

NOVEMBER 1- 14, 2021 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES

By Dick Harlow

WILD TURKEY



Wild Turkey, *Meleagris gallopavo*, male,
© ebird

In 1621, the people of the colony in what was known as Plymouth, Massachusetts and is still Plymouth, Massachusetts, were neighbors with the native Americans of the Wampanoag Tribe who also lived in the Plymouth area. The Pilgrims and the Wampanoags got together at the end of the Fall of 1621; they had a feast sharing the harvest from the pilgrims' gardens as well as what the Indians brought to the feast. This large American gathering became a tradition known as American Thanksgiving and is still a tradition today with obvious changes due to changing times. It has been 400 years since Thanksgiving began!

According to what is written, Plymouth's Thanksgiving started with a few men from the colony going "fowling". Fowling specifically is hunting for fowl, such as ducks, geese, turkeys, grouse, etc. They brought back enough to feed the colony for almost a week. A surprise visit from a number of Wampanoag Indians at the edge of the settlement created a nervous stir in the community. According to history the two groups socialized for the next several days. The Wampanoag brought deer meat along with shellfish, fish, eels, while the colonists contributed their supplies of fowl and vegetables. Supposedly this 1621 get-together created a bond that lasted up until the King Philip's War that began in 1675. From 1621 to 1675 represents 54 years.



Wild Turkey, *Meleagris gallopavo*, female,
© Richard Harlow

It should be understood that between 1621 and today in 2021 covers four hundred years. A lot has changed over that period of time. Turkeys, geese, grouse, ducks were more plentiful in the 1600's. However, the success in hunting them for survival was harder in 1621 with fewer means for a viable success.

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For example, settlers had flint-lock rifles for hunting, as well as flint-lock pistols, but no shotgun or anything resembling the kind of firearms we have today. Tough to shoot a bird with a flint-lock rifle or for that matter tough to shoot a deer not having the skills the Indians had developed over time.

When you are living off the land, when you are dependent on what you hunt for winter survival, both the Pilgrims and the Indians shared an identical desire to survive. That survival represented a mutual bond that stayed with them until newcomers in the 1640's and 1650's started to sow mistrust between the settlers and the Indians.

FEWER INSECTS LEADING TO SPECIES EXTINCTION?

There is current concern for Insect Extinction. Insects are responsible for many things in the Natural World, one major one is pollination. Therefore, I thought I would provide some pictures of butterflies that were once common here at EastView. When we first arrived in 2013 up until last year these species were notable because I would see them each year; but they were NOT seen in 2020 or 2021. I am not suggesting they will not appear in 2022, just highlighting a concern for the diminished numbers of beautiful butterflies.

This Tortoiseshell in picture **#1** was seen every year until 2019. This butterfly is about the size of an American Lady butterfly. Its primary food sources are nettles, which are still in abundance in our fields and meadows.



#1 Milbert's Tortoiseshell, *Nymphalis milberti*,
September 2019, © Richard Harlow

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#2 Painted Lady, *Vanessa cardui*, July 2017,
© Richard Harlow

The Painted Lady butterfly in picture **#2** migrates from the South to the North every year and is noted to colonize much of North America in the summer. We, or I should say I have not seen this butterfly since 2018. Although the abundance of this butterfly is known to vary tremendously from year to year, not seeing it for three years straight is concerning.

Due to our changing climate the Giant Swallowtail butterfly in picture **#3** has extended its range from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to at least Milton, Vermont. I had not seen a Giant Swallowtail on a regular basis until we moved to Vermont in 2003. Then we moved from Milton, VT to EastView in 2013. I have pictures that I have taken of this species every year at EastView until this year, 2021.

This year was a tough year for butterfly species. Only six species have been seen and recorded here at EastView for 2021.



#3 Giant Swallowtail, *Papilio cresphontes*,
July 2020, © Richard Harlow

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OBSERVATIONS

MAMMALS

Coydogs – howling after one AM
Red Fox
Meadow Vole

BUTTERFLIES

Cabbage White
Orange Sulphur

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

PRECIPITATION

Average November Precipitation for Vermont = 3.15 inches.

Total precipitation for November was 55.0 mm or 2.2 inches. So far this month we are fairing quite well!

Overcast Days 1-14: We had 7-days of overcast skies. Of those overcast skies 6 days produced rain.