

Newport Forest

Monday August 15 2005

2:55 - 3:30 pm (Wed.)

Weather: prec. 15 mm; RH 53 %; N \leq 10 kmh; LM 28 C; FCF 25 C

Purpose: three-day stay

Participants: Pat, Kee

Although Fleming Creek is flowing a little more briskly after the recent (light) rain, the lower rapids are still exposed. Inspecting her gourds, Pat found a new Chrysomelid beetle on one of the plants, a cucumber beetle (See **new species**.)

Inspecting the regen zone, I reached the conclusion that most of the summer's growth is now ending. Some trees are setting buds, others have stopped producing new leaves, although the poplars (3 spp.) keep going.

Finishing the inspection, I noticed an attractive moth on the grass at the edge of the mulch pile. It had uniformly smoky grey wings edged in white, the hind wing having two small orange dots near the rear margin. Total wingspread was < 2 cm and the pose was spread, not closed. The closest insect to this in the moth book was the White-fringed Pyrausta Moth, *Pyrausta niveiciliaris*, but I cannot add it to the list without confirmation. We saw lots of Katydid and Preying Mantis around, including one on Pat's hand. (2P)

We went to the River Landing, me carrying the canoe. We startled a GBH down at the rapids. It flew upriver to the mouth of the creek and perched there in a tree. We spotted a Giant Swallowtail in the vegetation nearby and I found I could get reasonably close. (10P) Pat found an orb web spun by a Black-and-Yellow Argiope. (2P) On the beach there were just two ephemeral ponds left and these had a new (coccal) alga on them. (S)

Back at the trailer we were amused to see a Chipmunk on an outing with two of its young. These engaged in a prolonged wrestling match in the grass by the table.

After supper we went for a visit at Eva's. It was nearly dark when we returned and I took my gate-walk immediately. It was still just light enough for me to notice a few things: a) The Bur Oak and American Basswood are in mast, with a heavy volume of seed, b) One of the Red Oak gallery trees looked like someone had emptied about 500 loads of buckshot at it, each leaf peppered with from 10 - 30 holes. This was apparently a "shothole fungus." The responsible organism, *Coccomyces* sp. is not known to affect oak, but its alternate generation, *Cylindrosporium*, is known on Quercus. So it seemed reasonable to guess the

genus, at any rate.

On the way back from the gate, I was almost back to the gallery forest when I saw a woodcock fly right in front of me, its form clearly silhouetted against the fading sunset. This is a bird we see perhaps once a year. Back at the trailer, Pat had heard a few more birds to expand her list. The katydid chorus started up slowly.

After dark, the first animal to show up was one we hadn't seen during our night vigils since the very first one in 2001. An (adult) possum. Later, a large raccoon showed up at the base of the BM and later still, a young (subadult) raccoon showed up at the trailer steps, very likely one of the kits that had started life in the raccoon box.

Before retiring, Pat examined the blossoms on her gourd plants, only to discover that each one had a Black-horned Tree Cricket in it. What were they doing? Each had its head buried in the anthers of male flowers, as if eating either anthers or pollen. She also saw a Southern Flying Squirrel at the hickory tray feeder. We sat outside a while longer, noting a Little Brown Bat. We can be confident about the species now since we have realized that there is no other bat in our area that small.

Next morning, we went to the Upper Meadow to open the gate. Pat decided to walk along the lip of the ER and found a Preying Mantis eating a Cicada several times larger than itself, gripping the prize tightly in its raptorial forelegs and munching contentedly away on the cicada which had not quite died yet. While Pat searched for new butterflies, I clipped the walkways in the TS, moved the remaining trees from Plot B to Plot A, then began to re-cut the edges of Plot B, preparatory to turning the soil and adding sand/topsoil. I also watered the trees by the gate and in the TS. Pat reported that the UM was "full of butterflies."

After lunch, we walked to the TR, carrying paddles and lifejackets, then took a trip up to Clam Island, finding it nearly devoid of living specimens, but with about ten sp. of valves lying about, hinting at past glories. At the island, we spotted a new sp. of Damselfly, with a bright red proximal patch on each forewing. This was our first American Rubyspot. (See **new species**.) We then got back in the canoe and drifted down the river in most pleasant fashion until we passed the landing, descended the rapids (with one or two bumps) in search of the Sand Bar in the RSF. I was surprised that the sandbar was well past the point, so far past that I lost heart in finding it. So we turned back upstream, having a heavy time of it ascending the rapids. Once more out of the canoe, Pat spotted another

new damsel fly, the Blue-Fronted Dancer.

We did not have long to wait for sunset after supper. There was little action, except for Screech Owls calling from various locations. We speculated about the meaning of the calls. Did they establish hunting territories? After Pat went to bed, I sat out on the deck, surprised to see the same young raccoon come right to the foot of the deck, looking up at me quizzically, as if to say, "Whatcha got for me?" I had some Cheeze Nips on hand and threw several down for it. Later, I saw the possum again, enjoying the DBs we had set out earlier.

Next morning we went to the TR. Pat remained on the bluffs bench for a while to watch the river, while I continued on into the RSF and the Sandbar. The American Hazels were healthy and growing. The Pawpaw was in steady state (not growing, but healthy) and the Witch Hazel was in a bit of trouble, several of its leaves damaged and looking dry. The way to the river was now blocked by Stinging Nettle, which has taken over the entire sandbar - perhaps in revenge for my earlier wholesale slaughter of this plant. I found a mystery ash growing nearby that I could not identify. It did not appear to be a Blue Ash and I wondered if it might be the elusive Black Ash that we have yet to find on the property.

Returning along the TRT, I started up a Ruffed Grouse while passing under the power lines on the Hogsback. I noted that the beeches were not in such bad shape as I had thought during my previous visit. Several remain in good shape and may all belong to the same clonal stand. Also the Bitternut trees are apparently not all dead. The trail was littered with their nuts as I ascended the HB trail.

Before leaving for London, I took the 2pm weather:

prec. 0 mm; RH 58%; N \leq 15 kmh; LM 29 C; FCF 25 C

New species:

Little Brown Bat	<i>Myotis lucifugus</i>	KD Tr
American Rubyspot	<i>Hetaerina americana</i>	PD CI
Blue-fronted Dancer	<i>Argia apicalis</i>	PD RL
Spotted Cucumber Beetle	<i>Diabrotica undecimpunctata</i>	pd/KD Tr
Shothole Fungus on Oak	[<i>Coccomyces</i> sp.]	KD GF

Phenology:

New England Asters coming into bloom; Bitternut Hickory dropping fruit.