

Time: Sunday 2:35 - 6:40 pm

Weather: Pr 23 mm; RH 43%; BP 102.3 kPa; Sky cld/sun; W 10 kmh; T 14° C

Activity: Walking main trail collecting plants with Pat & Kee

It was distinctly cool on site today, with few birds about or calling. Driving in along the old farm track, we could see the asters taking over from the goldenrods in the Upper Meadow, as in the image below. Whereas goldenrods are an almost uniform shade of yellow, the asters present a more varied palette of red, pink, white, purple, and blue. In the foreground several teasels have left their prickly



skeletons to winter over. I let Pat out a little further on. She wanted to visit the heritage apple tree on the distant rise where a farm house used to be. I continued down to the trailer, where I had a coffee inside. There was no point in carrying out the bee protocol, since there were no bees about -- and few other insects.

When Pat came into camp, she reported that the apple tree seemed to have borne

no fruit this year. She added that a few bedraggled Painted Ladies were still about, but the weather seemed more like November than late September.

We took a walk to the river, where I patrolled the beach for tracks: Virginia Deer, Raccoon, Coyote and Great Blue Heron. I looked for tracks of Spiny Softshell turtles hauling themselves onto the beach since the last rain. Nothing. We continued along the Thames River Trail up to the bluffs where Pat parked on the rest bench there. The Gentians are in bloom once again, dotting the bluffs with little clusters of dark blue. (Later, Pat would report no birds at all, only a distant crow.)

Deep in the Riverside Forest, I flushed a Wild Turkey about 50 m away. What powerful wings! Thrub-thrub-thrub-thrub! Up on the Hogsback I sat for a while on the bench there, but was given no rest by two Eastern Gray Squirrels scolding me from both sides simultaneously: “Move along, Jack!” “My name isn’t Jack!” “Whatever ...”

Back at camp by 5:30 pm, the sun finally broke through for good, flooding the meadow with warmth and light. Better late than never.

Birds: (9)

American Crow (LM); Black-capped Chickadee (GF); Blue Jay (GF); Canada Goose (BCF); Great Blue Heron (EW); Red-bellied Woodpecker (GF); Turkey Vulture (LM); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr); Wild Turkey (RSF)

Phenology: Gentians in full bloom, Asters 80% in bloom, Goldenrods dying back, with 20 % still in bloom; summer resident birds long gone; no Juncos yet

Trail cams: doe at Lower Rapids; Raccoons and Eastern Cottontail at The Hole.

Readers Write:

Patty Frank, a reader in San Diego, sends two fascinating videos:

“Here’s a cool uTube of one of the butterflies you mentioned in this Bulletin: Painted Lady Butterflies develop, emerge in time lapse:” (Pipevine Swallowtail emerges below that) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkiU9uFwqmw>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2cE86AA1q0&feature=relmfu>

(See first image below for a second message.)

IMAGES:



Mora Gregg

Mora Gregg, a reader in Winnipeg, sends this query:

“I feel as if I am there with you when I read your Newport posts. I just love it. Anyhow I need your help. I do not have a proper zoom and keep my distance from wildlife (except raccoons) when I spot critters. This raptor hung around my backyard for awhile the other day. Maybe, if you zoom in with your computer, you can figure it out. I couldn't.”

Can anyone help Mora? Could it be a Cooper’s Hawk?



Source: Russell G. Rhodes, Dept. of Biology, SW Missouri State

In the late summer/fall period local waters host a phenomenon as common at the micro level as leaf-fall at the macro level. A filamentous stream alga called *Cladophora* (those long, dark green tresses on rocks) becomes colonized by an ovoid diatom called *Cocconeis*, a microscopic epiphyte. Each diatom is like a tiny jewel-case made of glass (silica) and with a lid. The “jewel” is a chloroplast containing not our familiar green chlorophyll, but a golden light-absorbing pigment called xanthophyll.