

JUNE 1 - 14, 2017 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES FOR EASTVIEW

By Dick Harlow

GREAT BLUE HERON



(1) **Great Blue Heron**, *Ardea herodias*, South Pond, EastView, Middlebury, VT © Dick Harlow

This is one of the individuals that visited South Pond in late May! I had thought that Great Blue Herons who dropped in on South Pond were after frogs, e.g. Bullfrogs or Green Frogs until I observed that there were, in fact, fish in the pond in May, both bait-fish and a single Goldfish! It is easy to identify a Goldfish when it comes to the water's surface.

I think it can be determined that the fish had been recently dumped into the pond. It is hard for me to believe that a Goldfish could have survived last winter's thick ice that covered the pond. I am not necessarily against having fish in the pond as we have both a Great Blue Heron and a Green Heron that visit the pond regularly along with an occasional Belted Kingfisher. The fish will provide food for them, but I doubt if any can survive this coming winter's cold water and ice cover on the pond.



(2) **Great Blue Heron**, *Ardea herodias*, South Pond, EastView, Middlebury, VT © Dick Harlow

Great Blue Herons are nesting now and the adults need to have areas that are near by so they can sojourn to pick up a quick meal before heading back to the colony to defend their nest and give their mate a respite.

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Notice the characteristic S-curve to the neck of this heron. All herons and egrets tend to have this characteristic. If you have ever watched a Great Blue you will have noticed this S-curve can straighten out for some distance which allows the heron a wide striking range around him to hunt for food.

Great Blue Herons cover most of North America and have been aided by the increase in Beaver populations. Beaver are responsible for patchworks of small ponds, swamps and wet meadows. This increase in aquatic habitat helps the Great Blue Heron, other herons and egrets because of the food this habitat provides.

TIGER SWALLOWTAIL



Canadian Tiger Swallowtail, *Papilio glaucus canadensis*, nectaring on Dames Rocket, *Hesperis matronalis*, © Dick Harlow

The Eastern Tiger Swallowtail butterfly, *Papilio glaucus*, is one of our most beautiful butterflies with its bright yellow and black marked wings. It is easy to identify when walking in your garden. Yet, are you seeing a Tiger Swallowtail, or a Canadian Tiger Swallowtail? Tough when the difference is determined by difficult minor changes in appearance.



Canadian Tiger Swallowtail, *Papilio glaucus canadensis*, nectaring on Buddleia. © Dick Harlow

However, the Canadian Tiger Swallowtail, *Papilio glaucus canadensis*, is slightly smaller and is usually the first to be seen. It will be flying in May. There are differences, especially on the underwing, but they are still difficult to see on a butterfly that seems to be constantly on the wing. The Canadian Tiger is a single brood early butterfly. We live in an area that is in the overlap zone between the two varieties. So, around EastView, if you see a Tiger Swallowtail before the middle of July it probably is a Canadian and if you see one flying in August or later you are looking at an Eastern Tiger Swallowtail.

There are some good ID references on Google if you want to fine tune your identification skills between Eastern Tiger Swallowtail and the Canadian Tiger Swallowtail. When a butterfly is flitting from one flower to another, or even if it pauses on a flower, I still find it difficult to fine-tune the differences between these two look-alike butterflies.

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ADIRONDACK CRABAPPLE



Adirondack Crabapple blossoms, *Malus 'Adirondack'*
© Dick Harlow

The last weeks of May showcase a profusion of Apple, Pear and Crabapple blossoms, and I thought it would be interesting if I showed a picture of one, not typical, that is on the EastView campus.

There are many varieties of Crabapple trees that one can plant. However, if birds are the focus of the interest then a small amount of research is necessary. You see, birds have definite preferences for certain types of crabapple, determined by size of the fruit, food value and possibly the ability of the fruit to ferment over the winter. Even birds tend to get a "buzz on" with the right type of fermenting fruit.



Adirondack Crabapple, *Malus 'Adirondack'*
columnar nature of the tree, © Dick Harlow

Besides the avian value, according to research, 'Adirondack' Crabapple has some long-lasting traits that make it a little-known favorite.

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Adirondack Crabapple blossoms, *Malus* 'Adirondack'
© Dick Harlow

Although it can grow to 18 feet high and 16 feet wide at the crown in 20 years, the fact that the tree is upright and columnar and stays that way with age is a plus. One can rely on a definite amount of space that they will occupy. Add to this the fact that it is disease resistant according to the International Ornamental Crabapple Society, you have almost a perfect crabapple tree.

OBSERVATIONS

MAMMALS

White-tailed Deer – 3
Gray Squirrel – 3
Eastern Chipmunk – 2 individuals
Meadow Vole – 1 individual

REPTILES

Snapping Turtle – 1 Female

AMPHIBIANS

Gray Tree Frog
American Bullfrog
Leopard Frog

FISH (South Pond)

Bait Fish
Goldfish

BUTTERFLIES

Giant Swallowtail
Canadian Tiger Swallowtail
Cabbage White
Silvery Blue
Viceroy
Common Ringlet

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Weather Tidbits

Month of JUNE 1-14, 2017

All Measurements taken at solar noon (1230 EST).

PRECIPITATION

Total Precipitation: 28.6 mm or 1.1 inch

Overcast Days: 5

TEMPERATURE

Mean Temp: 18.0 C⁰/64.4⁰F

High Temp: 29.7 C⁰/85.5⁰F

Low Temp: 5.6 C⁰/42.1⁰F