

MAY 15 – 31, 2017 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES FOR EASTVIEW

By Dick Harlow

GREEN HERON



(1) Green Heron, *Butorides virescens*,
© naturespics.com

Along with the Great Blue Heron, the Green Heron has been a consistent visitor to both the North and South Ponds at EastView ever since we arrived here in 2013.

If you ever visit Florida and go to their many wildlife refuges, these fellows are so tame they will stand on a railing a few feet in front of you. You won't have to take pictures through a window!

I have observed Green Herons here at EastView either on a sturdy bare branch overlooking either pond, or along the shore of the pond hunting for either fish, large insects or frogs and other amphibians.

If you see a dark blob on the shore that seems to move slowly and you have binoculars, be sure to train your 'bins' on that dark blob, as it probably is a Green Heron.

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(2) Green Heron, *Butorides virescens*, on southern shore of South Pond. © Dick Harlow

Pond edges, shores of streams and rivers, marshes even estuaries are the favorite habitat of these small herons.

In picture (2) please excuse the slightly out of focus image that was taken through our sun porch window of the Green Heron that visited South Pond on the 25th of April. This date was the earliest date a Green Heron had been observed here at EastView since 2013. The earliest it had been seen in the past 5 years was on the 14th of May.

An early date by itself is not necessarily an indication of climate change. By recording the first return dates of migrants, we become aware of changes both in their return dates and the overall change in climate. If there is an indication of a change in climate and if we live long enough and keep track of the first return dates, we will see that migrants will return earlier and earlier. All this collected data for EastView is factual data. One can imagine what it is on a much larger scale, e.g. North America.

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COLUMBINE



(1) Columbine, *Aquilegia Canadensis*,
Buttercup Family, © Dick Harlow

The columbine, a spring perennial flower, has an interesting relationship to a bird of prey. But, the Latin *Aquilegia* has the root *Aquila* meaning eagle. Looking at the flower you can see these long backward tubular spurred petals that are hooked at the ends. This part of the flower, to those who were responsible for naming the flower, looked to them like Eagle talons

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(2) Columbine, *Aquilegia Canadensis*,
individual flower, © Dick Harlow

The specific name *Aquilegia canadensis* (1) & (2) refers to the natural, native perennial, not the store-bought plants one can buy for a garden. *A. canadensis* has nodding flowers with normal petals and long backward red petals and protruding yellow anthers. It likes partial shade and rich humus.

A. vulgaris (3) is the European species with short spurs sold by garden suppliers because of its variety of colors, white, blue, red, violet or pink. Each of the flower spurs has nectar and therefore can attract any long-tongued bird or insect, e.g. hummingbirds or butterflies.

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(3) Columbine, *Aquilegia vulgaris*,
Buttercup Family, © Dick Harlow

This plant is easy to propagate and from my experience both *A. vulgaris* and definitely *A. canadensis* will readily self-seed in the garden. If you like to have a beautiful flowering plant initiate propagation and develop offspring in your garden this represents a good start.

BLACK SWALLOWTAIL



Black Swallowtail, *Papilio polyxenes*, Male,
© Dick Harlow

The Black Swallowtail, *Papilio polyxenes*, is one of the earliest swallowtails we could see around EastView. The above picture was taken the 8th of May last year. Unfortunately, the weather this May has been cloudy, windy, cool to rather cold; plus the amount of plants with nectar that are available in the middle of the month has been negligible. Some plants have been blooming, but only a few so far, which puts a limit on the butterflies that will be able to negotiate that food supply while the males are looking for a mate.

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We have three species of swallowtail butterflies that visit our gardens during the summer and fall: The Black, Tiger and Giant Swallowtail Butterfly. the Black Swallowtail Butterfly is usually the first followed by the Canadian Tiger Swallowtail and coming later in summer and early fall is the Giant Swallowtail.

One of the first flowers sought after by the Black Swallowtail is a member of the Carrot Family of plants called Golden Alexanders, *Zizia aurea*, a spring yellow flowered nectar plant. The Tiger Swallowtail can be seen on various varieties of Lilac and the Giant Swallowtail can be seen on Buddleia.

WHITE-TAILED DEER



(1) White-tailed Deer, *Odocoileus virginianus*,
Doe, © Dick Harlow

Picture (1) was taken in early May of this year (2017) and shows a couple of things. The thinner tan to brown coat of summer is not there yet, because this doe is beginning to shed and still has its winter coat which looks gray-brown and scruffy indicating that she is shedding. Notice the bare spot near the middle of the back of this doe. It looks to me as though that could possibly be from a wound caused by a tick that either dropped off or was rubbed off. If not, then some other injury.



(2) White-tailed Deer, *Odocoileus virginianus*,
Doe © Dick Harlow

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Picture (2) was taken in late June of last year. Notice the rich brown of her thinner summer coat. The doe in picture (1) will look like picture (2) next month. Deer develop this heavier coat of gray brown hair in the fall to help them survive the winter.

OBSERVATIONS

MAMMALS

White-tailed Deer – 2 Doe
Gray Squirrel – a individuals
Chipmunk – 2 individuals
Eastern Cottontail – individual
Meadow Vole – individual

FISH

Bait Fish (Type Unknown)
Goldfish (still surviving)

AMPHIBIANS

American Bullfrog (3)
Gray Tree Frog (heard)

BUTTERFLIES

Cabbage White
Silvery Blue

Weather Tidbits

Month of MAY 1-31, 2017

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

PRECIPITATION

Total Precipitation: 95.4 mm or 3.8 inches

Overcast Days: 16

TEMPERATURE

Mean Temp: 14.7 C⁰/58.5⁰F

High Temp: 29.7 C⁰/85.4⁰F

Low Temp: 1.6 C⁰/ 34.9⁰F