

Newport Forest Saturday July 5 2008

2:45pm/5 - 5:10pm/6

**Weather:** prec. 16 mm; RH 62%; BP 99.55 kPa; clr; calm; LM 28° C

**Purpose:** two-day stay

**Participants:** Pat & Kee

As soon as we got to the trailer we could tell it was going to be a great weekend for butterflies, with more about than any time in recent memory.

The RZ looked lush. A brief inspection revealed two Silver Maples badly nipped by deer sometime in the last two weeks. We walked down to the RL. I brush-hooked as far as the bench, then returned for the third newt hotel as far as the bench. Then I joined Pat as she finished clipping the trail at the RL. I surprised a smallish Spiny Softshell basking on the clay beach. I could see about a dozen turtle tracks leading up the gentle incline to the foot of the bluffs. Here a turtle would bask for a time, then turn itself around, making a different track back to the water. The prints of the feet are remarkably similar to those of a skunk. (general form: intermittent tail drag mark, with feet straddling, claws prominent and deep) The beach is about 90 % emerged from the river now.

Back at the Nook we were joined by the chipmunks and a black EG Squirrel who shared in the birds' bounty. We cleaned out the bedroom, finding that the box spring was rotted through and that one of the pillows was so badly mildewed as to be unusable. We remade the bed with a new layer of foam, vowing to replace the box spring at the first opportunity. The main problem, of course, is that the roof leaks at that corner of the trailer, invariably soaking the foot of the bed.

After supper we drove up to the gate to install a hummingbird feeder (Nina's suggestion), as well as to visit the couple, who were sitting out by their pond, enjoying a Belted Kingfisher and its fishing antics. Nina put Pat in a wonderful mood by telling her that a young bear had been sighted two days previously "between west Lorne and Rodney." We drove back to the trailer with an early crescent moon hanging over the BCF. We lit the lamps, set out the bait and waited. Presently a mother with 4 kits appeared out on the track. All appeared to be in good health.

I was all set up to shoot a video of the magnificent firefly displays we had witnessed during our previous overnight, but the lower temperature seems to have cooled their ardour, with only a few winking here and there. The mosquitos had been relatively light all day and were no worse into the evening. After Pat retired

for the night, I took two flashlights to the Nook, one a powerful lantern-battery searchlight. I set this on the table, aiming it at the old log, which lit up like a neon sign. With the other flashlight, I waved in individuals. Moths flying through the Nook would spiral into the beam, close enough to be seized by hand and placed in a jar for ID. Trotting the specimen into the trailer (where I kept the moth book) produced two identifications: a Maple Spanworm Moth and a (beautiful) Snowy Geometer.

Later I captured a third moth which turned out to be not in the book (this happens with about every fifth or sixth specimen - the coverage of the book being about 50% of described spp anyway). The third moth was very strange, I wrote a description and made an accurate sketch of the specimen before releasing it. Within 24 hours I had an ID from one of the larger moth collections on the web (Geometrids) as 'The Beggar' (see below). Perhaps it's called The Beggar because its beautiful pale yellow cloak is marked by a pattern of "holes" (actually scale-free windows). The hind wing is entirely transparent except for a fringe of yellow around the edge.

My mothing frenzy over, I gazed at the stars, admiring the Summer Triangle, with its three constellations, then Scorpio lurking to the south-west. The Milky Way stood out beautifully, giving me vertigo. Two meteors, seconds apart, streaked from NE to SW.

Come morning, Pat was up well before me, startling two deer browsing in the RZ. (that would explain the nipped Silver Maples). She thought she saw a small Cecropia-like moth, a possible new Saturnid. After breakfast I worked on a moth clinging to one of the screens: an Eastern Tent Caterpillar Moth, as it turned out (nn). She also gave herself a scare when she flushed a wild turkey hen from its nest along the edge of HBF. Later, after my breakfast, Pat showed me a juvenile Eastern Cottontail grazing on the road to the Hole.

At 1:30 the only butterfly people we would see all day showed up: Daria Koscinski and Caroline Williams, a grad student from UWO Biology. Despite the previous day's promise, nothing remarkable turned up (see list below). Indeed, several that we thought they WOULD see did not show up. They did not lack for either skill or energy, however.

While the two were out in the woods, a young, starving raccoon showed up at the tray feeder in the Nook, proceeding to eat bird seed. It's fur was disturbed and its sides had begun to cave inward, indicating that it had a day or two to live without

adequate nutrition. When Daria and Caroline had finished, they joined us in the Nook, all watching the starving cub. We put out some water and food scraps in the hope that it might revive and depart in time to avoid being beaten up by local (raccoon) mothers.

When Daria and Caroline left for the East Ravine, we loaded up and broke camp.

Note: quite a few juvenile Northern Leopard frogs in the UM these days!

**Birds:** (32)

American Crow (FC); American Goldfinch (LM); American Robin (FCF); Barn Swallow (UM); Black-capped Chickadee (Tr); Blue Jay (Tr); Brown-headed Cowbird (LM); Canada Goose (TR); Cedar Waxwing (Tr); Common Flicker (EW); Common Grackle (GF); Common Yellowthroat (BCF); Downy Woodpecker (BCF); Eastern Kingbird (LM); Eastern Towhee (BCF); Eastern Wood Peewee (BCF); Field Sparrow (LM); Gray Catbird (BCF/HBF); Great Blue Heron (LM); Great Crested Flycatcher (GF); Mourning Dove (GF); Northern Cardinal (EW); Northern Harrier (HBF); Northern Oriole (GF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (GF); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (Tr); Song Sparrow (GF); Tree Swallow (UM); Turkey Vulture (LM); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr); Wild Turkey (HBF/GF); Wood Thrush (BCF)

**Butterflies:** (12)

Cabbage White (LM); Clouded Sulphur (LM); Great Spangled Fritillary (BCF); Eastern Comma (BCF/ET); European Skipper (LM); Eyed Brown (LM); Mourning Cloak (RL); Northern Crescent (LM); Silvery Checkerspot (VCF); Tiger Swallowtail (BCF); Common Wood Nymph (LM/GF); Little Wood Satyr (LM/GF)

**New species:**

The Beggar	<i>Eubaphe mendica</i>	Nk KD J105/08
Lesser Maple Spanworm	<i>Itame pustularia</i>	Nk KD J105/08
Snowy Geometer	<i>Eugonobapta nivosaria</i>	Nk KD J105/08