

## Newport Forest Drying Out

Newport Forest Thursday September 10 2009 2:40 - 7:45 pm

weather: p;rec. omm; RH 61%; BP 100.4 kPa; calm; sn/cld; T 32° C  
purpose: trailwork and arthropods  
participants: Kee

After setting up (birdseed + weather) I carried out the bee protocol. I noticed almost all the numbers were up from last count. (This count was performed an hour or two earlier than previous ones and the air temperature was certainly higher than it has been for recent counts.)  
The number of Syrphids (Flower Flies) was up substantially.

Birds were not plentiful, many lying low because of the heat, one suspects.

A quick tour of the RZ (Regeneration Zone) made it clear that some of the younger trees are suffering from drying stress, their leaves beginning to curl. Katydid's called occasionally during the daylight hours, while meadow crickets made a constant hum. Grasshoppers big & small were everywhere.

Inspecting the larger Hop Tree, I found several medium-sized Giant Swallowtail larvae still chewing away. (P) Later, just before leaving camp, it occurred to me to inspect the smaller Hop Tree across the road from the larger one, finding to my surprise two full-grown GS larvae on it -- with about half the little tree's leaves entirely gone! (P)

I found two photographable arthropods near the trailer. One was a Stink Bug nymph on the Nook table (almost impossible to ID these critters, with so little ref. materials available) and a new jumping spider (Salticidae) on one of the towels in the trailer. (I read that this particular species, common in our area, is frequently found in outbuildings.)

I began work on extending the FC trail from the former bridge landing down to the lower rapids, where one can cross easily on foot during normal water levels. It was tough going slashing through the Giant Ragweed (which now covers the entire (former) landing area. And I had to saw through two logs, exercise that left me exhausted. Only 10 more logs to go. . I spotted a lone Ebony Jewelwing hawking flies from the edge of the creek. Would that be the last one I would see this year?

Relaxing later in the Nook, I witnessed an extraordinary sight: A Yellowjacket flew toward me with a long green thing dangling from its legs. The wasp alighted on a bush a few feet away, where I could see it clearly. The "green thing" turned out to be a skinny Mirid bug -- all green. The wasp proceeded to eat the head (even as the bug waved its legs helplessly), then the thorax. By the time I realized I was not going to be able to focus on the scene for a dramatic nature shot, only the tip of the abdomen was left, the whole meal taking about 3-4 minutes.

A black (Eastern Gray) Squirrel scolded from a distant tree in the GF, while a lone chipmunk helped itself to the birdseed overhead. I walked to the river, spotting a woolly bear caterpillar on a Wingstem leaf (P), and starting up a Great Blue Heron on MB. I sat on the Bluffs bench for about ten minutes, camera at the ready, in case the eagle flew by again. (faint hope)

I succeeded in collecting aphids\* from Giant Ragweeds by the creek and a sunflower in the LM. The mosquitoes were barely there today. By 6 pm I had counted just four on my person.

I waited until sundown to see if Two-stripe and/or her kits would show up. No raccoons at all -- rather unusual. At a guess, Two-stripe has vacated her territory and no one has taken over. Just before leaving, I spotted a Brown Snake returning to the meadow after hunting in the GF. This is my first Brown Snake sighting of the year. (We average only one or two a year, so this is not unusual.)

\* I expected different species, but they were all the same -- and not even aphids!

birds: (9)

American Crow (EW); American Robin (GF); Black-capped Chickadee (Tr); Blue Jay (GF); Canada Goose\* (LM); Gray Catbird (GF); Great Blue Heron (MB); Mourning Dove (GF); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr)

\* flight of 20+ over LM

bee protocol:

group count  
HB 271 (still increasing; up another 37%)  
BB 13 (Bumblebee count lower)  
OB 1  
SW 0  
LW 4  
SF 16  
LF 40 (Syrphids definitely more abundant)

(improvement for later: reduce W- and F-categories to one each; record time of day)

new species:

Tan Jumping Spider *Metacryba undata* Tr KD Sp10/09  
syn. *Platycryptus undatus*

'Gold Thread Rot' *Phanerochaete chrysoschiza*\* BCF kd/GT Sp05/09  
(Basidiomycete)

'Spined Membracid' [*Telomena*] sp. LM KD Sp10/09

\* not "*Ph. chrysosporium*?"  
[recall also that email conversion destroys italics]

NOTE 1: Having ID'd the spider via Kaston, I checked the "web," finding over two dozen images of this species, only a few of which could be called "tan" coloured. Our specimen is more typical in coloration. So common names can be a bit misleading. The name *P. undatus* may be a revision -- to be checked.

NOTE 2: I spent several hours working on what I first thought might be an aphid but, discovering no cornicles (or antennae), I began to think "nymph," Psyllids didn't work, but Membracids were closer. Then quite by accident I ran across what are undoubtedly my specimens, as it were. (See image below.) Generic ID is provisional, but based on ubiquity of the genus (all species of which have spined nymphs.)

### IMAGES:

(click on image to enlarge)



Giant Swallowtail larva on Hop Tree (called "orange Dogs" in Florida)

(click on image to enlarge)



"our" Membracid (treehopper) nymph (being tended by ant) [file photo] (anyone who can ID this nymph for sure wins an all-expenses-paid vacation for two in Wardsville)  
new jumping spider (on trailer towel) Note extremely hairy palps !