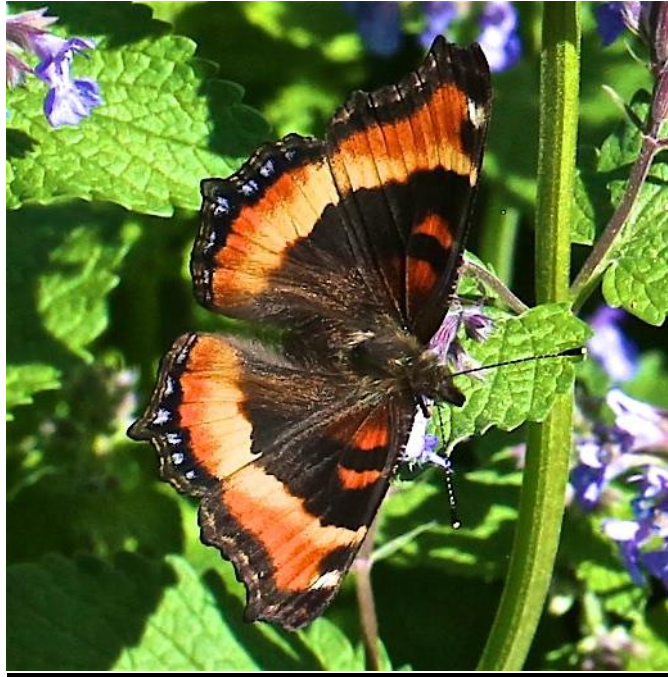


MILBERT'S TORTOISESHELL



Milbert's Tortoiseshell, *Nymphalis milberti*
Dorsal View © Dick Harlow 2016

The Milbert's Tortoiseshell, *Nymphalis milberti*, is a member of a large very interesting group of butterflies known as Nymphalids or Brushfoot butterflies. It belongs to a very diverse family of butterflies, encompassing many that we see in our gardens and some semi-tropical beauties.

However, Milbert's is a northern, boreal species found in Canada and Northern New England, New York and the mountains of Pennsylvania. Their chief host plants, those plants where it will lay its eggs and where their caterpillars will feed, are Nettles (*Urtica dioica* and *U. procera*) that are growing in the open rather than in the woods.

As you can see in the following picture, when the Milbert's has its wings folded or closed the Milbert's becomes easily cryptic and difficult to see against any background but a light one. And, in fact it will fly close to the ground, not flitting about like many butterflies do unless to nectar on something like Catmint. Once it opens its wings however, its beauty is revealed.

JUNE 15-30, 2016 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES FOR EASTVIEW

By Dick Harlow



Milbert's Tortoiseshell, *Nymphalis milberti*
Ventral View © Dick Harlow 2016

For me to have this fellow visit our garden in June and specifically feed on the Catmint is a rarity. Although I have seen this species further north, this year was my first for Middlebury.

The habitat for this species is usually wet, moist or damp northern areas, but can be found visiting a wide range of habitats, from woodland edges, city parks to open fields.

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CATMINT



Catmint, *Nepeta racemosa*, garden perennial
© Dick Harlow 2015

All mint plants have a square stem and emit an odor. Catmint or *Nepeta racemosa* is a dwarf mint or herbaceous perennial. If you pick a leaf there is an aromatic odor to it, which is enhanced by crushing the leaf. Many mints grow tall, but this mint grows about a foot tall with violet or lilac-blue summer flowers. Interesting that this plant contains nepetalactone, which repels cockroaches and mosquitoes, yet butterflies will nectar from the flowers.

Although this plant has become naturalized to North America, it is native to the Caucasus, Turkey and Iran. If your cat snags a leaf, watch how the cat behaves. You will find the cat is attracted to the leaf, the odor, which is another reason why it is called catmint.

JUNE 15-30, 2016 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES FOR EASTVIEW
By Dick Harlow



Catmint, *Nepeta racemosa*, single blossom
© Dick Harlow 2015

The raceme of flowers looks large as a group, but as a single flower each individual one is small; but when the image is enlarged it is almost orchid-like.

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MARSH BLUET



Marsh Bluet, *Enallagma eribium*, male
© Dick Harlow 2015

This small blue and black damselfly belongs to the Pond Damselfly Family and looks similar to many of the pond damsels. Here at EastView's South Pond most of the bluets will be seen near if not at the edge of the pond. When viewing a damselfly in the field or on a grass stem it is very difficult, if not impossible, to identify the bluets to species. However, brought back to a lab or to your microscope and reference material these fellows can be determined to species.

This is a summer damselfly that can be found around well-vegetated pools, ponds and marshes. As you can see in the picture this male is perched horizontally, but could be seen obliquely on a stick or piece of vegetation.

UPDATE:

EastView has its first nesting pair of Purple Martins. As of 30 June there are 2 eggs in the nest. She could lay as few as 2 to as many as 5 eggs.

Stay tuned for further updates!

OBSERVATIONS

JUNE 15-30, 2016 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES FOR EASTVIEW

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BUTTERFLIES

Silvery Blue Butterfly
Cabbage White
Canadian Tiger Swallowtail
Common Ringlet
Milbert's Tortoiseshell
Mourning Cloak
Black Swallowtail

DRAGONFLIES

Common Whitetail
Dot-tailed Whiteface
Eastern Pond Hawk
Widow Skimmer

DAMSELFLIES

Marsh Bluet
Eastern Forktail

AMPHIBIANS

Gray Tree Frog
American Bullfrog
Leopard Frog

MAMMALS

White-tailed Deer
Gray Squirrel
Eastern Cottontail
Eastern Chipmunk
Meadow Vole
Muskrat

Weather Tidbits

JUNE 15-30, 2016 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES FOR EASTVIEW

By Dick Harlow

Month of JUNE 1-30 2016

All Measurements taken at solar noon (1230 EST).

PRECIPITATION

Total Precipitation: 82.2 mm or 3.2 inches

We are 1 inch below normal.

Overcast Days: 7

WIND

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

Average Wind speed for April: 1.9 mph,

Dominate Wind Direction: North

Days w/wind gusts 20-30 MPH: 15 Days w/wind gusts >30 MPH: 0

TEMPERATURE

Mean Temp: 19.7 C⁰/67.5⁰F

High Temp: 27.9 C⁰/82.2⁰F

Low Temp: 8.0 C⁰/ 46.4 ⁰F