

JUNE 15 - 30, 2020 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES
By Dick Harlow

SILVERY BLUE



(1) Silvery Blue, *Glaucopsyche lygdamus*,
feeding on Nepeta, Catmint blossom. © Dick Harlow

This is a small butterfly, a hair bigger than a man's thumb nail. Easy to see because they are not bothered by humans standing near the flowers on which they are feeding. However, they are fast and do fly close to the ground, so you could miss them if you are not careful.



2. Silvery Blue, *Glaucopsyche lygdamus*, feeding
on Nepeta, Catmint blossom, © Dick Harlow

Currently it is considered that there are two races of this butterfly species. The northern race and the southern race.

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The northern *couperi* race lives in northern New England, and according to the references is larger and isolated from the southern *lygdamus* race living in the Appalachians. The primary difference between the two, according to the references, is on what they tend to feed on, and that the southern race has bigger brighter and more dots on the underside of the wings. The dots on the northern race are fewer and more muted. The only images showing a definite difference between the muted dots of the northern race and the dominate, bold dots of the southern race is in Cech and Tudor's Butterflies of the East Coast. Checking the images that I have and those of the southern species, they look very similar.



3. Silvery Blue, *Glaucopsyche lygdamus*, feeding on Nepeta, Catmint blossom, © Dick Harlow

Unfortunately, I have not been able to come up with pictures of the Northern race that would show a marked difference between it and my images. Consequently, although these images look similar to the southern race, I cannot for sure say that they represent the southern race.

Males tend to patrol a great deal looking for females. Though males will stop and feed, they are looking to procreate, to patrol and find a female.

The food of the northern race is usually White Sweet-Clover, and Crown Vetch along with other legumes. The southern race prefers Carolina Vetch as well as other legumes.

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ITALIAN and HYBRID HONEYBEE



(1) **Western Honeybee**, *Apis mellifera*, © Dick Harlow

This **non-native** insect was brought to the United States in 1622. It reached the West coast of the US by 1853. Therefore, by the start of the Civil War the honeybee had spread throughout the United States as an important pollinator for agriculture.

There are 5 subspecies of the honeybee that are slightly different from each other; but all are descendants of the Italian Honeybee, *Apis mellifera*. All five varieties or subspecies of the Italian Honeybee pollinate and make honey. However, since man tends to keep bees, using them as a business for pollination of agricultural plants and fruit trees along with making honey for sale, he needs to be sure he can handle the honeybees without them causing a concern.

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(2) **Carniolan Honeybee**, *Apis mellifera carnica*

© Dick Harlow

For example, some bees can be either aggressive or too aggressive when it comes to controlling their hives. i.e. being unduly stung, frequently swarming or being a threat for serious injury.

Therefore, varieties have been established in various parts of Europe, Russia and the Balkans; and some of those varieties have found a home in North America.

The honeybee that is considered the calmest is the Carniolan honeybee, ***Apis mellifera carnica***. Carnica is a subspecific name for this variety. Notice the darker abdomen compared to picture (1).

The honeybee that has a long tongue and therefore considered the best for pollination is the Caucasian, ***Apis mellifera caucasia***. Whichever variety is pollinating vegetables and fruits in North America, be it known our agricultural survival depends on them. Mites, predatory insects, toxic insecticides and poisons of all kinds take their toll on honeybees.

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OBSERVATIONS

MAMMALS

- White-tailed Deer, 1 Doe, 2 fawns
- Eastern Coywolf, howling
- Red Fox
- Eastern Cottontail Rabbit
- Gray Squirrel

REPTILES

- Garter Snake

AMPHIBIANS

- Leopard Frog
- American Bull Frog

BUTTERFLIES

- Cabbage White
- Clouded Sulphur
- Silvery Blue

Weather Tidbits

Month of JUNE 15-30, 2020

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

PRECIPITATION

Total Precipitation: 34.0 mm or 1.3 inches. Average June precipitation is 3.7 inches. This leaves us in this part of Middlebury at approximately 2.2-inch deficit of rainfall for the month.

Overcast Days: 12