

Watering Plus Insects

Newport Forest Tuesday August 17 2010 2:00 - 6:30 pm

weather: prec. 2 mm; RH 82%; BP 101.8 kPa; ovcast: SW 5-12 kmh; T 32° C

purpose: to water trees in Regen Zone

participants: Kee, Steve

Although our principal activity today was watering the smaller planted trees in the Regeneration Zone, I would take breaks when Steve took his truck up to the water tank (aka the Drought Buster) to fill up the jugs and other containers. During the breaks I would search vegetation for insects, camera at the ready. While carrying out the Bee Protocol, I happened to notice two more of the Square-headed wasps that I saw on my last visit. They are obviously not rarities. Down at the creek I found an European Paper Wasp (P) and also spotted a very large black wasp (approx. 1.5" long) visiting some flowers among the Giant Ragweed (8' - 10' high). Unless I'm mistaken, it was the Great Black wasp -- *Sphex pennsylvanica*. (I'll be back . . .)

We used three loads (typically 110 litres each) to water the Regen Zone in three sections: 1. strips along track by trailer 2. west of watering trail 3. east of watering trail.

Owing to the windy weather and generally gloomy sky, there were few birds around. Several dragonflies hunted above the Lower Meadow, however, and I saw a few more bees about than I did during the previous visit. No squirrels of any kind (4 spp) visited the tray feeders and no rabbits showed up, either.

New Species:

Yellow-collared Scape Moth *Cispeps fulvicollis* GF/FC KD Au17/10

"Allegheny Mound Ant" *Formica exsecta* gp*. LM KD Au17/10

European Paper Wasp *Polistes dominulus* GF/FC KD Au17

*mounds at Newport are usually a meter or more wide and half a meter high, covered with thatch and earth-pebbles. I have used the common name for *Formica exsectoides* without committing myself to that species. Our mound-builders appear to be in that group, however, as it contain almost all the red-and-black mound builders in our area. Often one sees a related (Formicine) all-black species, possibly *F. fusca*, on these mounds as slaves or cohabitants. (I used to think they were the mound-builders.) Mounds of this size may contain over 200,000 workers and (believe it or not) over a thousand queens. The Lower Meadow alone contains at least 50 mounds. They are just begging for a grad student to come and study their ecology.

Bee Protocol:

HB BB OB SF LF SW LW (goldenrod now 15% in bloom)

2 4 0 2 2 2 0

gloss: HB = honeybee; BB = bumblebee, OB = other bees, etc.

Drought watch: precipitation shortfall = 29%

IMAGES:

(click on image to enlarge)



The Yellow-collared Scape Moth is

(click on image to enlarge)



Nature drama: A Silver-spotted

(click on image to enlarge)



The Clover Looper (Caenurgina

almost instantly identifiable. This one was parked on a plant growing on the bank of Fleming Creek. Feathery antennae usually imply a male.

Skipper does not notice the Jumping Spider waiting on a Wingstem petal to pounce. Strangely, when I took this photo I was on the bee protocol and completely failed to notice the spider lurking!

crassiuscula) is a very common moth at Newport Forest. Here is one resting near some clover (of course) in the Lower Meadow. Our species list of butterflies (about 50) is probably 80-90% "complete." But our list of moths (over 100) is probably not even 25% "complete."