

Tales From Along The Trail...

Eastern Tiger Swallowtail

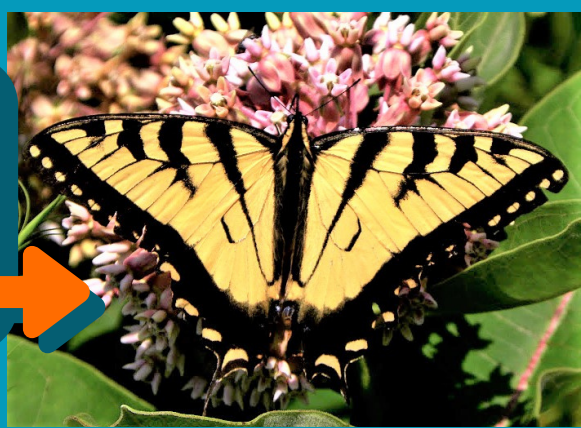
(Papilio Glaucus)

with Naturalist Cathy Rickes 



Cool Cats: That's not bird poop – it's a caterpillar!
 Young swallowtail caterpillars look like bird droppings. As they grow, they change into their next disguise as they transform into bright, green "snakes" with fake eyespots. They can even rear up and release "a bad smell" to repel predators. Our wooded parks are home to the caterpillars' host foodplants including tulip tree, big-tooth aspen, and black cherry.

Male "Tigers"
 This swallowtail male is showing off its vibrant tiger-like stripes. Visit Plum Creek park to see the native wildflower plantings and the pollinators they attract. This male is dining on the nectar of one of the swallowtails favorites, common milkweed.



Female Look-alikes
 Female swallowtails can develop into two color forms. These non-poisonous beauties both have a "blue crescent" crowning the edge of their wings. The dark morph mimics the distasteful pipevine butterfly (more common in southern Ohio) Colors can start to fade as the butterflies "age" and show wing damage.

"Puddle Clubs"
 Swallowtails will flock along the banks of the Cuyahoga River busily engaging in some outdoor dining as they siphon up "non-nectar" nutrition from the mineral rich mud. Look for them at Tannery Park. Male swallowtails love to visit puddles often forming "all boys clubs".



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photos by Tracey Johnson