

Newport Forest

July 16 2003

2:15 - 12:00 pm

Weather: prec. 4 mm; sun/cloud; N < 10 km/h; LM 26 C; FCF 22 C

Purpose: three-day stay

Participants: Pat and Kee

As soon as we arrived, I checked the trees in both cores. All seem to be healthy and growing but, as the rainfall continues to decrease, they will need watering soon. I went down to the creek to check for aquatic life (if any). Water striders and whirligigs were both plentiful, feeding on what the creek brought in, there being little to eat of local provenance. There was still no algae to speak of on the rocks and I saw only one school of 9 small minnows. There were other minnows there, taking small insects from the water's surface, but they were fast and the water was just murky enough to conceal them before I could even tell how big they were.

Walking to the North core along Edgar's Trail, I spotted a northern Short-tailed Shrew that had died of shock (as is usual for these high-strung little beasts). I deposited the corpse under the big log by the trailer, not realizing that I was setting in motion a train of events that would lead to a remarkable sighting by Pat two days later. At the same time, Pat was inspecting the sunflowers that Eva and her great grandchildren had planted at the edge of HBF, when she spotted a newly emerged sphinx moth that turned out to be a new species. (See list.)

Pat and I took a walk down to Eva's Hairpin, where we watched for birds for a while. I took a nice picture of Pat looking out over the creek bend. (2P) I thought we had a new aquatic plant in the shallows there, but Pat pointed out that she had already logged it by the bridge. It looked a like an Arrowhead, but had wide, fleshy leaves.

Before supper, we walked the Thames Trail (formerly referred to as the HB Trail, etc.) Pat did very well, keeping up throughout. As we paused along the upper river bluffs, I spotted our first Dogbane Beetle (See new species).

We ate after dark, then watched the Raccoons that came for the food. A mother came with two or three cubs. The cubs enjoyed raiding the bird feeder, while the mother sensibly devoured kibble in the nook.

After breakfast, we went up to the tree station to add new roof strips (translucent tarp material) and to do some serious weeding. I clipped around the station inside

and then we watered Lorne's trees (again).

Back at the trailer, I went down to FC to look around and spotted a very large fly with a peculiar colouring. (See illustration at end of report.) I don't think it was a Robber Fly, but it might just have been a Mydas Fly. Pat, meanwhile, caught a beautiful Cuckoo Wasp in her insect jar.

After lunch I watered all the trees I could find in the south core, about 26. With the remaining water, I also did about 12 trees in the North Core.

Back at the trailer, I spotted a Robber Fly eating an European Skipper in the goldenrod by the S Core. We took a break in the nook, where Pat saw the Grosbeak family arrive for dinner: a male, a female, and one recently fledged young bird. It seemed to want to be fed, rather than feed. Pat also observed that, while every previous visit has brought out a Chipmunk or two, this visit has produced none. Where have they gone? Pat wondered if the GHO ate them.

Before supper we went down to MB to search for new plants. I noticed that many of the species there had red stems, not only the young Cottonwood seedlings, but a creeping plant, willows, dogbanes, and so on. Is there a reason for that? We examined the Dogbanes closely to see if there were new species there. We also noticed several Mayflies, including a large, dusky-coloured species and a smaller brownish one.

We drove to Wardsville to replenish our supplies, with a light rain falling that came to barely a millimetre when it was done. I walked the FCT while Pat made supper. After supper I walked up to close the gate. On the way back a bat flew right over my head. It was larger than the little Browns that we see in London. The coons came again tonight. I went looking for Skunks and startled another mother coon in BCF. She sort of warbled to her young as a warning. At the trailer, two males came, one very fat.

Newport Forest

July 18 2003

12:01 am - 5:20 pm

Weather: prec. 1 mm; clear; N < 10 km/h; LM 28 C; FCF 23 C

Purpose: three-day stay

Participants: Pat, Kee

Before I was even out of bed, Pat had spotted two burying beetles making off with the corpse of the shrew I had placed under the log two days earlier. They

dragged it a total of about two metres, attempting to bury the animal in leaf litter beside the path. She observed enough field marks to id the beetles later. (See new species.)

Pat set out for the West Meadow to search for new plants, while I watered the remaining trees in the North Core. According to my count over the two days, we have about 26 trees going in the South core and about 37 in the North Core. This does not count volunteers or trees that we've forgotten about. The Tulip Trees in both cores have just begun to show signs of heat stress and UV damage. The Large-toothed Aspens, on the other hand, seem to be thriving.

Meanwhile, in the West Meadow, Pat found a new (alien sp.) Viper's Bugloss. She also startled a Woodcock, watched a Yellow Warbler, and thought she saw another Hickory Hairstreak.

We rounded out what was left of our time at Newport Forest with a visit from Eva Newport and Jordan and Karissa. Walking down to the creek, Jordan kicked at a mushroom. I was drawn to the scene by Eva's scolding. Jordan had kicked over a new species for our fungus list, an Amanita called the Yellow Blusher.

Butterflies:

Cabbage White (Tr); Clouded Sulfur (LM); Eyed Brown (FCF); Great Spangled Fritillary (FC/Br); Least Skipper (RL); Monarch (Tr); Red Admiral (FCF); Tiger Swallowtail (FC/Br); Virginia Creeper Sphinx Moth (HBF/LM)

Dragon Flies:

Blue Dasher (f-Tr); Common White Tail (f-Tr)

Birds: (24)

American Crow (RSF); American Robin (FCF); American Woodcock (WM)
Blue Jay (Tr); Cedar Waxwing (RL); Chipping Sparrow (UM/Rd); Common Yellowthroat (FCF); Downy Woodpecker (FCF); Eastern Kingbird (LM); Eastern Towhee (BCF); Field Sparrow (HY); gray Catbird (FCF); Great Blue Heron (FC/TR); Mourning Dove (Tr); Northern Cardinal (Tr); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); Red-winged Blackbird (TR); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (Tr); Song Sparrow (protecting nest) (LM); Turkey Vulture (LM); Vesper sparrow (UM); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr); Wood Thrush (FCF); Yellow Warbler (with nest in HT at

GF/WR)

New species:

Yellow Blusher	<i>Amanita flavorubescens</i>	jn/KD GF/FC
Viper's Bugloss	<i>Echium vulgare</i>	PD WM
Clasping-leaved Dogbane	<i>Apocynum</i> sp.	PD MB
Black mustard	<i>Brassica nigra</i>	PD R
Spiny-leaved Sow Thistle	<i>Sonchus asper</i>	PD HBF/LM
Grey-headed Coneflower	<i>Ratibida pinnata</i>	PD LM/BCF
Blue Dasher	<i>Pachydiplax longipennis</i>	KD LM
Dogbane Beetle	<i>Chrysochus auratus</i>	KD RB
Round-necked Burying Beetle	<i>Necrophorus orbicollis</i>	PD GF/FC
Virginia Creeper Sphinx moth	<i>Darapsa myron</i>	PD HBF/LM
Cuckoo Wasp	[<i>Chrysis coeruleans</i>]	pd/KD Tr
Robber Fly	[<i>Promachus</i>] sp.	KD LM
Northern Short-tailed Shrew	<i>Blarina brevicauda</i>	KD LM/HBF

unknown fly:

Phenology: Wood Nymphs mating; Damselflies mating

note: "jn" = Jordan Newport

"HY" = hydro lines

"RB" = River Bluffs

"WM" = West Meadow

"MB" = Mussel Beach