

HUMMINGBIRD MOTHS



Hummingbird Clearwing Moth, *Hemaris thysbe*
feeding on Buddleja Photo © Dick Harlow

This is a group of moths that are diurnal, unlike most moths that fly at night. These moths come out during the day and are very visible feeding on the nectar of flowers. They can be seen on clear sunny days. People tend to confuse these two moths with a hummingbird. Hummingbird moths live in our area; they like fields, meadows, gardens and forest edges.

There are two types of hummingbird moth. The Clearwing Hummingbird Moth and the Snowberry Clearwing Hummingbird Moth.

The picture above shows the Hummingbird Clearwing Moth, *Hemaris thysbe*, characterized by the tufts of burnt brown hair in the middle of the tail. The Snowberry Clearwing, *Hemaris diffinis*, seen below looks very similar, except its tail is jet-black, no color but black on the tail and is less rusty overall.

Both hummingbird moths have relatively clear wings with broad amber or reddish markings within the clear wing. Because you can see through parts of the wing, is the reason for the name, Clearwing.

AUGUST 1-14, 2015 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES FOR EAST VIEW



Snowberry Clearwing Moth, *Hemaris diffinis*
feeding on **Monarda** Photo © Dick Harlow

WILD CARROT

You may know it as a weed, (14 of 48 states consider it invasive); others consider it a wild flower, herb or just an interesting flower of field and meadow. According to the USDA, Queen Anne's Lace is a weed. But, here at EastView it acts as a beneficial filler, or to some a wildflower, amongst the grasses and sedges of our meadow and field. Along with the tall grasses it is a friendly plant to many beneficial insects and I am sure, along with the grasses, provides cover for birds and mammals alike.

As an herb Queen Anne's Lace is considered an antiseptic or diuretic for a calming of the digestive system. Because this plant is not native to North America, it was probably brought over by the colonists. With no natural enemies here in North America and producing a large amount of seed, it spread hither and yon by attaching to animal fur, bird feathers or to men's' boots. Consequently, the seed sprouted in most of the US and Canada.

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Wild Carrot, *Daucus carota*
Photo © Dick Harlow

An interesting story about how the flower of this plant, *Daucus carota*, got its name follows.

Queen Anne, either Anne (1574-1619) the first Stuart Queen or Anne (1665-1714) the last in the Stuart line, the legend contends, was making lace by hand and pricked her finger with a needle. The drop of blood that oozed from the finger dropped into the middle of the lace she was making. Thus, the purple sterile florets in the center of Queen Anne's Lace represent that drop of blood. However, not all Queen Anne's Lace flowers have these purple flowerets. You can be the judge as to why or why not!

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Wild Carrot, *Daucus carota* dark spot in the center of the flower Photo © Dick Harlow

Wild Carrot is a member of the Parsley Family that has edible and poisonous members. There are fragrant and some flavorful members of this family, such as fennel, celery, parsnip, dill and then there is Poison Hemlock, which is extremely toxic. Sap or juice from this plant can cause severe problems; look into history and you will find that this is what killed Socrates.

TIGER SWALLOWTAIL

There are potentially two Tiger Swallowtails in the Middlebury area. Middlebury is in what is called the overlap area where you could see both. North of us the Tiger Swallowtail is called the Canadian Tiger Swallowtail, and south of this overlap area it is considered the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail. The supposed key to the difference between these two varieties is the amount of black between the yellow blocks on the edge and under the forewing. On the dorsal side of the distal end of the hindwing the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail has more blue and black. Whereas the Canadian Tiger Swallowtail has less on the dorsal surface, but about the same amount on the ventral surface of the hindwing as does the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail. The difficulty in the field is to observe and take an image of the underside of the wings for a positive ID.

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Canadian Tiger Swallowtail, *Papilio canadensis*

Photo © Dick Harlow

The picture above shows a Tiger Swallowtail (who has gone through some tough times) that does not have very much blue on the distal part of the dorsal hindwing.

But the clincher is how the yellow under the forewing and at the edge of the wing all run together with hardly any definite black lines going between each block of yellow as seen in the second picture. Thus, by definition, this is a Canadian Tiger Swallowtail.

This is a difficult field decision to make when you are in an overlap area where two very similar species intermingle. And, it becomes doubly difficult if the butterfly is not cooperative by showing its underside long enough for you to make an ID decision or uncooperative when trying to take a picture.



Canadian Tiger Swallowtail, *Papilio canadensis*

Photo © Dick Harlow

The image below does not show the whole butterfly, but if you look at the underside of the left forewing you can see definite black lines between the yellow blocks at the edge of the forewing. Looking at the ventral side of the wing above

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and the ventral side of the wing below you can see how the black lines go between the yellow blocks by more than a thin line. Therefore, based on various references, this is an Eastern Tiger Swallowtail.



Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, *Papilio glaucus*
Photo © Dick Harlow

GREEN HERON



Green Heron, *Butorides virescens*
Photo © Dick Harlow

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This Green Heron was enjoying the early morning sun on August 2, 2015 on top of our next-door neighbor's roof shortly after a Great Blue Heron flew into Dragon's Pool.

OBSERVATIONS FOR FIRST TWO WEEKS OF AUGUST

MAMMALS

- Eastern Cottontail Rabbit
- Muskrat
- Meadow Vole

AMPHIBIANS

- Leopard Frog
- American Toad
- American Bullfrog

BUTTERFLIES

- Giant Swallowtail
- Eastern Tiger Swallowtail
- Canadian Tiger Swallowtail
- Black Swallowtail
- Cabbage White
- Clouded Sulphur
- Orange Sulphur
- Monarch
- Viceroy
- Common Wood Nymph
- European Skipper
- Least Skipper
- Dun Skipper
- Delaware Skipper

MOTHS

- Hummingbird Clearwing Moth
- Snowberry Clearwing Moth

DRAGONFLIES

- Common Green Darner
- Canadian Darner
- Widow Skimmer
- 12-spotted Skimmer
- White-faced Meadowhawk

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DAMSELFLIES

- Eastern Forktail

Weather Tidbits

AUGUST Two Week Totals

All Measurements taken at solar noon (1130 EDT).

PRECIPITATION

AUGUST 2015 Total Precipitation: 28.6 mm or 1.1 inches

Overcast Days, AUGUST: 3

WIND

Highest wind 3 AUGUST: 44 MPH, Direction: N

Average Wind speed for AUGUST 2015: 2.2 mph,

Dominate Wind Direction: SSW

Days w/wind gusts 20-30 MPH: 5

Days w/wind gusts >30 MPH: 1

TEMPERATURE

Mean Temp: 23.4 C⁰ 74.1 °F

High Temp: 32.8 C⁰ 91.0 °F

Low Temp: 13.9 C⁰ 53.2 °F