

AUGUST 1 - 14, 2018 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES

By Dick Harlow

BELTED KINGFISHER



Belted Kingfisher, *Megaceryle alcyon*, Male, perched on the Purple Martin Pole overlooking South Pond watching every move I make!
© Dick Harlow

In the third week of July we had a Belted Kingfisher decide to investigate South Pond. Usually when a kingfisher appears it heralds the beginning of Fall migration. It seems every year since 2013, but one, we have seen a male kingfisher come to the pole in the Spring and the Fall. After one day or one hour trying to fish the South Pond, they seem to get frustrated and leave.

Male Belted Kingfishers have a slate blue chest band; whereas females have rusty flanks connected to a rusty belly band that includes a slate blue chest band. These pictures are of a male, but he turned his back on me before I could get a decent shot of a frontal view.

Belted Kingfishers are found throughout most of North American and Mexico. Although they are solitary, they are quite conspicuous near water, especially during spring/summer nesting season. They will T-up on an overhanging branch or a telephone wire to get an advantage looking into a stream, river, pond, lake or estuary. They won't be successful every time they dive for a fish, but they tend to do better than humans.



Belted Kingfisher, *Megaceryle alcyon*, perched on the Purple Martin Pole overlooking South Pond.
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There are two other species of kingfisher that are found primarily in Central America. One is the **Ringed Kingfisher** which is found on both coasts of Central America and occasionally enters Texas around Brownsville. It has a full rusty breast and is slightly larger than the Belted Kingfisher.

The other species is the **Green Kingfisher**, a small Kingfisher, the smallest of our kingfishers. It has a green back with white dots on each of the primary wing feathers and a black terminal band on the tail. The male has a rusty patch on the upper chest whereas the rest to the belly is white. It is found in all of Central America and overlaps into southern Texas.

EYED BROWN



Eyed Brown, *Satyrodes eurydice*, nectaring on swamp milkweed, 2016. © Dick Harlow

This is an unusual butterfly to see here at EastView. Watching it fly it seems like a non-descript brown butterfly. But, when it settles down and alights on a flower or vegetation and you can get close enough, the wing markings are quite striking. You can see why it is called the Eyed Brown!

The habitat that the guides say it prefers is "very wet meadows/marshes with sedges." We have North and South Ponds for wetness, but the meadows and fields are not at the moment very wet; in fact, they are somewhat dry. The larva feed on sedges, but we don't have many sedges. It is a mystery why this fellow should turn up in our garden.

It is feeding on Rose/Swamp Milkweed, *Asclepias incarnate*, growing in our backyard, or resting on vegetation. However, since 2013, we have only sighted this species every other year. I don't have a reason for this observation, other than to say it is an interesting anomaly.

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Eyed Brown, *Satyrodes eurydice*, resting, 2018.
© Dick Harlow

The last time I recorded one here at EastView was in July of 2014 and then July of 2016. So, they do show themselves from time to time, but as noted seeing one every other year is an anomaly as far as I'm concerned.

MONARCHS

The following two photographs of Monarchs are simply to give credibility to sightings of them here at EastView. There were several, more than two, flying about the Swamp Milkweed and Buddlejia as well as over four seen in the meadow. As a matter of fact I have recorded a Monarch every day since the first of August.



Monarch, *Danaus plexippus*, feeding on Swamp (Rose) Milkweed. © Dick Harlow

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Monarch, *Danaus plexippus*, feeding on Buddlejia (Black Knight) . © Dick Harlow

OBSERVATIONS

MAMMALS

Eastern Cottontail
Meadow Vole
Moose - yearling
Mink - 2

AMPHIBIANS

Bull Frog
Leopard Frog

REPTILES

Garter Snake

BUTTERFLIES

Cabbage White
Clouded Sulphur
Monarch

DAMSELFLIES/ DRAGONFLIES

Familiar Bluet
Eastern Forktail
Yellow-legged Meadowhawk
White-faced Meadowhawk

Weather Tidbits

Month of AUGUST 1-14, 2018

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

PRECIPITATION

Total Precipitation: 43.0 mm or 1.7 inches

Overcast Days: 7 of 14 overcast days

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