

## AUGUST 15-31, 2022 - NATURAL HISTORY NOTES

By Dick Harlow

### GIANT SWALLOWTAIL



**Giant Swallowtail, *Papilio cresphontes***, nectaring on Echinacea, Cone Flower. © Richard Harlow

The **Giant Swallowtail**, *Papilio cresphontes*, is a relative newcomer to Vermont. Yes, we have seen it here in Vermont since 2010, but before 2000 there hadn't been any recording of Giant Swallowtail visiting gardens here in Middlebury, Vermont. However, now this large, beautiful butterfly has found a home in Vermont gardens.

Notice the flowers it is nectaring on and if you grow those in your garden you too may see this visitor nectaring on your flowers.

The Giant Swallowtail can be found in meadows, fields, woodlands that are sparse or open, as well as in neighborhood gardens nectaring on the flowers of Rose Milkweed and Echinacea or Coneflower.

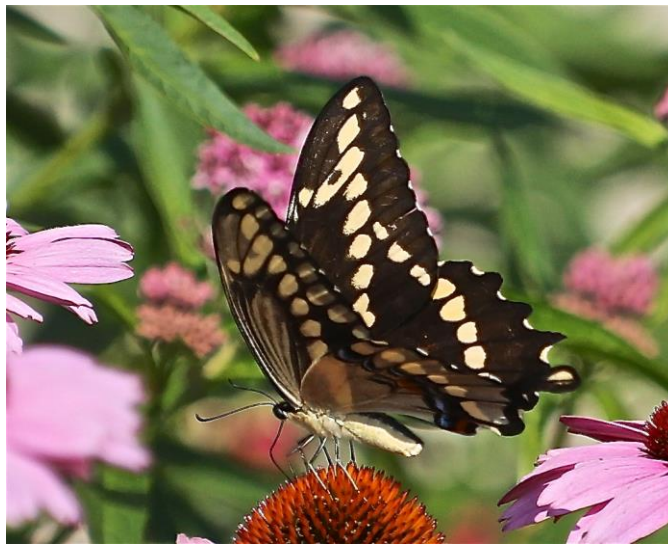
The primary food plant for the caterpillars of this species is Northern Prickly Ash, *Zanthoxylum americanum*, and Rue, *Rutaceae*, as well as several other plants such as Hercules Club, Wild Lime, Torchwood, and cultivated citrus.

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**Giant Swallowtail, *Papilio cresphontes*,** nectaring on Rose Milkweed. © Richard Harlow

Primarily Prickly Ash here in the North; most of the other plants that the caterpillars feed on in the south.



**Giant Swallowtail, *Papilio cresphontes*,** nectaring on *Echinacea*, Cone Flower.  
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### COMMON WOOD-NYMPH



1. **Common Wood-Nymph**, *Cercyonis pegala pegala*,  
(southern 'pegala' type) © Richard Harlow

There are two basic color types for this species. The variety with a distinct yellow forewing patch, #1 and #2 and the variety without the yellow patch, #3.

In the Northern dark type, #3, you can see the black dot with a white center dot with the black outlined either with a light-colored ring or even a shallow yellow ring around the black dot.

The term "wood" in the name is a misnomer as this butterfly is an open field and garden type butterfly, not found in the woods. However, it does have the ability with its dark color, when hiding in vegetation, to be very difficult to observe. The only giveaway for this butterfly is its yellow patch on the forewing of the southern type. Otherwise, this species is difficult to see amongst any dark vegetation.

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**2. Common Wood-Nymph, *Cercyonis pegala pegala*,**  
(southern 'pegala' type) © Richard Harlow



**3. Common Wood-Nymph, *Cercyonis pegala nephe***  
(northern dark 'nephe' type) © Richard Harlow

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### OBSERVATIONS

#### MAMMALS

Meadow Vole  
Eastern Cottontail Rabbit

#### AMPHIBIANS

Bullfrog  
Green Frog  
American Toad

#### BUTTERFLIES

Cabbage White  
Yellow Sulphur  
Giant Swallowtail  
Black Swallowtail  
Monarch  
Viceroy  
Common Wood-Nymph  
Common Ringlet

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

#### PRECIPITATION

**Average August Precipitation for Vermont = 3.9 inches.**

**TOTAL August Rainfall: 1<sup>st</sup> Wk.= 1.8 mm; 2<sup>nd</sup> Wk.= 31.0 mm; 3<sup>rd</sup> Wk.= 7.6 mm; 4<sup>th</sup> Wk.= 50.8 for a total of 91.2 mm or 3.6 inches. August Average is 3.9 inches, which leaves a deficit of 0.3 inches for the month. Total deficit to date is 5.29 inches. August had 13 overcast days and 10 days where there was some sort of precipitation.**