

JULY 15 - 31, 2018 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES FOR EASTVIEW

By Dick Harlow

GIANT SWALLOWTAIL



(1) Giant Swallowtail, *Papilio cresphontes*,
© Dick Harlow

This swallowtail (1) was always a possibility in Pennsylvania, southern New York, and Massachusetts, but not in middle and northern Vermont.

Could it be that the climate is changing, and the adults have found a food source for their larva? It seems to me that 9 years of constantly seeing this butterfly in spring and summer into early fall is a good omen, that the climate has changed to favor the movement of this swallowtail to expand its range.

This butterfly favors plant leaves of the Prickly Ash, *Zanthoxylum-americanum*, a member of the citrus family of plants. One can imagine how the citrus farmers (orange growers) in the south must feel about this butterfly! The adult female will lay its eggs on the leaves and when the eggs hatch they will immediately look like miniature bird droppings. As the larva feed and develop in growth they will look like picture (2), simply an enlarged and lengthened bird dropping.

The shrub, Prickly Ash, picture (3) is the bane of many New England farmers due to the thorns and the tendency to take over a shrub area if left unattended.



(2) Giant Swallowtail, *Papilio cresphontes*,
larva on the leaf of a gas plant, *Dictamnus albus*
© Distant Hill Gardens

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(3) Prickly Ash, *Zanthoxylum-americanum*-
© New England Wildflower Society

However, as more land is less and less farmed and Prickly Ash becomes more apparent, the Giant Swallowtail will have a larger food supply for its larva.



Giant Swallowtail, *Papilio cresphontes*,
© Dick Harlow

SILVERY BLUE



(1) Silvery Blue, *Glaucopsyche lygdamus*,
extracting minerals. © Dick Harlow

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This is a picture of the underside of the two wings of the Silvery Blue. If this fellow was trying to extract nectar from a flower we might be able to see the blue on the dorsal side of the wings as in picture (3), but this is generally how they are seen when remaining in one place.



(2) Silvery Blue, *Glaucopsyche lygdamus*,
extracting minerals. © Dick Harlow

There is no other species that can be confused with this butterfly. Moreover, it is small, no bigger than a quarter. If you see a very small blue butterfly flying by, this is probably the one. If it stops by a wet spot on the ground, be careful where you walk, because you might miss seeing it and step on it.



(3) Silvery Blue, *Glaucopsyche lygdamus*,
checking for nectar. © Dick Harlow

The end of May and the month of June are the flight periods for this northern species.

As we leave July we should see different species of butterflies. As an example, from the end of July through August we should see Great Spangled Fritillary here at EastView, a beautiful butterfly that frequents flowers of either milkweed or Purple Coneflower.

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Great Spangled Fritillary, *Speyeria cybele*,
nectaring on Swamp Milkweed. © Dick Harlow

This butterfly is found throughout our entire region where there are open fields, meadows and moist areas. The larva feed on violet leaves. The field guides say that if you see one of these fellows in late August or September studies show that most of them will be females.

OBSERVATIONS

MAMMALS

White-tailed Deer
Yearling Moose
Eastern Cottontail Rabbit
Meadow Vole

AMPHIBIANS

American Bullfrog
Leopard Frog

LEPODOPTERA

Cabbage White
Clouded Sulphur
Great Spangled Fritillary
Monarch
Silver-spotted Skipper
Pearl Crescent

REPTILES

Garter Snake

Weather Tidbits

Month of JULY 1-14, 2018

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

PRECIPITATION

Total Precipitation: 73,8 mm or 2.9 inches Average for July: 4.1 inches

Overcast Days: 9