**BUTTERFLY FIELD TRIP TO INDIAN SPRINGS METROPARK – JULY 28, 2018**

**Leader: Doris Applebaum**

The morning started out cool for a July day, but it warmed up fairly quickly from the mid-60s to the mid-70s. The large group of 23 people provided lots of eyes to spot butterflies, though such a large number meant that we needed some very cooperative butterflies if everyone was going to see them.

Some butterflies did cooperate, but others among the 17 species unfortunately were seen by only part of the group.

We did get a “swallowtail grand slam” by recording all 4 of the swallowtails that can be seen in our area. The large number of 10 Monarchs was actually expected, because this year is the best for that species in a long time (and it’s hard to get tired of seeing Monarchs). One of the last species seen was a cooperative Viceroy which allowed everyone to learn the difference between the Monarch and its lookalike.

Butterfly species seen: Black Swallowtail, Giant Swallowtail, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Spicebush Swallowtail, Cabbage White, Clouded Sulphur, Orange Sulphur, Great Spangled Fritillary, Pearl Crescent, Eastern Comma, Red-spotted Purple, Viceroy, Common Ringlet, Common Wood-Nymph, Monarch, Northern Broken-Dash (skipper), and Dun Skipper.

Because OAS field trippers are interested in all aspects of nature, we didn’t ignore the other creatures we encountered. We were able to identify 5 kinds of dragonflies (Eastern Amberwing, Eastern Pondhawk, White-faced Meadowhawk, Widow Skimmer (female), and Halloween Pennant.

A pair of Sandhill Cranes, a Green Heron, a family of Eastern Kingbirds, and several other birds were seen.

Some Painted Turtles were basking in a pond, but the most exciting animal we came across was a different kind of reptile—a large Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake. Only a few people were lucky enough to see it as it slithered across the path. Some folks even heard it rattle. It was certainly the most unexpected event on a very pleasant nature-filled walk.

Pictures of some of the butterflies seen.

  

 

 

 

  

