

## Site Visit Report

Newport Forest Forest August 8/9 2009 2:35 - 5:45 pm

weather: prec. 33 mm; RH 89%; BP 99.3 kPa; ovcast/rn; calm; 18° C  
purpose: 2-day stay  
participants: Pat, Kee

We arrived during a light rain and rushed to set up camp. The wind came up gradually, although the rain stopped. While donning a bath robe in the trailer, Pat was startled when a mouse came rocketing out of the sleeve and ran up her arm. She didn't see what kind of mouse it was. I went up the the Copse to see if any new fungi had emerged -- nothing. We took a nap to wait out the inclement weather, reviving in the late afternoon in time to see Chipmunks at one of the feeders. We heard a tree or snag falling over in the BCF.

Walking up to close the gate, I spotted what was probably a Little Brown Bat out hunting above the road. We see bats infrequently during overnight stays. Further along, as I gained the UM, I saw a puzzling sight about 150 m away, close to the ravine forest to the west. My attention was drawn by a screaming sound and the sight of a "stilt-legged creature" hopping up, then hopping up some distance away, as though fleeing. In the twilight, the animal was difficult to make out, either a fawn or a wild turkey, at a guess. There was only that one scream and, after the second hop, no interesting sights or sounds from that quarter. I heard another tree/snag fall over in the FCF at this time.

Shortly after dusk, a Screech Owl started up in the FCF and continued to call for several minutes. At that point Two-stripe showed up for kibble in the Nook, along with all four kits -- looking healthy. Later, having more kibble on the road, they were joined by an immense male, all six creatures feeding without friction. It was just possible, I mused, that this was actually Daddy, although no one would have a clue as to the actual father; the "family" would then be (accidentally) reunited.

Much later Two-stripe returned with her kits, so for amusement I threw out a few last handful of kibble. By this point, the kits were so energized that they began to "romp." One in particular attacked the deck rug without mercy, trying to break its neck with a shake and making horrible little growls. Another pair of kits played "poke me." In this game one kit sits on the lower trailer step, pretending to be nonchalant, while another crawls under the steps to launch a sneak attack on its sibling. The kit on the step jumps up in a rage and tries to bite the sibling through the space between the steps. The performance is then repeated. This appears to be great fun for all. During this period only one or two fireflies would be visible over any one-minute interval.

At 1 am a brief storm rolled through the area to add another 5 mm of rain to the 28 mm already recorded. At 2 am another tree/snag fell over with a crash. I guessed that this was not a regular feature of recent ecology, but the result of weakened snags or dead trees getting loaded up with moisture and becoming somewhat top-heavy. At 6 am Pat observed Two-stripe and her kits back at the tray feeders.

By 10 am we were both up in time to hear the "Rain Crow" once again. The Yellow-billed Cuckoo gave out several repeated coos at a distance.

By 11 am the sky had cleared out and an intense, humid heat began to settle over the area, the thermometer climbing gradually to 34 ° C. A Giant Swallowtail flew right past the trailer. I spotted a new species of Tachinid Fly in the LM and got some nice photos of it. I couldn't ID it later, so I sent the images to Steve Marshall. A young Red squirrel showed up at the Maple tray feeder. We also spent time searching for new Lady Beetle species, but all we could find were Seven-spots -- already logged

In the afternoon we walked down to the river in sweltering heat. Mussel Beach (MB) is now 90 % exposed. We startled two smallish Spiny Softshells basking on the beach. They dove into the water -- klaxon horns sounding (Dive! Dive!).

As Pat searched the banks for new flora, I was becoming increasingly dizzy and wobbly on my feet, unaware that by standing close to the water I was getting double the solar radiation. At the point where I nearly fell over, Pat suggested I get back to the trailer & cool off. I did. When she got back to camp, Pat spotted a Russian Leather Beetle on the log in the Nook and, a little later, just before we left, a Geometrid moth resting on one of the trailer screens. This was destined to be our 1500th species.

phenology: Goldenrod about to bloom, fireflies waning, some Monarda still in bloom. Katydid and Cicadas beginning to call.

birds (24) Winds kept birds tied down somewhat.

American Crow (FCF); American Goldfinch (LM); American Robin (GF); Bald Eagle (TR); Black-capped Chickadee (LM); Blue Jay (GF); Cedar Waxwing (TR); Common Grackle (GF); Common Yellowthroat (BCF/LM); Eastern Screech Owl (FCF); Eastern Towhee (GF); Eastern Wood Peewee (GF); Field Sparrow (Nk); Gray Catbird (EW); House Wren (GF/ER); Killdeer (TR); Mourning Dove (HL); Northern Cardinal (EW); Rose-breasted Grosbeak Tr; Song Sparrow (LM); Spotted Sandpiper (TR); Turkey Vulture (LM); Yellow-billed Cuckoo (FCF); Yellow Warbler (GF);

new species:

Soft-lined Wave1 *Scopula inductata* Tr pd/KD Au09/09  
(species no. 1500!)  
Blue Cohosh2 *Caulophyllum thalictroides* BBW KD/PD AU05/09

ID Notes:

1. Moths can be tricky. Of the three candidates for the moth in question, the Softlined Wave was a nearly perfect match, except for one thing: each wing had a small, dark spot on it and the reference images, although showing a few colour variations, showed no specimens with the dark spots. Searching the web, however, I soon found a Soft-line Wave with exactly the same spots. (That explains why the spots were not listed as field marks. It's simply an occasional character.)
2. The Blue Cohosh is not new to our list, but the only previous find of this plant was in Harvey's Woods, adjacent to but not part of Newport Forest.

### IMAGES:

(click on image to enlarge)



"Yellow-banded Tachina" (no ID yet)

(click on image to enlarge)



Russian Leather Beetle (loves rotting wood and smells like leather)