

**Time:** 3:05 - 8:55 pm

**Weather:** PC 31 mm; RH 65%; BP 101.3 kPa; haze/sun; S 5 - 10 kmh; T 29<sup>a</sup> C

**Activity:** Kee continues the search for new species

Once again, it was a delight to read the rain gauge, finding that 31 mm had fallen since our last visit. It was disappointing, on the other hand, to discover that the goldenrod was still nowhere near to being fully in bloom. Wasting no time, I took a brief excursion up the farm track to the Upper Meadow, finding what I thought would be our first Gem-studded Puffball on the track. I took the specimen shown



here, discovering later that the skin of the puffball had cracked open all over the surface, revealing a brown spore mass inside. This happens to be a characteristic of the White Puffball (*Lycoperdon conoidum*) and a new species in any case!

In the Upper Meadow, the “take” was not encouraging. I caught a nice Two-striped Grasshopper -- not new but it added to our image files. An Orchard Spider

also showed up in the net. Also not new, but unusual habitat for that species.

Back at camp, I made my way down the trail to Fleming Creek to change the sd card on the trail cam at the rapids. (Nothing showed up on this occasion.) Returning, I spotted a cryptic land snail clinging to the bark of an Ironwood Tree. It had faint stripes like the European Striped Snail but was much darker, transparent, only half the size, and the lip of the opening was not “reflected” or turned out.

The next excursion involved sweeping the Lower Meadow at a few random locations. My heart leapt when I spotted a beautiful orange and black beetle on a milkweed plant, a great image resulting. Only later did I find that it was already on our list as the Swamp Milkweed Leaf Beetle. As I walked along the end of the Lower Meadow, I noticed a new ant mound under construction beside the path. I have assumed that these are Allegheny Mound Ants, since the only other mound-building ant with similar coloration in eastern North America (*Formica integra*) is not in our area, whereas the Allegheny Ant is recorded from southern Ontario.

What appeared to be a new species of Bush Katydid showed up in one of the Lower Meadow sweeps, along with the second appearance in as many weeks of a “mystery bug” that we never mentioned before, since we had no idea what it was. It has a long beak rather like a Snout Beetle, but no antennae sprouting from the beak. It had the wing covers of a Cercopid (Spittlebug) and spines on the tibia of leg III. The critter has absorbed many hours of frustrating searches, bouncing back and forth between Steve Marshall’s wonderful book *Insects* (Firefly Books 2006) and Tom Murray’s equally wonderful website at pBase.com, not to mention numerous other ID sources. However, it never occurred to me to peruse the Plant-hopper section of Marshall’s book. How could it be a plant hopper with a beak like that? But there it was! Indelible, unique.

A final foray around 5 pm took me to the Thames River Trail to slowly walk the leg to the river (Edgar’s Trail). On the way, I dismounted Trail Cam #1 from its location at Edgar’s Elbow and used it to replace Cam #2 at The Hole. A large Shamrock Spider had a web beside the trail deep in the Blind Creek Forest east of the path. This was only our second glimpse of this magnificent Orb Weaver in 12 years.

### **Who’s that roaring?**

Although winds had been gradually increasing, stirring trees to wave in worry, the weather remained warm and comfortable. A thick haze had turned the sun into a

very bright moon all day. Thunderstorms were expected later in the evening but that would be then. This was now. I relaxed in the Nook. “Ahhh.”

Suddenly a succession of 12 “screams” obviously made by an animal with a large chest echoed through the Fleming Creek Forest below the creek bluffs next to the Nook. Or would it better be described as a roar? The calls were brief (a second or two) and even, neither rising nor falling in pitch. I practiced making the same sound by clearing my throat in just the right way.

Naturally I checked a variety of vocalizations on the web back home. Bear or Cougar? Nothing close enough to elicit “aha!” Deer? Maybe, but again no real match. On the other hand, the rutting season has started. Who knows? About ten minutes later the animal roared four more times. The sounds seemed closer and I looked anxiously down the Fleming Creek Trail nearby. “Hmmm.”

As if to compound the confusion, there was a sudden crashing noise from Eva’s Woods behind me in the opposite direction. A tree had apparently just fallen over. Beavers, I thought. Another thought linked the noises. Wouldn’t it be great if a large predator took out the beavers? “The enemy of my enemy is my friend.”

### **New Species:**

White Puffball	<i>Lycoperdon candidum</i>	LM/GF KD Au16/12
‘Dwarf Katydid’	[ <i>Meconema</i> sp.]	LM/GF KD Au16/12
‘Longnose Planthopper’	<i>Scolops sulcipes</i>	LM KD Au16/12
White Maple Blotch	<i>Julella fallaciosa</i>	GF KD Au16/12

**Notes:** The adult katydid I photographed is only 12 mm long (not counting what appears to be a short ovipositor peaking out from behind the wings). The only katydid I can find in any reference to be this size is the Drumming Katydid, but hesitate to pin that label, owing to its slow spread westward from New York State. (alien species) The White Blotch, a fungus that is a “part-time lichen”, seen virtually everywhere at Newport Forest on ash as well as maple, appears to be the only possible species according to a description by Ontario naturalist Bob Bowles.

### **Phenology:**

Acorns fully developed on Red Oak, Bur Oak; Goldenrod spp 10% in bloom

### **IMAGES:**





New ant mound under construction reveals thatch being knitted slowly together by grasses into the aboveground portion of a city of 10,000 or more Allegheny Mound Ants & Co.. At present the mound is one forearm wide by half a forearm high. (1.0 x 0.5 cubits, if you like.)

There are about 50 mounds in the one-hectare section of oldfield that we call the Regeneration Zone (nearby). We have mapped & measured them all. The largest are over a metre in diameter and about 50 cm in height. A mature colony could have a population as large as London, Ontario!

Two kinds of ants are sometimes found in these mounds, the Allegheny Mound Ant (*Formica exsectoides* group) with its reddish-brown head and thorax, and another, all-black species of *Formica* sp “slaves”. According to ant expert Gary Umphrey (if I heard him right), our part of southern Ontario is the “world capital for slave-making ants”.



Mysterious sunset followed an entire day when the sun resembled a rather bright moon! It went well with the mysterious screams (or growls) heard coming from the Fleming Creek Forest.

The camera looks across the Regen Zone at the ragged canopy of Blind Creek Forest, still recovering from the Great Bitternut Dieback of '06 '07.

The scene is somehow reminiscent of Gauguin.