

**AUGUST 15 – 31, 2017 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES FOR EASTVIEW**  
**By Dick Harlow**

**WHITE-TAILED DEER**



**White-tailed Deer**, *Odocoileus virginianus*, Male  
EastView, Middlebury, VT © Dick Harlow

This shot of a lean 4-point buck in velvet was taken 29 June 2017 at the end of South Pond in back of the Krauses' cottage. This is a beautiful animal, but I'm concerned that you can see his ribs. This is why I called him lean. With all the vegetation available, some of which I consider food for deer, it is concerning that this buck is not heavier. But, then again, he is a beautiful animal standing there in his young sleek, lean maleness.

I think most of us here at EastView enjoy seeing wildlife in our backyard. We may become disgruntled when individuals feed on our garden plants; but we will then take measures to foil this activity, but at the same time not to unduly harm the perpetrator.

Along with this buck, there have been a couple of does that have decided EastView is safe enough to feed on the grasses in the meadow between the Inn and the cottages.

In two months hunting season will be upon us, and when we see an animal such as this buck we need to keep in mind that we have disrupted the natural system by eliminating most of the predators of deer herds. This is why some states have over populations of deer. Human hunters are not purposely going to kill ill or infirm deer like a Puma or a pack of Timber Wolves would do. An alpha male Whitetail's head will look far better on the hunter's wall than a sick one. Therefore, human hunters are looking for different characteristics in their quarry rather than just food. Natural predators tended to maintain the herds' health by killing the sick, injured and old. It was too costly for a predator to try and take down a strong healthy animal. Over population of deer also presents a problem for various plant and tree species as an increase in the number of deer will have a deleterious affect on the environment and thus on forests in general.



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Therefore, hunting deer is a means to maintain some form of population control, certainly not the best, but at least a method to control deer populations that is practiced by various state fish and wildlife agencies.

Let us hope this beauty will find a place to hide unnoticed throughout the hunting season.

### RED ADMIRAL



**Red Admiral, *Vanessa atalanta*, ventral view, feeding on Purple Cone Flower. © Dick Harlow**

There's an interesting contrast between the ventral and dorsal views of this beautiful butterfly. I'd like to think the behavior of keeping its wings folded while feeding on Purple Cone flower is characteristic because it is walking over the prickly stamens. Whereas the dorsal view is on softer Liatris or Prairie Gay Feather. But, in fact I don't think it has anything to do with that, as the focus is on consuming nectar.

The red band on the ventral view and the red bands on the dorsal view make this butterfly unmistakable. There is no other butterfly that looks like this or can be confused with it. This is certainly helpful if you are trying to learn the names of different species that are possible in your area. However, this fellow is a fast flier until it finds the flower or nectar source of its choice.



**Red Admiral, *Vanessa atalanta*, dorsal view, feeding on Liatris, Prairie Gay Feather. © Dick Harlow**

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Preferable habitat for breeding Red Admiral is moist wood edges where it can find its host plant, Stinging Nettles, (*Urtica doica*). This butterfly is so common you can find it from Maine to Florida, anywhere from the tops of mountains to the middle of a city as long as there are flowers to nectar.

Red Admiral usually has two broods in the north and has been noted to have three broods in the south. Besides being a generalist and being able to reproduce in quantity probably results in the success of this species.

This species has limited tolerance to freezing temperatures and will migrate southward during late fall. For some reason, southward migrations haven't been studied as fully as northward migrations. It has been known to return, sometimes in mass in late spring early summer.

### **GOLDENROD vs RAGWEED**



**Goldenrod** various species, in the Field/Meadow in back of Deer Meadow Drive Cottages, © Dick Harlow

Because this plant is so visible it has endured all kinds of hay fever miss-information over the years. It's colonies showing a mass of beautiful yellow flower heads that cover fields and meadows from August to September is a sight to behold whether walking or riding.



**Giant Goldenrod flowers, *Solidago gigantea***,  
© Dick Harlow

Up close and personal with Goldenrod you can appreciate the beauty of the flowers and also why they are so visible.

However, at the same time there is a non-descript, greenish flower head on a non-descript plant that produces pollen grains that cause human beings a great deal of congestion and unrest, literally!

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**Ragweed, *Ambrosia psilostachya*,**  
© Szczecin Dąbie

There are many species of ragweed. They are members of the Aster plant family also considered Composite Family of plants. All species of ragweed produce pollen that can cause allergic reactions in humans. It can conservatively be estimated that half of pollen-related cases causing hay fever or allergic reactions is due to Ragweed pollen.

Scientists have estimated that a single Ragweed plant can produce close to a billion pollen grains in a year. These pollen grains are carried by the wind and can stay in the air for days. By moving via the wind these pollen grains can cover large distances affecting individuals far from the source.



**Giant Ragweed, *Ambrosia trifida* inflorescences,** © Wikipedia

Our ragweed species was brought to Europe and it is flourishing throughout the continent; our natural Ragweed species we have here in the United States are considered abundant and diverse.

Please don't blame the beautiful goldenrod for your congested nasal and throat passages!

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**OBSERVATIONS**

**MAMMALS**

Gray Fox - 1  
Gray Squirrel - 2  
Eastern Chipmunk - 2  
Eastern Cottontail Rabbit - 1

**AMPHIBIANS**

American Bullfrog  
Leopard Frog  
Green Frog  
American Toad

**BUTTERFLIES**

Cabbage White  
Clouded Sulphur  
Black Swallowtail  
Monarch  
Viceroy  
Painted Lady  
Pearl Crescent  
Delaware Skipper

**Weather Tidbits**

**Month of AUGUST 1-31, 2017**

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

**PRECIPITATION**

**Total Precipitation: 79.6 mm or 3.1 inches**

**Overcast Days: 3**