

Newport Forest

Saturday July 29 2006

3:25 - 7:20pm

**Weather:** prec. 30mm\*; RH 78%; sn/hz; SSW 0-15kh; LM 34C; FCF 31C

**Purpose:** Thames Talbot Work Bee

**Participants:** Pat and Kee plus Muriel Andreae (Peter Andreae), Jane Bowles (Andre LaChance), Terry Grawey, Terry Keep, Bruce Parker (Joel & Hayley), Bernie VanDenBelt

We came a day early for the Thames Talbot Work Bee on our property, the better to be prepared. We brought in some lumber, as well as extra food and drinks. We let the girls go almost immediately and we did not see them again until Pat spied them from the pipe bridge an hour later and 100 m upstream. They returned with her to the Nook to explore the BM. (Note: each girl approached the coon box, sniffed once and went away. Does that mean it's occupied or were they merely reacting to a residual scent?)

Pat spent some very fruitful time browsing inside the GF. Intending to find our lost peanut feeder, she found instead our first Amanita, a Fly Agaric. She also spotted a Blue-fronted Dancer. Note for future: We should browse the GF more systematically during a future visit.

Meanwhile, I tried to ID a day-flying Noctuid in the LM. I captured it in the viewing bottle and went through our moth book with great care. Unfortunately, I could not ID it as either a Corn Ear Borer or a Signate Melanolophia, the two closest lookalikes.

After supper I was sitting out in the Nook, when I heard a fairly substantial tree fall over somewhere upstream near FC. Had the girls climbed a dead tree only to trigger the crash? After inspecting the trees in the regen zone (a few Aspens with a leaf-miner "infection"), we headed up to the TS, from which Pat walked up to visit with Nina. I did some clipping at the TS, dismayed to see that I was soaked with sweat after some 20 min of exertion with the clippers.

Back at the trailer, we saw an Eastern Cottontail cross ER from the LM into the GF. After dark, I spotted a Southern Flying Squirrel on the SH tray feeder. Two Gray Tree Frogs called back & forth from Eva's Wood and a bit later, we could hear an Eastern Screech Owl calling distantly from the FCF. A large beetle flying about the lamps in the trailer next drew our attention. A very large "June Bug" turned out to be another new species, a Grapevine Beetle or Spotted Pelidnota.

The girls, who had been gone since 4:30 pm, now showed up at 10:00 with appetites intact and in an active frame of mind. They must have slept in the

woods somewhere (or, less romantically, under the trailer). A large male-looking raccoon that I could not identify positively as Greylock, showed up to eat kibble from the log. The girls, meanwhile, busied themselves with a lamp I had hung from one of the young walnuts by the weather station. They had both climbed the walnut to inspect the lamp, which slid unsteadily along the branch it hung from until it rested against the tree. The lamp swayed and banged for a few minutes in the darkness when, suddenly, its flame fell to earth. This could only mean that the girls had succeeded in unscrewing the base. I could not suppress a belly-laugh. A little later, one of the female raccoons showed up to eat kibble from the road along the trailer. As she ate sedately, the girls moved cautiously across the road and crept under the trailer.

I had to make a long distance call around midnight, so I walked up the road to the end of the GF, where the altitude put me in touch with a local cellsite. Completing the call, I turned to go back to the trailer and had not taken ten steps, when the girls showed up, panting. They had tracked me by scent from the trailer - or had homed in on the sound of my voice. Impressive either way, as the distance was about 300m. After one quick snack, they shot off again into the night.

The lady coon showed up again at the SH tray feeder in the company of another female - possibly her sister. (Where were their litters? Could one of them be the girls' mother and could the other be the mother of the more advanced litter we spotted two weeks ago? If so, could Greylock be the father of both litters? Questions abound amid very few answers.) At 1:10 my reverie was interrupted by snarls and screams coming from the front of the trailer. I found Thelma standing her ground facing the steps, where a large head emerged from the space beneath the steps to make a threatening sound. Thelma refused to be intimidated. It struck me that the girls were "finding a place" in the local social hierarchy and would not let themselves be driven out.

The girls next came into the trailer and looked like they might fall asleep on Pat's bench seat. No such luck. They started to explore the table, knocking over jars and boxes, so I put them out. At 2:30 I found them up on the SH tray feeder, exploring some lower branches. After that I went to bed, sleeping poorly in the hot and breathless weather.

At 12 noon next day, Jane Bowles showed up to begin supervising the TTLT work bee. Andre had brought his latest digital camera and promised me some new photos for the Newport Forest website. By 1pm, everyone was there. I took the weather: prec. 0mm; RH 85%; hz/sn; calm; LM 33C; FCF 27C. One of the children found a green stick insect (nymph) near the big log in the Nook. (P)

We divided into three teams. I took Terry Grawey, Bernie VanDenBelt and Bruce Parker into the depths of the RSF to scrape trail, while Jane took the Andreaes onto the river bluffs to remove a dense stand of (invasive) Russian Olive trees. Terry Keep worked on the steps of the FCT, repairing or replacing eight of them. Pat monitored the kids, helping them spray leaf designs on the trailer.

After everyone except the Parkers had left, we called the girls and searched for them along the 2BT. Here, we came upon a 8" dbh BH that had fallen right across the trail (yesterday's crashing noise, no doubt). We had to work around it . . . Still no girls after walking the whole circuit. It began to rain, pouring heavily for 125 minutes and leaving some 10 mm in the rain gauge. The Parkers left. Still no girls. We called and whistled. No girls. So we just left!

**Birds: (28)**

American Crow (FCF); American Goldfinch (LM); American Robin (GF); Black-capped Chickadee (LM); Blue Jay (BCF/LM); Canada Goose (TR); Cedar Waxwing (LM); Common Grackle (LM); Common Flicker (BCF); Common Yellowthroat (BCF/LM); Field Sparrow (LM); Gray Catbird (Tr); Great Blue Heron (FCF); Great Crested Flycatcher (BCF); Eastern Kingbird (LM); Eastern Screech Owl (FCF); Eastern Wood Peewee (BCF/LM); Mourning Dove (LM); Northern Cardinal (GF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); Red-tailed Hawk (TR); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (Tr); Ruby-throated Hummingbird (LM); Song Sparrow (LM); Tree Swallow (UM/Rd); Turkey Vulture (UM); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr); Wood Thrush (FCF);

**New species:**

Goldenrod Crab Spider [Thomisidae]	<i>Misumena vatia</i>	LM hp/KD
Grapevine Beetle	<i>Pelidnota punctata</i>	Tr KD
Fly Agaric	<i>Amanita muscaria</i>	GF pd/KD