

**AUGUST 15 – 31, 2018 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES**

**By Dick Harlow**

**EASTERN KINGBIRD**



**(1) Eastern Kingbird, *Tyrannus tyrannus*.**

© Dick Harlow

This image is a good example of what to look for in this species. White belly from throat to under-tail coverts. Black head and dark gray back, with a tail that has a white terminal band. This band gets worn and frayed during the summer, so it might be difficult to see. In the second image you can also make out the white band at the end of the tail. There is an orange-red patch on the middle of the crown that is seldom exposed, unless the bird is quite agitated!

As this species is a flycatcher, it needs to be near areas where there is plentiful food to catch: dragonflies, damselflies, house flies, butterflies, almost any insect that flies. However, its preferences are insects that spend part of their life history in water, which is probably why we will see this flycatcher in the vicinity of some type of water. This flycatcher has been recorded here at EastView every summer since 2013.

**AUGUST 15 – 31, 2018 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES**  
**By Dick Harlow**



**(2) Eastern Kingbird, *Tyrannus tyrannus*.**  
© Dick Harlow

Being a flycatcher, this specie's winter home is in South America. I saw many of our summer warbler, flycatcher and swallow species in South America when I travelled there in the months of October and December.

**AUGUST 15 – 31, 2018 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES**

**By Dick Harlow**

**WHO IS EATING MY TOMATO PLANTS**

**IS IT THIS ONE?**



© James Castner, University of Florida

**OR IS IT THIS ONE?**



© John Capinera, University of Florida

Count the stripes the top picture has seven slashes or stripes that look entirely different from the second picture that shows eight chevrons or V shaped markings.

If you grow tomatoes in the Northeast and you have this worm looking critter eating all your tomato leaves, then to you and to me it's called colloquially a Tomato Hornworm. But, is it really?

That is dependent on whether you have a hornworm that has white slashes or white V's on its side.

## AUGUST 15 – 31, 2018 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES

By Dick Harlow



**Tomato Hornworm**  
**Eight 'V' shaped markings**



**Tobacco Hornworm**  
**Seven backslash lines**

---

These two individuals are the larva of two very similar and large sphinx moths. One is called the Carolina Sphinx (Tobacco Hornworm) and the other is called the Five-spotted Hawkmoth, (Tomato Hornworm). One wouldn't think our tomatoes are dealing with a Tobacco Hornworm, but in fact that **is** exactly what is being seen here at EastView.

Let's look at the adult moths.



**(1) *Manduca sexta***, Carolina Sphinx Moth,  
© Lyle J. Buss, Univ. of Florida

The above picture (1) is the adult of the Tobacco Hornworm. Notice the orange dots on either side of its abdomen, a characteristic of both species.

## AUGUST 15 – 31, 2018 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES

By Dick Harlow



**(2) *Manduca quinquemaculata***

Five-spotted Hawkmoth, © John Capinera, Univ. of Florida

Picture (2) is the adult of the Tomato Hornworm and it as well has those orange dots along the side of the abdomen. I'm not sure if it is significant, except to say that the Carolina Sphinx seems to have more of them than the Five-spotted Hawkmoth.

If you look at each of these moths and their distribution in the Northeast United States, the only place that the Carolina Sphinx is not found is in Northern Maine.

How do I control them from eating my tomatoes? By being vigilant. Check the underside of the tomato leaves and remove the eggs. The reason to be vigilant is that these moths fly at night and will lay their eggs unobtrusively. Not until the eggs hatch will you know that anything is bothering your tomatoes. By then the hornworms are small, but because they are green and unless you are looking for them, they will go unnoticed! By the time you notice defoliation it is almost too late. If you see them when they are small you can control by picking them off; but if not noticed until the hornworms have defoliated half your tomato plants, then the stress on the tomato plant could be too much.

If you notice a hornworm with white egg-like attachments, you at least know that a parasitoid wasp has helped you out by attacking one or more of your hornworms.



Late stage larva of *Manduca sexta*, the tobacco hornworm, that has been parasitized by a parasitoid wasp. © Lyle J. Buss, Univ. of Florida.



# AUGUST 15 – 31, 2018 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES

By Dick Harlow

Please allow a worm with eggs attached to stay on your plants. It is now slowed down and on its way to death's door. As distasteful as it seems when the eggs (wasp larva) hatch they will use the hornworm as a food source, i.e. feed on the hornworm.

.....

## **OBSERVATIONS**

### **MAMMALS**

Eastern Cottontail  
Meadow Vole

### **AMPHIBIANS**

Bullfrog  
Lepaord Frog

### **BUTTERFLIES**

Cabbage White  
Clouded Sulphur  
Orange Sulphur  
Monarch  
Viceroy

### **DRAGONFLIES**

Black Meadowhawk  
Yellow-legged Meadowhawk  
Shadow Darner

### **Weather Tidbits**

**Month of AUGUST 15-31, 2017**

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

### **PRECIPITATION**

**Total Precipitation: 68.4 mm or 2.7 inches for the Month of August 1.3" below normal.**

**Overcast Days: 15**

**Rain Days: 5**