

## So Many Species, So Little Time...

Newport Forest Sat/Sunday August 21/22 2010 2:15/6:05 pm

weather: precip. 19 mm; RH 90%; BP 101.4 kPa; calm; ovcst; T 27° C  
purpose: two-day stay; search for new species (Bulletin #695)  
participants: Pat, Kee

We had about an hour of dry weather before the massive shield of cloud overhead began to leak. A light drizzle lasted two hours, then a heavy rain ensued, lasting for about 20 minutes, then light rain again until nearly sunset. All this while we took turns standing at the trailer door, champing at the bit to get out & collect. It was a clear case of "bioconflict." We wanted rain for the trees, but we needed to get out, too. After the rain, we just had time to drive up to the road in order to fix Lorne Newport's memorial sign near the gate. It had begun to lean heavily.

Prior to the rain, I had carried out the bee protocol, then visited the creek, spotting a large, dark leaf-footed bug on the way down the bluffs. At the creek, I was surprised to see a Muskrat swimming from one shore to the other upstream. We normally see Muskrats only at the river. I also heard a Green Frog trying to fix its broken banjo string.

When night fell, two raccoons showed up at camp, joined by a third about two hours later. It made us wonder if Wanda's children have begun to split up and find new territories (as raccoon subadults tend to do at this time of year). The "cascade rain" inside the heavy gallery forest continued until well after sunset.

The next day dawned misty and gloomy. Fine! Pat watched a family of hummingbirds at the feeder while I made breakfast. Off we went to the Thames River Trail, Pat determined to make it to the Sand Bar despite her ms. On the way we startled a Meadow Jumping Mouse that rocketed into the vegetation of the Lower Meadow. Later, I thought I saw a Wood Frog hop into the Wingstems along Edgar's Trail. We haven't seen a Wood Frog in two years.

At the River Landing, we were delighted to run into a new and significant plant species, the Groundnut. (See image below.) We motored on to the Sand Bar, deep in the Riverside Forest, Pat clipping away at the overhang as we went. At the Sand Bar Pat watched more than a dozen Cedar Waxwings hunting over the river, while I watched a very large harvestman (1 cm body-length) making its way to an unknown destination. On our return we counted our blessings and broke camp.

Birds (18 - terrible birding weather!)

American Crow (BCF); American Goldfinch (LM); Black-capped Chickadee (Tr); Blue Jay (GF); Cedar Waxwing (TR); Common Grackle (HL); Common Yellowthroat (LM); Downy Woodpecker (GF); Eastern Wood Peewee (BCF); Field Sparrow (LM); Gray Catbird (FC); Mourning Dove (GF); Northern Cardinal (Rd); Ruby-throated Hummingbird (LM); Song Sparrow (GF); Tree Swallow (LM); Turkey Vulture (LM); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr);  
Best bird: Ruby-throated Hummingbird

New Species:

Deer Mouse *Peromyscus maniculatus* Tr pd/KD Au22/10  
Two-striped Grasshopper *Melanoplus bivittatus* Tr KD Au17/10  
'Brown-tailed Coreid' *Acanthocephala terminalis* GF/FC KD Au22/10  
'Apical Gall Midge' *Asphondylia* sp. SB KD Au22/10  
Groundnut *Apios americana* RL kd/PD Au22/10

Notes: 1. We had identified a White-footed Mouse several years ago from a corpse near the trailer. We recently noticed that the mice currently inhabiting the trailer are Deer Mice, based on the tail length difference between two otherwise very similar species. 2. The 'Apical Gall Midge' is specifically hosted by species of *Helianthus* -- in this case the Woodland Sunflower. 3. Today's "take" brings the total ATBI species count to 1652. We'd like to get to 2000 some day.

Bee protocol:

HB BB OB SF LF SW LW  
20 15 1 6 5 1 1

Note: the goldenrod is about 15% in bloom and this may be a kind of threshold at which the bees (B) and wasps (W) start showing up in the Lower Meadow in large numbers. Readers may recall the number of honey bees (HB) counted in the protocol during the last two visits: 0 and 2, respectively.

Phenology: Fireflies over

Drought Watch: precipitation shortfall = 27% (slowly improving)

**IMAGES:**

*(click on image to enlarge)*



*M*The Groundnut (so called) has beautiful crimson and white flowers. It belongs to the legume family and is called "ground nut" because the pear-shaped tubers are edible (and nutritious).

*(click on image to enlarge)*



*Pat* watches from the Sand Bar as some 15 Cedar Waxwings hawk insects from a perching tree across the river.

*(click on image to enlarge)*



*A* cluster of velvetine Trametes polypore fruiting bodies sprouted within 24 hours of the rainfall. (*Trametes hirsuta*, at a guess, the beauty of nature marred only by the ruler)