

More Bees than You can Shake a Stick at

Newport Forest Sunday August 29 2:10 - 6:30 pm

Weather: prec. 0 mm; RH 74%; BP 102.3 kPa; clear; calm; T 38° C ^a (!)

Purpose: to collect arthropods

Participants: Kee, Erin

Erin Carroll is a biology graduate who works for a local conservation authority and takes a keen interest in insects, among other things. She was a great help today, collecting and examining leaf litter, helping with the bee protocol, and so on. In case she ever visits the property on her own, she knows the protocol.

We walked the vernal pond area (now completely dried out). This is the former bed of Fleming Creek before it changed course, finding a new mouth on the Thames as the river eroded toward the creek -- perhaps between 100 and 200 years ago. Although I always remember the pond bottoms as being a good source of leaf litter, I had forgotten that most of that litter has to be digested before the next leaf-fall. There was more twig-litter than leaf litter. In the process of filling our garbage bag, I noticed several Buttonbushes growing in the old creek bed. This is the only locale on the property where we have found these plants.

We spread our haul on a clean white sheet back at camp, but the hoped-for millipeds and centipedes did not materialize. Sigh: Well, it's time I learned something about our mini-trilobites*, the sow-bugs. Among the finds were a Pterostichus ground beetle (not new), and an unidentifiable non-adult harvestman. The remainder are listed below.

Exploring the rapids of Fleming Creek, Erin found several crayfish, two of them being Clearwaters. Very few birds were seen -- or heard -- during our visit. No mammals. A temperature of 38° C drives them all into siesta mode, one supposes.

New species:

Hammock Spider¹ Pityohyphantes costatus BC/ET ec/KD Au29/10

'Pale Jumping Spider' Metaphidippus [flavipedes] BC/ET ec/KD Au29/10

'Three-lined Sowbug' [Trachelipus rathkii]² BC/ET ec/KD Au29/10

'Yellow-legged Carabid' Patrobus [longicornis] BC/ET ec/KD Au29/10

Notes: 1. This one took several hours to ID. At first I was convinced it was a lynx spider because the legs were covered with thin black spines, but the eye configuration was not correct for Oxypodids. Then I learned that some Araneids, as well as Linyphiids have spines on their legs. Tom Murray (google it) did the rest with a dead match on Carapace and abdomen patterns. (a not atypical ID experimnce) 2. We remind readers that square brackets mean a tentative ID applying to the scope of the brackets.

Bee protocol: (goldenrod now 50% in bloom; previous count in parentheses)

HB BB OB SF LF SW LW

149 38 0 18 4 0 3

(34 27 0 4 1 1 0)

Using the method described in the previous bulletin, one may now make a fairly accurate estimate of the number of honeybees in the Regeneration Zone alone: 7,450. Within the six hectares of goldenrod-dominated meadow areas on the property, there would be approximately six times this many or about 44,700 honeybees! (no shortage here, it would seem)

Drought Watch: precipitation shortfall is 29.5 %. The situation is not improving.

* Some people think these crustaceans (Isopoda) are the descendants of trilobites, but they aren't. Parallel evolution has produced a creature, nevertheless, that mimics the trilobite life-style, including the ability to enroll among the Isopods called "pill bugs" or "ball bugs."

IMAGES:

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Goldenrod (with visitor) A goldenrod plant in nearly full bloom is visited by a honeybee gathering pollen in its leg baskets.

photo 2009 click on image to see larger version



Not having taken any photos of note this visit, I went through the Longwood Road files and found this intriguing image taken two years ago of the front yard of a native protestor who was upset at the shooting of Dudley George during the Ipperwash standoff with the OPP several years ago. We have been cataloguing material on local history, customs, and characters. This part of southern Ontario was strongly influenced by American settlers crossing the frontiers at Niagara and Detroit, starting in the late eighteenth Century. For example, the town of Wardsville was founded by American settler, George Ward. The town of Delaware was founded by Gideon Tiffany and Ebenezer Allen (cousin of Ethan). Post 1812, many Scots settled in the area, arriving by schooner on the shores of Lake Erie.