

## Rain & Insects

Newport Forest Sunday September 5 2010 2:05 - 6:20 pm

Weather: prec. 41 mm; RH 49%; BP 101.5 kPa; NW 5-15 kmh; sn/cld; T 24° C

Purpose: trail maintenance

Participants: Kee, Will, Steve

Arriving at the trailer, I was astonished to find moths everywhere, some loopers and daggers, etc. but most belonging to a single, small species which, though common, turned out to be new. I have never seen so many day-fliers out at one time. They would fly up from our feet in clouds wherever we walked.

I thought Steve was supposed to join up with us at 2 pm, but apparently he came in at 8 am to clear the remaining deadfall from the Blind Creek Trail. After waiting in a state of uncertainty for an hour, I sent Will in to the deadfall area to scrape trail. Shortly after that, Steve came in with his wife Karen and a guest of theirs by the name of Carmen. "I want to show him the river," said Steve.

While the three were at the river and Will was scraping trail, I did the bee protocol. A gusty breeze was making it difficult for flying insects to land on flowers, so the entire pollen gathering operation was slowed down. Certainly, the count was down, being half of last week's.

Back in camp, Will found an all-brown Praying Mantis on the road. (see Images below.) I thought it might be a new species and the thought cheered me up. At home, however, I found it was *M. religiosus*, the colour reflecting habitat, perhaps. According to Bill Judd, about 20% of the mantids that he observed in southern Ontario are/were brown.

A Red Squirrel showed up at the Hickory feeder and, later, a lone Chipmunk. We saw two Blue Jays, but neither heard nor saw any other birds. Will, who has been to the property many times, thought the silence was "eerie." But there were lots of butterflies around: sulphurs, monarchs, crescents, coppers, fritillaries, azures and the usual gang of skippers.

Speaking of "eerie," there have been very few grasshoppers & relatives around this year - so far. No day-calling crickets, either.

When Steve & Co. came back from the river, we had a short but pleasant little picnic in the Nook. Karen & I bandied words and phrases in Delaware back and forth. She knows far more than I do, since she teaches in Delaware at the Moraviantown First Nation. But the language is nearly gone. Nobody can speak it fluently any more -- not among the Unami Delaware, anyway. The other division, the Lenape, live in New Jersey. A third division, the Mahican, are gone. (Glen Jacobs, with whom I studied Delaware for a few months, was the language coach in the movie Last of the Mohicans, starring Daniel Day Lewis. He said Day Lewis spoke his lines much better than Russel Means did, but I digress.)

At the gate I asked William to see if there were any "red beetles" on the milkweed plants by the road. He came back with a pod loaded with nymphs of the Red Milkweed Bug!

Phenology:

Oak nutfall plentiful, no walnuts this year, few Hickory nuts; day-flying moth population(s) outbreak.

New species:

Large Milkweed Bug *Oncopeltus fasciatus* UM/Rd KD Sp05/10

Clover *Nomophila*1 *Nomophila nearctica* LM/Rd KD Sp05/10

Notes: 1. The Clover *Nomophila* is a "snout moth" (Pyrulinae) also called the Lucerne Moth, for some reason -- common throughout eastern North America.

Bee protocol: gusting winds, partially cloudy sky

HB BB OB SF LF SW LW

75 31 1 5 5 1 1

(149 38 0 18 4 0 3 previous counts)

Drought watch: precipitation shortfall 24% -- down nicely

**IMAGES:**



*Will holds an all-brown Praying (Preying) Mantis. The only other species in our area is the Chinese Mantis, also brown, but it has two lines running down its face and green edging below the wings. (also larger). Foreshortening of Will's hand makes PM seem smaller than it really was -- about 7 cm. (Compare with his left hand, instead.)  
click on image to see larger version*



*A convention of Milkweed bugs, all of them late-instar nymphs. I was well aware of these bugs on the property, but thought we had already logged them. Nope. Black marks are vestigial wings (with apologies for the terrible focus) click on image to see larger version*