

SEPTEMBER 15 – 30, 2019 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES
By Dick Harlow

VICEROY, A MONARCH MIMIC

We have all seen more than the usual amount of Monarch butterflies this summer and fall. This butterfly is probably the most recognizable butterfly in the US. However, to the uninitiated it is amazing how many people will call the Viceroy a Monarch, or just a small Monarch.



(1) **Viceroy**, *Limenitis archippus*, nectaring on Buddlieja,
(2) © Dick Harlow

How can you tell the difference between a Monarch and a Viceroy? The size, Monarchs are larger. The way it flies, Monarchs glide in a V shape, whereas Viceroy's glide with wings out flat. The primary identifying characteristic, however, is that the hindwing of the Viceroy has a black bar, called a black post-medium band, that goes from one end to the other end of each hindwing, as seen in **#1** and **#3**.



(2) **Monarch**, *Danaus plexippus*, nectaring on Buddlieja.
© Dick Harlow

Notice in **#2** no black bar/band on the hindwing, but it looks very similar to **#3**.

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(3) Viceroy, *Limenitis archippus*, nectaring on Buddlieja, © Dick Harlow

Also, notice the difference between **#1** and **#4**. The similarity is significant, but there is no post-medium band on the hindwing of **#4**.



(4) Monarch, *Danaus plexippus*, female, nectaring on Buddlieja.
© Dick Harlow

There are other differences between the Viceroy and Monarch, such as the number of white dots on the forewing and color shading, but these markings would be very difficult to notice in the field.

Monarchs migrate, but the ones we saw late July laying eggs on milkweed will not migrate. It will be the offspring of those Monarchs we watched that will migrate south, especially the ones we see in September. Thankfully, most birds have learned to leave this distasteful morsel alone.

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AMERICAN BULLFROG



American Bullfrog, *Lithobates catesbeianus*,
South Pond, © Dick Harlow

It is interesting that EastView's South Pond has in the past year and a half become overgrown with Cat-o-nine-tails and filamentous green algae. The water level does not seem to depreciate below or extend above a particular level regardless of how much it rains. This sounds like I am suggesting that the pond is losing life or is not as active as it once was. Not true, as a matter of fact this pond is becoming eutrophic, in other words has an overabundance of vegetation and life.

The bullfrog survives our South Pond in winter. Why? Doesn't the pond freeze to the bottom or close to the bottom? Do bullfrogs dig themselves into the mud? How do they prevent freezing to death if the pond freezes to or almost to the bottom, or does the algae allow for gaps that provide oxygen? All these questions have plagued me and I do not have the answers to. All I know is the Bullfrog and his buddies are sounding a chorus every spring after every winter so far; and after I thought the winter had done them in!

MANY PAINTED LADIES



Painted Lady, *Vanessa cardui*. © Dick Harlow

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Painted Lady, *Vanessa cardui*. © Dick Harlow

My apologies for showing so many butterfly pictures in one note, but August and September have been big for Painted Lady, Monarch and Viceroy butterflies.

ANSWER TO NOTES SEPT 1-14



Milbert's Tortoiseshell, *Nymphalis milberti*.
© Dick Harlow

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CAN YOU NAME THIS ONE?



We so enjoy butterflies and birds, but I don't think we all understand the jeopardy they are in. When we poison the environment to eliminate a specific insect that is bothering us or our agricultural crops, we are also imposing toxins on birds.

The following is a summary of the research that has been done on toxins we use and their effect on pollinators and birds.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2019/09/widely-used-pesticide-makes-birds-lose-weight/>

"A first ever study of birds in the wild found that a migrating songbird that ate the equivalent of one or two seeds treated with a neonicotinoid insecticide suffered immediate weight loss, forcing it to delay its journey. Although the birds recovered, the delay could severely harm their chances of surviving and reproducing, say the Canadian researchers whose study is published today in Science."

Hopefully scientists will continue to test for insecticides/pesticides that will protect crops and not poison birds and pollinators.

OBSERVATIONS

BUTTERFLIES

Cabbage White
Clouded Sulphur
Painted Lady
Viceroy
Monarch
Milbert's Tortoiseshell

REPTILES

Garter Snake – didn't like being watered by the hose.

MAMMALS

Eastern Cottontail – scat
Coyote - barking

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Weather Tidbits

Month SEPTEMBER 1-30, 2019

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

PRECIPITATION

Total Precipitation: 81.2 mm or 3.2 inches

Overcast Days: 9

Note: Please disinfect your bird feeders before putting them out this Fall and Winter. It is easy for birds to pick up disease from feeders. Make a weak solution of Clorox, then rinse thoroughly. Or, you can purchase bird feeder cleaners, e.g. from Amazon or other stores.
Many Thanks.