northern Rocky Mountains.

**Literature**


**Acknowledgements**

As in all our trips together, my girlfriend Danusia Antonowicz was a great partner. For the sublime beauty of the Canadian Rockies and for allowing my to see more beauty than any mortal should be exposed to, I thank God.