

## AUGUST 1-14, 2016 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES FOR EASTVIEW

By Dick Harlow

### WOOD FROG



Wood Frog, *Lithobates sylvaticus*, © Dick Harlow

EastView may only hear and see the American Bullfrog, the Leopard Frog or American Toad; but in fact there is another amphibian that is only a walk away from EastView.

The **Wood Frog**, *Lithobates sylvaticus*, is a woodland or upland frog. It lives and breeds in and near woodland pools, and hides in leaf litter of boreal forests from Alaska through Canada to Maine south to Georgia and the Appalachians. One wouldn't think that an amphibian would be so obtuse as to take up residence in a forest. In fact, this fellow has an attribute that attracts biologists – its ability to withstand freezing temperatures. Along with its terrestrial inclination, this species is certainly unusual.

Wood Frogs are thought to be “obligate” breeders because they use ephemeral wetlands. Another name for ephemeral wetlands is vernal pools; those pools that appear in the spring and dry up when summer approaches are breeding grounds for a select group of animals.

EastView does not have ephemeral wetlands around its campus, but if you were to walk into the woods, you could possibly find a spot that has water in early spring.

These pools are also host to other organisms that will only breed in vernal pools. Because these pools are temporary, the Wood Frogs' eggs and their ability to develop from egg to tadpole to young frog has evolved over time to be able to survive this stressful environment.

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### MONARCH BUTTERFLY



**Monarch**, *Danaus plexippus*, feeding on Swamp Milkweed, *Asclepias incarnate*. © Dick Harlow

This photograph shows the first Monarch butterfly which was seen this year on July 13, 2016, feeding on Swamp Milkweed, *Asclepias incarnate* here at EastView.

This year has been tough on pollinators such as bees, butterflies, and moths due to our mini-draught. It has been extremely dry since the beginning of June. Along with the draught, pollinators in general are having a hard time adapting to all the poisons man puts into the environment. I lament over how the landscape and the wildlife have changed and diminished over the past 70 years.

We are fortunate here at EastView that we live in an area that has an environmental consciousness. However, there are those who would use a suspected carcinogen like 'Roundup' in a heartbeat to get rid of weeds, or use some other poisonous chemical because they don't like the bugs that are on their plants. Do they even have an idea whether the bugs they are looking at are beneficial or not? Do they care what they are doing to themselves, others and the environment, or to agriculture? Will they take the time to read, to understand the damage they are doing to themselves and others, or to the area where they live? You be the judge.

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**Monarch**, *Danaus plexippus*, feeding on Swamp Milkweed, *Asclepias incarnate*, © Dick Harlow

It is a sad commentary when looking at the environmental problems much of the country is facing that people disregard the knowledge that is available.

### EASTERN CHIPMUNK



**Eastern Chipmunk**, *Tamias striatus*, © Dick Harlow

When we first moved to EastView in 2013, I was amazed that we didn't see any chipmunks. That absence continued until this summer, 2016. Now EastView is being invaded by chipmunks! I am still perplexed that it took from 2012 when EastView started to rent to residents 'til 2016 before we began to see our first chipmunks.

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Cute is what they are! One can't look at a chipmunk without thinking or saying "awwww, you are so cute."

However, they do have another side to their personality. Clay soils are tough to dig deep burrows and tunnels. Thus, chipmunks need shrubs, wood piles, raised beds, some form of cover to build their open-ended tunnels.



**Eastern Chipmunk, *Tamias striatus***, feeding on a garden pea, © Dick Harlow

Some of the food items that chipmunks gather or feed on are: insects, seeds, fruits, nuts, vegetables, and garden bulbs. As well as feeding during the day, they also collect food to store for the winter and leaf litter for their nests. Especially when tree nuts, like acorns, drop to the ground in the fall, they will collect as many nuts as they can cram into their cheek pouches and run to their nest to set the nuts into a storage cavity in the den.



**Eastern Chipmunk, *Tamias striatus***, emerging from under a raised bed, © Dick Harlow

Although chipmunks build underground nests they are perfectly able to climb trees. They feed primarily during the day and stay underground or under cover during the night. Their principal

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predators are foxes, hawks, raccoons, weasels, snakes, bobcats and domestic cats. Unlike a mouse or vole the life span of a chipmunk is three plus years. A great deal of its life expectancy is dependent on where they live, the type and proximity of protection and their food supply.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

### **BUTTERFLIES**

Black Swallowtail  
Eastern Tailed-Blue  
Cabbage White  
Clouded Sulphur  
Monarch  
Viceroy

### **DRAGONFLIES**

Common Whitetail  
Eastern Pond Hawk  
Widow Skimmer

### **DAMSELFLIES**

Eastern Forktail

### **AMPHIBIANS**

American Bullfrog  
Leopard Frog

### **MAMMALS**

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

### **Weather Tidbits**

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Month of AUGUST 1-14, 2016

*All Measurements taken at solar noon (1230 EST).*

## PRECIPITATION

Total Precipitation: 18.6 mm or 0.73 inches

Overcast Days: 3

## WIND

Highest wind gust: AUGUST 5, 25 MPH, Direction: South

Average Wind speed for AUGUST 1-14: 2.1 mph,

Dominate Wind Direction: South

Days w/wind gusts 20-30 MPH: 7      Days w/wind gusts >30 MPH: 0

## TEMPERATURE

Mean Temp: 22.3 C<sup>0</sup>/72.1<sup>0</sup>F

High Temp: 31.7 C<sup>0</sup>/89.1<sup>0</sup>F

Low Temp: 13.4 C<sup>0</sup>/56.1<sup>0</sup>F