

Newport Forest

September 6 2001

1:45 - 7:00 pm

Weather: no precip., LM 34 C, FCF 24 C, sunny, clear, no breeze

Purpose: maintenance - trails, Bumblebee survey

Participants: Rob Gegear, Kee, Nic

We did we best we could to juggle two quite different activities. We started with Nic helping Rob record his capture data in the LM while I went down to Fleming Creek to scout out other good Bumblebee locales.

Rob found only three species in the LM but I found my first Bumblebee nest by following an extraordinarily large individual flying somewhat erratically around until it descended to the base of the old Beech “wolf” tree and promptly crawled down a hole under some dead leaves. Rob came down a little later and confirmed that it was a *Bombus impatiens* nest and that I had seen the queen. As she emerged for yet another erratic flight, Rob explained that the workers had stopped gathering nectar and pollen and the queen was searching for a place to winter over, possibly under bark on a dead tree (a popular choice). The hole, said Rob, was probably an abandoned mouse nest.

Earlier, while searching for good bee spots, I discovered an interesting new bug on a flower. It had a pattern on its wings quite reminiscent of the Harlequin Bug (which does not occur in our area), but with light and dark colours reversed. (See drawing.)

We went to the RL, where we saw a few Bumblebees that we had already logged. Rob counted every find, however, noting males and females.

Time was passing quickly so Nic and I decided to continue measuring the BCT, while Rob followed us, looking for new Bumblebees in the forest. We installed new posts at the 300-, 400-, 500- (HB), 600-, 700-, 800-, 900-, 1000-, 1100-, 1200-, and 1300-metre marks, the last on the river bluffs. The distance from the last stake to the sign on the RL is 63 metres. This makes the entire trail 1363 metres long (not the 1.5 km I had estimated last summer).

While we were on the HB, Rob spotted a Raccoon sleeping in the crotch of a Beech. It took no notice of us at all. Throughout our walks to-day we were amazed at the number of spiders in evidence, many of them very large Araneus-

types, but a possible Argiopid and, up on the HB, what might be my first Micrathena (a spider with a triangular abdomen). Nic noted and we all agreed that there were very few birds around, either to hear or see. I can record only five Canada Geese seen out on the river down by the shallows at the bend.

Rob was somewhat surprised at his reduced “take,” noting that dry conditions had reduced the productions of many flowers. He caught several *Psithyrus*, however. These are parasitic on *B. fervidus* and *impatiens* nests, the queen going in to lay her own eggs, which the *Bombus* workers would then have to raise (somewhat like the Cowbird).

New Species

<i>Bombus impatiens</i>	LM
<i>Bombus vagans</i>	LM
<i>Bombus perplexus</i>	TR/RSF
<i>Bombus grisecollis</i>	UM
<i>Bombus fervidus</i>	UM
<i>Psithyrus citrinus</i>	LM

Note: Rob says that the made-up common names “Impatient Bumblebee,” “Fervid Bumblebee,” etc. ought not to be used and have never been approved by any international body on nomenclature.