

Newport Forest

August 8-9 2004

2:05 - 5:10 pm

Weather: prec.* 84 mm; calm, clear; LM 28 C; FCF 26 C

Purpose: Overnight stay

Participants: Pat & Kee

Shortly after we arrived at the farm gate, we met up with Todd Janik & son Richard, who had driven up from Windsor to meet us and to inspect their property next door (to the west). After a very brief walk in their open field (Janik senior is not in the best shape), we regathered at the trailer where I discovered son Richard to be an avid conservationist and greatly interested in some of the plants and animals I told him about. Richard also showed great interest in the Nature Conservancy. We are therefore reassured about the Janik property remaining protected.

At 4:30 we had to leave the property for two hours to attend the annual West Elgin Nature Club picnic. Almost as soon as we returned I was off to the Sand Bar, a recently discovered (and possibly new) feature of the property. About 30-40 m downstream of the tip of the point bar, the river has deposited a considerable quantity of sand, a "bar" that is slightly inland and not really in the river at all. I intended to install a pitfall trap for tiger beetles. but went off the trail too early, spending the next 20 minutes in an exhausting stumble through vines, deadfall, impassible thickets, dead hanging branches and crumbling banks. By the time I regained the trail just shy of the river bluffs, my breath was coming in gasps. Good for the heart, wot?

There was still light to see when I installed the trap. I walked out over the HB and came back to the trailer through the BCf, noting a few fireflies still active. That night we saw two raccoons, one of which browsed steadily through the kibble thrown into the grass, the other sitting on the bird-feeding platform and eating seed. The stars were brilliant, as usual, and much later a quarter moon rose slowly in the east.

Next morning Pat went down to the bridge to look around. At the base of the old black maple half way down the trail, she found a Russian Leather Beetle in the sawdust that has been steadily leaking out from a hole in the base of this tree for several years. This was a large, impressive specimen with a smell like old leather. It was already dead, but in an excellent state of preservation. (S) I found a small,

* J131 48 mm; Au02 16 mm; Au03 20 mm

brownish longhorn beetle resting on the seat of a chair beside the trailer (S).

Both forest cores continue to flourish, with the exception of a few White Ashes and Silver Maples which have leaf spot (probably from UV damage).

Pat and I went to the river, where we hunted for insects for a while. About halfway up the bluffs, Pat found an interesting burrow that was slightly greater than 1" in diameter, with empty turtle eggs (probably Spiny Softshells) littering the entrance. Possibilities: snake; Short-tailed Weasel; mole.

We walked the trail across the bluffs and entered the RSF, where Pat found our second bird's nest fungus growing plentifully along a small log. (S) When we arrived at the sand bar, I exhumed the trap after taking a picture. (P) There were no tiger beetles inside, merely several small brightly coloured ground beetles all of the same species. (S) Pat found many interesting plants at the sand bar, including, appropriately enough, a Sandbar Willow. A new *Convulvulus* also crept across the sand. I saw several examples of a black sand wasp leaving and entering burrows in a mound, but was unable to capture any with the net.

We left the Sand Bar, got to the trail, but soon left it to walk straight up the side of the HB, bearing continually east, until we reached an upland meadow which has been very slow to tree-in. It is about 50 m long and 5 to 15 m wide. We then crossed that end of the HB, where I collected a dingy-looking Milky mushroom, as well as a Sweetbread. After making our way slowly down the BC side through heavy thorn trees and tall vegetation, we were once more on the trail and headed back to the trailer.

While resting in the nook, I spotted a distinctly undersized Redbelly at the feeder. (fledged young) At this point, Pat took a nap while I walked the FCT. On Tower Hill, I spotted a beautiful Carabid beetle under a log, but this turned out to be a common one (see species list below).

Phenology: Asters starting to bloom

birds: (28)

American Crow (BCF); American Goldfinch* (LM/H1); American Robin (HBF); Baltimore Oriole** (LM); Bank Swallow (TR); Black-capped Chickadee (GF/E); Blue Jay (BCF); Canada Goose (TR); Catbird (BCF); Cedar Waxwing (TR); Common Flicker* (BCF); Common Yellowthroat (BCF); Downy Woodpecker

(Tr); Eastern Kingbird (TR); Eastern Towhee (BCF); Eastern Wood Peewee (LM); Great Blue Heron (TR); Mourning Dove (RB); Northern Cardinal (GF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (Tr); Ruffed Grouse (RSF); Screech Owl (GF); Song Sparrow (RL); Spotted Sandpiper (TR); Yellow Warbler (RB)

* female with 6 eggs (Notes say “CFL.”), ** with fledged young

New species (12)

Fungi

Striate Birds Nest Fungus	<i>Cyathus striatus</i>	RSF pd/KD Au09/04
Sweetbread Mushroom	<i>Clitopilus prunulus</i>	HB KD Au09/04
“Cardboard Milky”	<i>Lactarius [imperceptus]</i>	HB KD Au09/04
“Grey”	<i>Hohenbuehelia atrocaerulea</i>	HB kd/GT J128/04

(left over from last species list ID'd by Greg Thorn = GT)

Insects

Russian Leather Beetle	<i>Osmoderma eremicola</i>	GF/FC pd/KD Au09
European Ground Beetle	<i>Carabus nemoralis</i>	TH KD Au09/04
Longhorn Beetle	sFam. Cerambycinae	Tr KD Au09/04
	(possibly the Rustic Borer <i>Xylotrochus</i> sp.)	
Small Ground Beetle	[<i>Bembidion</i>] sp.	SB KD Au09/04
	specs. 3.5 mm, straw yellow elytra with three black cross-bands	

Plants

Green Amaranth	<i>Amaranthus retroflexus</i>	SB PD Au09/04
Hedge Bindweed	<i>Convolvulus sepium</i>	SB PD Au09/04
Sandbar Willow	<i>salix exigua</i>	SB PD Au09/04
Horsetail	<i>Equisetum arvense</i>	RB PD Au09/04

SB = Sand Bar: a deposit of sand left by latest floods, 10 m x 3-4 m downstream side of point bar