

**JUNE 1-14, 2016 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES FOR EASTVIEW**

**By Dick Harlow**

**PURPLE MARTIN**



**Purple Martin** male, *Progne subis* © JJ Cadiz

Purple Martins are a large colonial nesting swallow, migrating from South America to the continental United States to breed. As can be seen in the picture above, the male is completely dark purple, whereas the female as seen in the second picture is not dark and is somewhat patchy in color. As a species, they nest in artificial boxes or natural cavities. In the east they are virtually dependent on large colonial boxes or groups of gourds placed on poles by man. Because this species breeds in colonies, usually in large open areas, they are dependent on man. Consequently, Purple Martins from Texas eastward will nest near people even within city or town limits. Consequently their distribution is scattered and for that matter absent if no nesting boxes or gourds are provided. As they nest in colonies, a single box will not bring Purple Martins to EastView.

## JUNE 1-14, 2016 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES FOR EASTVIEW

By Dick Harlow



**Purple Martin** female, *Progne subis*  
© Shanthanu Bhardwaj



**Purple Martin** male, *Progne subis*  
© Dick Harlow 2015

The above picture shows a Purple Martin on the cross bar of the Purple Martin Pole at Deer Meadow Drive. Purple Martins have investigated the Purple Martin gourds that are next to the south pool for three years: 11<sup>th</sup> of May, 30<sup>th</sup> of June and the first week in July from 2014 to 2016. But the end of June and the beginning of July is a tad late for martins to begin nesting. In 2014 two first year birds were looking over the gourds and in 2015 it was a male and female and in 2016 it was also a pair. However, the pair this year has been very persistent and the Tree Swallows have allowed the martin pair to bond with a gourd on the opposite side of the pole. At this time I don't know whether they will try and nest in this gourd, but this could suggest that in 2017 we may have Purple Martins nesting here. This pair came in May and again the first and second of June which suggests that this pair is serious about nesting here.

## JUNE 1-14, 2016 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES FOR EASTVIEW

By Dick Harlow

I am looking forward to next year when EastView will have its own Purple Martin colony!

Just before these notes went to press, there were three possible pairs of Purple Martins resting near the gourds. None were nesting as yet.

### TIGER SWALLOWTAIL



**Canadian Tiger Swallowtail, *Papilio glaucus canadensis***

© Dick Harlow 2014

Swallowtail butterflies, Tiger, Black and Giant, are a showy, flashy large beautiful butterfly group that people love to watch flitting about in their gardens. Generally, it is easy to know which one you are looking at until you find out that one species can look just like another. Or, that there are two color variations of the same species making you think you are seeing two different species.

First, there are two subspecies of the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail in the Middlebury area and further south. *Papilio glaucus* is found south of us, but Middlebury does represent a possible overlap area. The other is *Papilio glaucus canadensis*, or the Canadian Tiger Swallowtail found in Canada and northern United States. And, to add to the confusion females of the Eastern are dimorphic with some individuals being black.

Without going into a lot of detail as to how you can tell which one you are looking at, suffice it to say that here in Middlebury we would rarely see the black female tiger as it is found further south. But, as you move toward the Canadian border the early spring Tiger Swallowtail is most probably the Canadian Tiger. If you see a Tiger Swallowtail at your lilac shrub in middle to northern Vermont, it probably is the Canadian Tiger Swallowtail. The overlap area here in Middlebury is probably 60/40 in favor of the Canadian Tiger. If you go south to Rutland it might be closer to 50/50. Using location is probably the best for non-lepidopterists.

However, for those who would like to go a tad deeper, the Canadian Tiger Swallowtail is a small **single** brooded spring butterfly which can be seen in late May and has nearly a continuous sub-marginal yellow band. This band is on the underside of the wing. The Eastern Tiger has interruptions along this yellow band so that the resulting interruptions appear as spots. When you see a Tiger Swallowtail in late July you are most likely looking at the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail.

## JUNE 1-14, 2016 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES FOR EASTVIEW

By Dick Harlow

### YELLOW LADY'S SLIPPER ORCHID

Yellow Lady's Slipper is a member of the genus *Cypripedium* along with 58 other species. As many of us know, the tropics have many orchids. However, there are orchids that grow in temperate areas and even extend into northern Canada.



**Yellow Lady's Slipper, *Cypripedium pubescens***, emerging orchid plants ©  
Dick Harlow, 2016

These pictures were taken in my garden here at EastView. The first picture is of the orchids emerging this year, 2016. Since wild orchids are protected, the only place one can legitimately purchase one is from a recognized wildflower propagator. These were originally bought from "Garden in the Woods," in Framingham, MA. Planted in Marion, MA, I dug them up and brought them from MA and transplanted them to Milton, VT in 2003. Then when we moved to EastView I dug them up and transplanted them here at EastView in 2013. They have survived transplanting's from MA to VT and EastView. A very hardy and tough plant considering all the winters the plants have had to survive in Massachusetts and Vermont.



**Yellow Lady's Slipper, *Cypripedium pubescens***,  
© Dick Harlow, 2016

## **JUNE 1-14, 2016 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES FOR EASTVIEW**

**By Dick Harlow**

The second picture shows what a beauty the flower turns out to be. The Yellow Lady's Slipper, as can be seen from the history of this plant, is probably the easiest to grow in the garden.

### **WHITE PINE NEEDLE BROWNING**

I have been asked about White Pine needle damage, which has showed up along roadsides in the middle of May. Beside the typical salt damage that will occur as salted plow splatter hits the pine needles, not all browning of pine needles is caused by this event. According to the US Forest Service, severe damage is also developing in woodland pines.

The Forest Service predicts several disease fungi contribute to this region wide problem; the most common is the *brown spot needle blight fungus*. The Forest Service has been reporting a build-up of this disease on White Pine annually since 2005. Since 2009, there has been a 10-60% decline in annual wood growth on affected trees.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

### **BUTTERFLIES**

Silvery Blue  
Common Ringlet  
Canadian Tiger Swallowtail  
Milbert's Tortoiseshell  
Mourning Cloak  
Red Admiral  
Cabbage White

### **DRAGONFLIES**

Common Whitetail  
Dot-tailed Whiteface  
Eastern Pondhawk  
Widow Skimmer

### **AMPHIBIANS**

Gray Tree Frog  
American Bullfrog  
Leopard Frog

### **MAMMALS**

Eastern Coyote  
White-tailed Deer  
Gray Squirrel

# JUNE 1-14, 2016 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES FOR EASTVIEW

By Dick Harlow

Eastern Cottontail  
Meadow Vole  
Muskrat

## **Weather Tidbits**

**Month of June 1-14 2016**

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

### **PRECIPITATION**

**Total Precipitation: 40.8 mm or 1.6 inches**

**Overcast Days: 4**

### **WIND**

**Highest wind gust: June 7, 28 MPH, Direction: North**

**Average Wind speed for April: 1.7 mph,**

**Dominate Wind Direction: North**

**Days w/wind gusts 20-30 MPH: 5**

**Days w/wind gusts 30 MPH: 0**

### **TEMPERATURE**

**Mean Temp: 18.2 C<sup>0</sup>/64.8<sup>0</sup>F**

**High Temp: 25.6 C<sup>0</sup>/78.1<sup>0</sup>F**

**Low Temp: 8.1 C<sup>0</sup>/ 46.6<sup>0</sup>F**