

Newport Forest

Wednesday August 9 2006

2:15 - 6:10 pm

Weather: prec. 0mm; RH 81%; calm; sn/cld; LM 30C; FCF 25C

Purpose: two-day stay

Participants: Kee (& the girls)

After letting the girls out, I reorganized all the lumber in the vicinity of the trailer into a neat pile, then put bird feed in the two tray feeders. An inspection of the regen zone revealed nothing new, except the dieback of two small oaks. I cleaned the trailer. During this period of activity, the girls showed up once to feed at the Nook, then were off again.

Under pressure to continue the recording of new species, I walked the LM with my collecting jar and net in hand. I captured what I thought was a large skipper, only to find I had a new species of butterfly. (See the new species list below.) On the trail to the creek, I also saw several medium grey/white mushrooms with slimy caps. (These turned out to be "Ghost Parasols," [*Xerula megalospora*] which I should have remembered collecting last year!)

I went down to the creek to shoot a scene of the rapids (V), then returned to the trailer, startled to hear screams for help from the creek. I ran down to the bridge. The screams were coming from the other side of the creek, toward Eva's hairpin. I ran down the trail beyond the groomed part, running into heavy vegetation until I came to a box Elder freshly fallen across the creek. I spotted Thelma on the tree. When she spotted me she made her way along the log (heavily covered with vertical suckers) until she got to me. Louise then showed up at my feet, soaking wet. I assumed she had fallen into the creek, but seemed none the worse for wear. The girls followed me up to the Nook, where I put out their evening meal. Just before sunset, I spotted Thelma up on the log huffing at something on the other side of it. Leaning over, I spotted Greylock, standing patiently on the other side of the log. After I left the Nook, Thelma abandoned the log to eat on the ground with her sister, while Greylock climbed the log and munched away contentedly on the dog kibble scattered there. The tableau was somewhat allayed my fears about T&L not getting along with their compatriots.

I set out for the UM to close the gate and had barely reached high ground when I happened to turn. There were T&L bounding up the road after me, not wanting to be left out of any possible adventure. To save them energy, I let them ride on my shoulders up to the gate, then back to the tree station, where I let them down to show them how the tap worked. I picked them up again to resume our journey back to the trailer, but the girls got very squirmy and wanted to be let down. For a few minutes they kept pace with me, inducing the

fantasy of loyal and obedient raccoons. Then they broke into a bounding gallop, heading off the road, as we approached the upper end of the GF. (The lure of the forest?) I assumed they went down to the creek.

As night fell, the field crickets and katydids started their chorus. There were only about five katydids calling, but that was sufficient for the choir of night. At 10:30, I set up the camera for a shot of the moon through the trees, with a katydid calling rather loudly. (I could not get my camera to focus the moon into a crisp circle.)

At around 12:30 am, I was sitting in a folding chair out on the trailer deck, when I heard calls of distress coming from the direction of the UM. I walked quickly up the road, listened for the cries and stopping to whistle so they would know where I was. At high ground, they seemed to be getting fainter, although all this time I had been approaching the source of the sound. How could the girls have been so stupid as to abandon the forest cover for the open field? Then it struck me. Earlier I had heard coyotes baying at the full moon. Now they had evidently found the girls in the meadow and had picked them up to flee from me. What a poignant scene! I stood in the middle of the meadow veg, soaked to the thighs from the heavy dew that had condensed from the day's high humidity. Well, I couldn't outrun the coyotes, so I returned somewhat despondently to the trailer, having earned the name "Dewed Knee." By 1:00 am several Screech Owls had set up a chorus of their own.

At 3:00 am, just before turning in, I decided to go to the Nook to call T&L, even though they were probably eaten by now (such was the influence of the full moon). I had no sooner whistled than they came wearily up the trail. I picked one of them up. Whew! What a smell. I said to them, "You smell like swamp coons." Thus we all retired to the trailer bedroom, which was soon redolent with the sulphurous gases from buried creek mud and rotting vegetation.

I slept only lightly until about 7:30, when I got up to make some scrambled eggs & toast. The girls ate their egg heartily, but very little of the toast. I ate both items heartily and returned to bed, not rising until about 10:30 am. More species! I walked to the river only to regret not having brought the video camera. A flock of a dozen Canada Geese now rested on the newly emerging beach, while a Great Blue Heron fished for breakfast at the rapids. I left the scene without disturbing them. Meanwhile, a white Cessna began to buzz the property, flying at between 200 and 300 feet altitude. (Later, Ed Hiurdle told me this was probably the OPP "marijuana plane," searching for illicit crops.

At 12:30 I walked up to the gate to open it for a gravel truck that was

scheduled to deliver four yards of 'B' gravel at 1 pm. The truck did not show up until 1:30. I led it to the height of land between the two areas of the road that needed patching. As the gravel spewed out into a pile onto the field beside the road, I noticed a large brown insect on the stem of a Wild Carrot beside the road. My God! Another species of horntail! (Later it turned out to be a male Pigeon Horntail, a species already recorded.)

Back at the Nook I put out some lunch for the girls, who sat on their haunches to eat dates and the remnants of the morning's toast. Then they were off again, so I went in search of new species, finding a common (but as yet unreported) species of Chrysomelid Beetle. Then I captured what I thought was a new sp. of butterfly. Extraordinary! The Bronze Copper has a beautiful white body covered with a thick pile, with grey wings bordered with black dots and an orange band. (But we turned out to have logged that species already.)

I then remembered Jane Bowles alerting me to the goldenrod leaf galls last week, so I added that as a new species. By 6 pm I was all packed and ready to go. I went down to the bridge and called the girls, who were working the far shoreline of the creek not far from the bridge. They followed me up to the Nook, where I had set out a last bit of food. They ate, but when I got in the car to call them over for the ride "home," they climbed the Black Maple, instead, to start eating birdseed from the tray there. I took that as a "No. We'll stay, thank you."

Birds: (16)

American Crow (EW); American Robin (GF); Black-capped Chickadee (Tr); Blue Jay (GF); Canada Goose (TR); Common Grackle (GF); Eastern Screech Owl (FCF); Eastern Towhee (BCF); Eastern Wood Pewee (BCF); Field Sparrow (LM); Gray Catbird (GF); Great Blue Heron (TR); Mourning Dove (HL); Northern Cardinal (Tr); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); Red-tailed Hawk (HB)

New species:

Seven-spotted Lady Beetle	<i>Coccinella septempunctata</i>	Tr
Spotted Potato Beetle	<i>Diabrotica undecimpunctata</i>	LM
Inornate Ringlet	<i>Coenonympha tulia inornata</i>	LM/HBF
Goldenrod Gall Midge	<i>Rhopalomyia solidaginis</i>	LM
Dog Tick	<i>Dermacentor variabilis</i>	Tr

Phenology: exactly one firefly showed up all night! The last wood tick appears to have been collected July 16