**Ask the Biologist**

**Q:** What is the difference between albinism and leucism?

**A:** Leucism, where there are white patches, or in some cases all white fur, is a rare condition. Albinism, where the animal completely lacks pigment, even in the eyes, is even more rare than leucism. Both leucistic and albinistic animals tend to have high rates of mortality because they are so conspicuous to predators. Thanks to Eric Fedde of Stone Ridge, NY for sending us this photo of an albino chipmunk.

MICHAEL V. SCHIAVONE
CERTIFIED WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST®

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**Going Green**

Several readers sent us photos of caterpillars they found while enjoying the outdoors.

**Magnificent!** Those are caterpillars of two of our most charismatic moths, the cecropia moth and the Luna moth. These two feed on a variety of hardwood trees and shrub plants, and although they are among our largest caterpillars, they are rarely seen in this stage. The adult moths also are very large, showy, and amazing to see flying as they flutter like a large piece of paper in the wind, seemingly directionless. They both tend to be dusk or night flyers that do not eat or visit flowers, and so despite being fairly abundant in our environment, they are not frequently seen. Also, they both have very abbreviated life spans as adults, living for only a few days to mate and lay their eggs.

JERRY CARLSON, DEC RESEARCH SCIENTIST

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**Life Cycle of Monarchs**

Thanks to Julie Jorling of Saranac Lake and Amy Gould of Jamestown for sending us photos of different stages of the monarch’s life. When the monarch caterpillar is large enough, it attaches its hind feet to an overhead surface and shrugs off its skin. The soft green body hardens into the shape of the chrysalis, and inside the body reforms into an adult butterfly. In this picture you can see the wings as the butterfly gets ready to break out and begin its new life. Adult monarchs feed on the nectar of many kinds of flowers, getting the sugars they need for flight to Mexico. Females will lay eggs on milkweed, and the caterpillar cycle will begin again.

Read more about monarchs in “Got Milkweed” in the June 2016 Conservationist.

KATHLEEN O’BRIEN, DEC BIOLOGIST
Red-haired Beauty
I thought you might be interested in this photo of a very large eastern coyote. It was standing in the grass just off the right side of the highway. I pulled over to get a few photos, and it ran back into the woods when it became aware of my presence.
JOHN SERRAO
FLORIDA, NY

Wow, that is a great photo, and the coloring on the coyote is beautiful. Coyote coats vary from blonde or reddish blonde to dark tan washed with black. Read more in the June 2014 Conservationist article “Rise of the Eastern Coyote.”

At Last
I enjoyed reading “Worm Fishing for Stream Trout,” in the April 2019 Conservationist, which mentions the DEC Beaverkill Campground. My dad and I fished there every year on our annual fishing trip to Roscoe, NY. Last year, my dad caught three brown trout in front of the Beaverkill Covered Bridge while sitting in a lawn chair—his first trout success in several years. He passed away in February at 86 years of age.
JOHN FEMIA
ROTTERDAM, NY

Thanks for sharing your memories of your father with us. It is wonderful that you had that experience together. The Beaverkill Covered Bridge also graced the cover of the April 2018 Conservationist.

Quite a Catch
I captured this picture of an osprey flying over Chautauqua Lake carrying a black crappie.
ERICK DURICK
AKRON, NY

Lucky shot Erick! Ospreys catch fish using their long, hooked talons. An osprey sometimes plunges deep enough into water to momentarily submerge its entire body. Osprey will typically orient the fish head-first in flight to help be more aerodynamic.

Thanks for all the guesses for what was the pic on page 39 of the June issue. It was a bear!