

JULY 15 – 31, 2017 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES FOR EASTVIEW

By Dick Harlow

GREAT SPANGLED FRITILLARY



(1) Great Spangled Fritillary, *Speyeria cybele*, Dorsal View, feeding on *Asclepias incarnata*, Swamp Milkweed, © Dick Harlow

Some people see milkweed plants as weeds. I particularly like milkweeds for their flowers and the butterflies they attract. Also, milkweeds are native plants and what better way to husband our native pollinators than to conserve native plants.

Picture (1) shows the blossoms of the Swamp Milkweed and a dorsal view looking down on this beautiful Great Spangled Fritillary feeding and pollinating these flowers.

The Great Spangled Fritillary, *Speyeria cybele* is a summer to early fall butterfly, flying from June to October. It is particularly fond of Swamp Milkweed and Buddleia

It is interesting that some butterflies gather nectar from plants that are completely different from those plants that are hosts for their larva. This is true for this butterfly. It loves these flowers (Swamp Milkweed and Buddleia) to get nectar, but lays its eggs on various species of violets. Reports have shown that the larva of this species feed on the following species of native violets: specifically native Round-leaf Yellow Violet (*Viola rotundifolia*), the Arrow-leaf Violet (*Viola fimbriatula*) and the Common Blue Violet (*Viola sororia*).



(2) Great Spangled Fritillary, *Speyeria cybele*, Ventral View, Swamp Milkweed, © Dick Harlow

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Believe it or not there is even a song named for this butterfly - Interesting!

This is the time of year when butterflies visit meadows and garden flowers, plants and trees to nectar, lay eggs and patrol for a possible mate. Be sure to let me know what you see on campus. Many thanks!

SWAMP MILKWEED



Swamp (Rose) Milkweed, *Asclepias incarnata*,
© Dick Harlow

Swamp Milkweed also known as Rose Milkweed, *Asclepias incarnata*, has beautiful rose red, and pink colors. This plant does not need a swamp to grow; ours have grown for three years in garden soil.

I know that some feel milkweed is a weed and should be pulled from the garden. However, if you grow some of your plants for pollinators such as butterflies, hummingbird moth and the such, this is an excellent and beautiful plant to have in the garden.

You can always cut off the seed heads before they open up and drop their seeds. If you don't you will find that these plants are quite prolific! My garden is full of young milkweeds.

It does have one concern that I have found and that is aphids. Usually the new stems that are either a year or two old seem to be more affected than old established sets. Plants that are older either have a greater resistance to aphids or aren't as enticing for aphids. Of course, after saying this I should be forewarned that I might still have aphids on my older plants!

EASTERN KINGBIRD



Eastern Kingbird, *Tyrannus tyrannus*,
© Dick Harlow

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This bird has in human terms exceptional courage! It is a bird with an attitude when defending its territory! The Eastern Kingbird, *Tyrannus tyrannus*, has a dark gray back and white front with its white tipped tail, black head and large tyrant flycatcher bill for catching large insects on the wing. The Eastern Kingbird will not hold back in harassing crows, hawks, herons, or for that matter any bird that trespasses through its territory. There have been accounts of kingbirds landing on the back of a hawk and pecking at the back of its head or neck! Now that is tough!

To date at EastView,, they can be seen irregularly, from the middle of May to the end of July. We are more apt to see them when dragonflies and large butterflies and other large insects are flying. Because we don't have outside wires here where they can tee up high, they can usually be seen teeing up on a pole, the corner of a cottage, or on a shrub and darting out after an insect. Not necessarily their favorite place, as they prefer a high perch.



Eastern Kingbird, *Tyrannus tyrannus*,
© Dick Harlow

This species is known as a long-distance migrant. Its range is most of the United States except the southwest and west coast, extending into Canada including most of the provinces. The Western Kingbird occupies the southwest and west coast.

In early Fall the Eastern Kingbirds will gather in flocks to migrate to South America. Their migration routes are either via Mexico and Central America or over water to Cuba, but all arriving in the vicinity of Columbia, South America. In South America, they travel to the forests of Columbia, Brazil and down to northern Argentina. They migrate back to the United States in the spring to be seen here at EastView around the end of May to the beginning of June dependent on weather.

During the Summer, they primarily eat insects. But in the Winter, when they come together in flocks, they completely change their diet and feed on fruit.

OBSERVATIONS

MAMMALS

Gray Squirrel – 4-5 individuals
Eastern Chipmunk – 2 individuals
Eastern Cottontail Rabbit – 2 adults
Eastern Cottontail Rabbit – 2 immatures

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AMPHIBIAN

American Bullfrog - South Pond
Leopard Frog - South Pond
Green Frog - Garden
American Toad - Small, Garden

BUTTERFLIES

Cabbage White
Clouded Sulphur
Tiger Swallowtail
Black Swallowtail
Mourning Cloak
Great Spangled Fritillary
Red Admiral
Monarch
Painted Lady
Pearl Crescent
Silver-spotted Skipper
Delaware Skipper

DRAGONFLIES

Canada Darner
Black Meadowhawk

Weather Tidbits

Month of JULY 1-31, 2017

[All Measurements taken at solar noon \(1230 EST\).](#)

PRECIPITATION

Total Precipitation: 137.4 mm or 5.4 inches

Overcast Days: 12

TEMPERATURE

Mean Temp: 21.4 C°/70.7°

High Temp: 31.2 C°/88.1°F

Low Temp: 13.4 C°/56.1°F