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THROUGH THE LEPIDOPTERAN LENS

Beautiful Juba

BY LINDA KAPPEN

The Juba Skipper, Hesperia juba, belongs to the butterfly family of skippers, Hesperiidae. It is one of the largest of the grass skippers, reaching up to 1.5 inches. Varying in colors—orange, light brown, and olive-the Juba also has distinct, toothed, black, inward-facing markings on the wing borders, which meet with the orangish veins on the dorsal view. Ventral views of both sexes show bright whitish markings on the hind wing and on the apex of the forewing. A greenish tinge of hair covers the body, slightly extending the color translucently in the bright sunlight.

The male Juba perches on grassy slopes and in gullies, awaiting females. The egg is laid on bunchgrasses, which include Bromus and Dechampsia species, as well as the non-native Poa pratensis



Dorsal view of the Juba Skipper.

(Kentucky bluegrass). The Juba Skipper can be bivoltine, meaning two broods or generations within the flight period, though sometimes the eggs or early instar larvae will overwinter. In southern Oregon we experience two broods in flight, from early April to early or mid-October.

Their habitats are open dry woodlands, grassy oak woodlands, roadsides, and



Ventral view of a Juba Skipper found at Sampson Creek Preserve.

canyons, to name a few. Nectaring occurs on yarrow, rabbitbrush, and many native wildflowers or flowering shrubs or trees. Males will visit mud for nutrients. The Juba

Skipper's range is from British

Columbia to Linda Kappen southern California and from Montana to New Mexico.

I took these photos during a butterfly survey at Sampson Creek Preserve of the Selberg Institute in southern Oregon. The day turns magical when I spy a bright fresh Juba from a small distance, perched on grasses or flowers. Their size, greenish bodies, and bright white markings make Jubas easy to recognize and to appreciate for their beauty.

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> **Photos by Linda Kappen**

How to burn a pile with minimum smoke

BY MARK HAMLIN

Burning forest and landscape trimmings is common in the Applegate. To avoid an escaped fire, homeowners usually wait for wetter winter conditions; however, wet burns have negative consequences, including excessive smoke, difficult ignitions, and extra labor. Safe burning opportunities between dry and wet conditions minimize the undesirable consequences of a wet burn.

Timing is the key to an excellent burn. Dry wood burns more readily than wet wood, but a dry forest risks a fire escape. Ideal conditions for pile burning exist when the forest is too wet to burn but the piled wood is dry enough to burn readily.

For example, two large but hazardous pine trees were felled in the spring of 2024. The logs were hauled off for milling. To create a pile of slash ready to burn in the fall, boughs were stacked about two feet high, making a readily burnable base. Log remnants, less than 12 inches in

diameter, were then stacked on top of the base. More boughs and yard trimmings were added until the pile was the size of a delivery van. The pile was left to dry through the summer.

readily, as did the logs. The photos show the results.

Spring burning conditions are different. Spring's advantage is that green grass is not going to burn readily, in contrast to the dry grass and dry forest of the fall. Therefore, spring burning is generally less risky due to typically higher fuel moisture. However, greater spring moisture also means more smoke and sometimes incomplete consumption. This is why spring burning is best suited for fuels less than eight inches in diameter. Additionally, drying the fuels for a few weeks will promote flammability, lessen smoke, and contribute to full consumption.

Covering the pile with a plastic tarp enables burning in wet conditionsremove the tarp in the dead of winter and ignite. Even covering only part of the pile with a tarp enables ignition in wetter conditions. If possible, select an open area for the burn pile and consider where the



prevailing wind will push the flames. A steel rake can be used to consolidate the pile as it burns down. If available, a garden hose is good for damping the flames in the early stages, but it may not be sufficient to douse a raging pile.

Two regulations must be followed. First, on the day of the burn, call the Jackson County "daily burn status" line at 541-776-7007 or the Josephine County "daily burn status" line at 541-476-9663. Burn day forecasts are not available, but incoming low-pressure systems often create permitted burn-day conditions. Second, check with the Oregon

Department of Forestry or your local fire department for any burning restrictions. In Jackson and Josephine counties, fire restrictions are typically removed sometime in October, and then reinstated around June 1.

If you're in doubt about the safety of lighting a pile, wait until a little rain has wetted the landscape. The principle is to burn relatively dry wood when the landscape is too wet to burn. If you want some coaching, consult your local fire department.

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Fuel moisture in fine fuels changes quickly from wet to dry, or vice versa. However, largerdiameter fuels change more slowly. Densely packed fine fuels in a pile can be dry enough to burn, even when dispersed fine fuels in the landscape will not carry a fire. Additionally, large-diameter pieces, dried through the summer, burn readily once ignited. We used these facts to determine optimal burn conditions.

The optimal burn day occurred in November 2024, after 2.5 inches of rain had wetted the forest, followed by a week of cool, drying temperatures. When the next storm arrived, and after the rain started, the pile was ignited. Conditions were perfect. The surrounding forests were in a low fire-hazard condition-too wet to burn, in fact. Yet, after the preceding week of dry weather, the densely packed fine fuel in the pile burned

Large fuel, dried through the summer, is consumed in a fall burn. Note the minimal smoke. Photo: Mark Hamlin.



Results of a November burn after the fuel was dried throughout the summer. Photo: Mark Hamlin.

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