

Shorter Contributions

Banisteria, Number 15, 2000

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THE RUDDY DAGGERWING (*MARPESIA PETREUS*):
A NEW FACE IN VIRGINIA --The ruddy daggerwing (*Marpesia petreus*) is a common Neotropical butterfly, resident in southern Florida, the West Indies, and the mainland of Latin America from Mexico south to Brazil (Opler & Krizek, 1984; Opler, 1998). It is associated with figs and rotting fruit. Stray individuals of this species have been recorded in the western United States from Texas, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, and Arizona (Opler, 1998). The only records of strays in the eastern United States are from northern Florida (Opler, 1998).

On 17 July 1995, while conducting a survey for rare butterflies and dragonflies for the Virginia Division of Natural Heritage (VDNH), I was in the process of exploring a beach across from the amphibious LARC vehicle hangers on the Fort Story Military Reservation in the City of Virginia Beach. After I had passed through a narrow border of evergreen shrub just before entering the open beach, an orange butterfly flew out of a dense live oak (*Quercus virginiana*)/wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*) thicket. It landed on a common reed (*Phragmites australis*) stem about 25 m away. I slowly stalked the butterfly and caught it in my net. It was a ruddy daggerwing, the first known record for Virginia. The specimen was in perfect condition considering its long journey. A few days earlier, Chris Hobson, field zoologist for VDNH, observed a gulf fritillary (*Agraulis vanillae*) on this beach. I have sighted the gulf fritillary, a known migrant, many times in late summer on the Eastern Shore barrier islands.

The specimen will be donated to the National Museum of Natural History (Smithsonian Institution) via Steve Roble of VDNH.

Literature Cited

Opler, P. A. 1998. A Field Guide to Eastern Butterflies. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. 486 pp.

Opler, P. A., & G. O. Krizek. 1984. Butterflies East of the Great Plains. The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore. 294 pp.

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