Newport Forest Drying Out

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

weather: pmvc. cmm; RH 62%; BP 104.4 KPa; srm; ec; cl; T 7° C

purpose: trailwork and arthropods participants: Ke

After setting up (binned = weather) I carried out the bee protocol. I noticed almost all the numbers were up from last count. (This means I performed an hour or two earlier than previous ones and the air temperature was certainly higher than it has been for record counts.)

The number of Spiders (Forest Floor) was up substantially.

Birds were not plentiful, many lie dying because of the heat, one suspect.

A quick tour of the RE (Revegetation Zone) made it clear that some of the younger trees are suffering from drying stress, their leaves beginning to curl. Katydids 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. (F) Later, just before leaving camp, I 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 tree’s leaves entirely eaten! (F)

I found two photographable orthoptera near the trailer. One was a small black bug nymph on the Noah table (almost impossible to ID thosecretos, with so little el. materials available) and a new jumping spider (Telomena) on one of the towels in the trailer. (I find 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 standing through the Giant Ragweed (which now covers the entire (former) landing area. And I had to use two tires over each log, even to reach my exhaust. I stripped a low fence, dumping 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 Blattid bug — all green. The wasp proceeded to eat the bug (even as the bug waved its legs helplessly), then the body. 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 tip of the abdomen was left, the whole meal taking about 3-4 minutes. I spotted a lone Ebony Jewelwing hawking flies from the edge of the creek.

I walked to the river, spotting a wooly 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. (Half hopes)

I succeeded in collecting aphids* from Giant Ragweeds by the creek and a sunflower in the LM. The mesquites were barely there today. By 6 pm I had counted just four on my person. I waited until sunset to see if Two-stripe and/or her kids would show up. No raccoons at all — rather unusual. At a guess, Two-stripe has vacated her territory and so has 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 Cardinal (GF); Great Blue Heron (MB); Mourning Dove (GF); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr)

flight of 20+ over LM

group count
HB 24 (still measuring; up another 37%)
BB 13 (Bumblebee count lower)
Sp10/09

flight of 20+ over LM

new species:
Tan Jumping Spider Metarachus undatus Tr KD 9/09/09
syn. Platycryptus undatus

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

"Spined Membracid" [Telomena] sp. LM KD 9/09/09

* not "Ph. chrysosporium"

(other ID was Spined Membracid - cause 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” (P). Our specimen is more typical in coloration.

The number of Syrphids (Flower Flies) was up substantially. (Syrphids definitely more abundant)

This count was performed an hour or two earlier than previous ones and the air temperature was certainly higher than it has been for record counts.)

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

IMAGES:

[click on image to enlarge]  [click on image to enlarge]