

SEPTEMBER 15- 30, 2021 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES

By Dick Harlow

EASTERN CHIPMUNK



Eastern Chipmunk, *Tamias striatus*,

© Dick Harlow

The Eastern Chipmunk is a small rodent that is endemic to the eastern part of the United States and Canada. Although its range extends into the middle of the United States, it does not go west of the Mississippi River valley.

The life of an Eastern Chipmunk is between two to eight years. Interesting that they can live to be eight years old. We have had the pleasure of a chipmunk only once in nine years at EastView. But, since we also have a weasel, a fox, and coywolves as possible predators, they may be the reason we have not seen one since 2016.

This rodent is active during the day feeding and gathering seeds, nuts, fruits, worms, birds eggs, and insects. In other words, it spends most of the day looking for and finding food. And, as you probably have seen, the chipmunk carries its food supply in its cheek pouches. These pouches are very handy allowing the chipmunk to forage a slight distance away from its burrow and

allowing it to carry its findings back to its burrow and store those findings in separate cavities underground next to its living quarters.

The Eastern Chipmunk that lived in our garden for about a year, give or take a month, used two different entrances to its underground nest that I knew about. He/she could have had more because they are known for having several entrances to make it difficult for predators.



Eastern Chipmunk, *Tamias striatus*,

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I am not sure which of three predators we have seen or heard here at EastView might have actually taken the chipmunk.

However, ever since actually observing as well as seeing evidence of a weasel we haven't seen a chipmunk. Yet, we have a "handful" of Meadow Voles" each winter in our garden. Go figure! On the other hand, the Meadow Vole population in the late Fall starts strong and ends in March far fewer in number. Because the vegetation is gone in the winter, there is no place for the Meadow Voles to hide or

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to stay hidden from a possible predator. Therefore, I believe predators during winter have a better chance of catching Meadow Voles. Therefore the Meadow Vole population declines during winter.

GREAT SPANGLED FRITILLARY



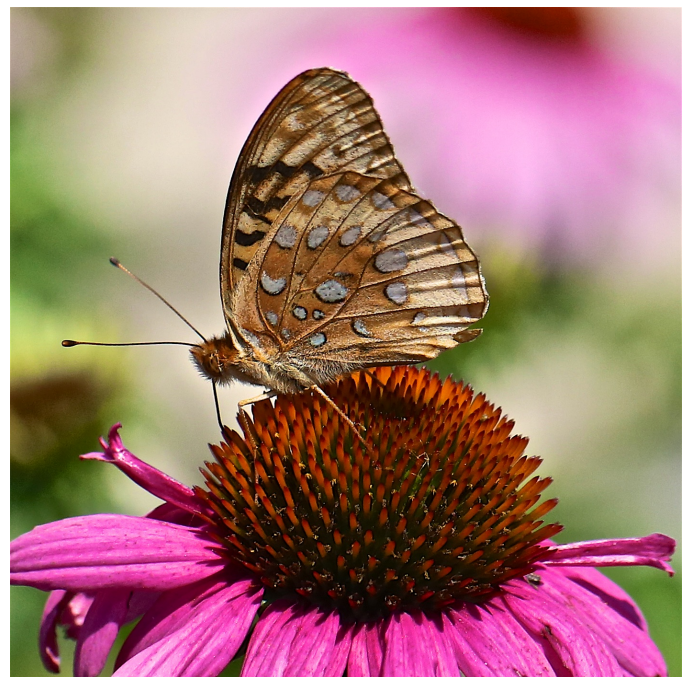
1. **Great Spangled Fritillary**, *Speyeria cybele*, **Male**, feeding on *Asclepias Incarnata*, Swamp Milkweed, Middlebury, VT © Dick Harlow, 2016.

Because I had luck trying to entice a Red Admiral to show up this year by writing a note and showing a past picture beforehand, I will try to entice another species that has been here four of the last eight years.

The Great Spangled Fritillary is a very good looking butterfly. Its range covers all of New England south to Northern

Georgia. It is found inland, in central and eastern Canada.

The word spangled comes from the white silvery "spangles" on the underside of the hind wing. Since other fritillaries have these white flashy white dots under the hindwing, they are not diagnostic for identification. What is diagnostic is that this butterfly is the largest fritillary. On this fritillary there is no black dot near the trailing edge of the basal forewing as is in the Aphrodite Fritillary and Atlantis Fritillary according to Cech and Tudor in "Butterflies of the East Coast, An Observer's Guide."



2. **Great Spangled Fritillary**, *Speyeria cybele*, **Male**, feeding on Purple Cone Flower, *Echinacea purpurea*, Middlebury, VT © Dick Harlow, 2020.

The way one tells the sexes is the color where the forewing and hind wing attach to the body. That area is pale brown in males and dark orange-brown in females, see **Picture #3**. Plus, the black

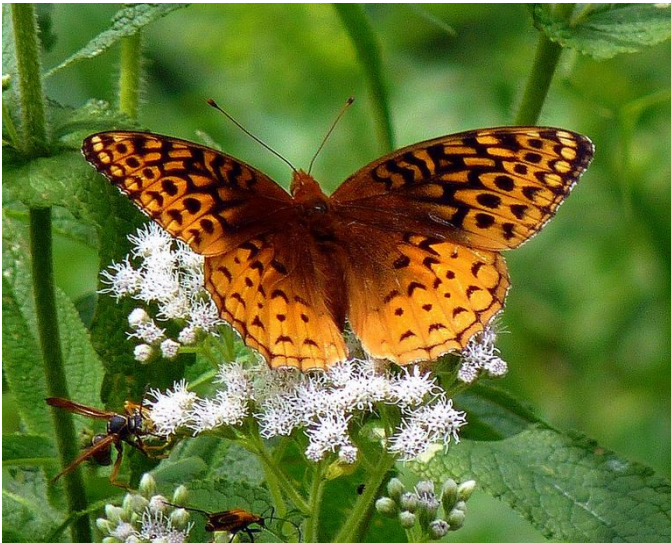
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outlines and markings are stronger and darker in the female.

Great Spangled Fritillaries produce one brood per year.

The habitat for this species is open moist fields with a host of nectar and or host plants available. Therefore, any moist field with a good supply of violets should suffice.



3. **Great Spangled Fritillary**, *Speyeria cybele*, Female, © Birds&Blooms

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

PRECIPITATION

Average September Precipitation for Vermont = 3.62 inches.

Total precipitation for September was 72.2 mm or 2.8 inches. This is a 0.82 deficit for the month.

Overcast Days 1-30: We had 13 days of overcast skies. Of those overcast skies 11 days produced rain. This month definitely added to the draught we are in even though it may not feel like it did.

OBSERVATIONS

MAMMALS

Red Fox
White-tailed Deer
Meadow Vole

REPTILES

Garter Snake

AMPHIBIANS

American Toad
Bull Frog
Leopard Frog

BUTTERFLIES

Cabbage White – very common

Yellow Sulphur – more common this month.

Monarch – several so far this month

Viceroy – once last two weeks