

Newport Forest

Sunday September 18 2011

2:00 - 7:15 pm

Weather: prec. 5 mm; RH 63%; BP 102.8 kPa; sun/haze; S 0-15 kmh; T 25° C

Purpose: trail maintenance

Participants: Kee, Steve

We walked the Thames River Trail clearing some ten logs and other woody obstructions along the way. Ironically, just as the trail arrives at peak condition, the visiting season is nearly over. Fall colour walks, anyone?

An extended break in the Nook netted a new species of Planthopper, identified by its two narrow brown stripes running from the eye toward the rear margin of the wing. I also picked up two wood-eating fungi from a log that had been torn apart by some animal, possibly a raccoon.

Throughout this visit, we saw/heard very few birds. In fact I heard American Crows and Canada Geese and saw exactly one Blue Jay. In previous years a one-person visit would net an average of 9 species. Recently the average is about 5 and today just three! Pat wonders if the birds are hiding out from the Sharp-shinned Hawks that have been showing up lately. This provides a segway into the use of tracts like Newport Forest to monitor population changes and providing warnings about ecological or environmental problems: extirpations, breakouts, invasive species, etc.

New species:

Two-striped Planthopper

Acanalonia bivittata

Nk KD Sp18/11

Note on mystery spider:

Once I began to suspect that the mystery spider mentioned in the Bulletin of September 6 was not an Anyphaenid, but an orb weaver, I began to find a lot of near-matches in the genus *Neoscona*, particularly *N. arabesca*. This species has huge variation in patterning and colouring so that, even though our specimen fell easily within the implied range, I am reluctant to add it to the list as such. Next time we see it, I will collect it.

Note on mushroom:

In a recent issue of this Bulletin, I stated that our species of the *Lyophyllum*

mushroom was mycorrhizal, its hyphae communicating with the roots of nearby trees. This was from a list of mycorrhizal genera, but not all species in these genera may be mycorrhizal, according to Greg Thorn, our consulting mycologist. Case in point, the species we found in the Copse, *L. decastes*, is not mycorrhizal.

Phenology: about 10% of goldenrod going to seed

Note on Thames River:

I used Google Earth (a great facility) to measure the length of the Thames River from the centre of the forks in London down to the the point bar at Newport Forest. I found a total length of 119.76 km, almost exactly 120 km or 74.4 mi. Crowfly distance is 68 km, hardly more than half the river distance. The distance from Newport to the Moraviantown bridge is 11.51 km or 7.15 mi. (more below)

IMAGES:



Steve cuts large bitternut log that fell across trail. The Scolytus beetle infestation of '05 - '07 left over 100 mature Bitternut trees as standing deadwood. Then they all fell over, one by one, being highly susceptible to fungal attack, apparently.



Stand of American Beech on slope of Hogsback is one of the nuclei of a future (climax) beech-maple forest. Beech becomes co-dominant in the canopy by its ability to survive on low light at the sapling stage, where other saplings (except maple spp) may not survive. One secret of the beech is that it spends very little “money” (ATP) on side branches, so it gets by with a low overhead -- so to speak.

(more)



Journey by river starts here at the river forks in London, Ontario. Jets of water spray into the Thames. These do not draw many tourists, but they *do* oxygenate the water, enhancing life downstream by speeding up aerobic decomposition and giving fish a slightly more vigorous lifestyle.

Knowing the distance along the Thames will enable one to predict the arrival of everything from flood crests to pollution threats.