

June 1-30, 2014 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES FOR EASTVIEW

By Dick Harlow

Are the first two weeks in June a prelude to the rest of the summer?

We here in Middlebury had over an inch of rain the first week and an inch of rain the second week. Even though we have had a few good sunny days, this has been a fairly wet two weeks, as we have had 7 rainy days out of 14 days.

The natural history excitement during this period is that 7 nest boxes are, so far this spring, successful in producing chicks. Bluebirds, and Tree Swallows have been successful in hatching their young, while Starlings and the 'killer' House Sparrows are still trying to take over. The 4 Killdeer eggs produced 4 chicks and they are moving around campus.

Along with the birds at East View, there are Butterflies, Dragonflies and Damselflies that have been very active on days when it isn't raining! Black Swallowtail, Canadian Tiger Swallowtail and Giant Swallowtail Butterflies have been feeding on the lilacs while Mourning Cloak, Cabbage White, Orange Sulphur and Clouded Sulphur have been moving quickly through the area. At least one or two of these species fly through on those days that are not rainy.



The Giant Swallowtail is a significant observation as the major references suggest they have never ventured this far north - too cold, not enough food plants. However, I have been told that

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Vermont has been seeing them here in Middlebury since 2011. That fact suggests either they are extending their range and being successful or the climate, regardless of this past winter, is becoming warmer, or it could be a combination of both.

Damselflies and Dragonflies have been gliding over Dragon's Pool. The dominant Dragonfly is the Green Darner, and the dominant Damselfly is the Bluet.



An occasional Deer has been observed feeding on clover and Rabbits have been enjoying the grass and clover along with sampling garden plants. The pair of Muskrats has stayed hidden except for an occasional foray to check out the cottage backyards. And, the Mosquitoes seem to be very numerous this year, which means there is an abundance of food for the birds. Aren't we lucky we have a constant breeze most of the time!