

**Date and time:** Wednesday June 19 2013 2:10 - 7:50 pm

**Weather:** Prec 28 mm; RH 48%; BP 102.3 kPa; clear; SW 0-10 kmh; T 26° C

**Activities:** Sweeping for arthropods and grooming the Fleming Creek Trail

I stopped by the Hurdle house across from the main gate to check out a report from Nina of a “Milk Snake” on their property. Edgar, who saw the animal, gave the description of either a very large Brown Snake or, possibly, a Redbelly. The matter rests there, suspended between two (or more) uncertainties. There are some ten species of snakes living in southern Ontario, several of them becoming rare.



Back at Newport Forest, flowers of the Ninebark bushes had all turned from white to red, an annual June phenomenon. Thanks to recent rains, mosquitoes have become more bothersome than ever, even out in the open. I put off the final phase of the forest survey project in favour of three short walks, one to the creek, one to the river, and one up the road to the Copse.

Before even starting out, I noticed some mushrooms growing by the canoe stand. Turning one over, I spotted a growth of a secondary fungus called *Hypomyces* a kind of fungus-on-fungus disease. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, male and female, seemed to be everywhere, almost as numerous as Blue Jays.

I took the Fleming Creek trail down the creek bluffs, net in hand. I noticed almost immediately that the trail had become overgrown and badly in need of grooming. Nothing comes for free at Newport Forest. New species and other observations have to be paid for by more or less constant maintenance. (end of sermon) A few sweeps by the creek brought very little of interest to view, except for an all-green Mirid (bug) that I could not identify, even to genus, with any certainty. And then an even more mysterious Mirid showed up, short and with an arrowhead on its dorsum for which no match could be found later, even after reviewing hundreds of separate images of this genus. A good candidate for “outsourcing”, I suppose. On the way back up, I found several sprouts of Black-footed Polypores growing by one of the liner logs.

On the second foray, I walked from camp across the Lower Meadow and into the Blind Creek Forest. In almost every sweep along the way, from meadow to river, a green-and-black striped bug kept showing up. I didn't recognize it and assumed it was new, only to be disappointed later when I examined the images in my camera. It was already on the list: the common Four-lined Plant Bug. The river was only moderately high, just covering Mussel Beach. More Four-lined Plant Bugs were out on the Landing, of course

Returning to the Lower Meadow, I continued the search, but this time more fruitfully. A long-legged spider that I didn't recognize showed up. Again with the misplaced delight. (See the first image below.) As I went, I kept looking for ripe Wild Strawberries. Lots of plants, but no berries. Had they all been eaten? A tortoise beetle that I thought to be a Lady Beetle provided another surprise later on. Then a new Dryomyzid fly and a new Mayfly rounded out the day's take.

Taking lunch in the Nook, I was visited for the second time in as many weeks by a Gray Catbird that eyed the feeder, now monopolized by Blue Jays. Ruffians and bullies! The catbird flew to some nearby bushes to mew plaintively.

I walked up the road and past the power lines, sweeping selectively along the way. More four-liners, of course, but little else. In the Copse itself (an open area within the Gallery Forest that lines the Creek Bluffs) I found little more. I clawed the leaf litter for Carabid and other Beetles, finding nothing except a mushroom that

resembled *Cordyceps*, but probably wasn't. On the way back I noticed that the Hop Tree was in full flower. Such a powerful aroma from such little flowers!

It was time to pay the piper for all this excitement. Brush hook in hand, I descended the Fleming Creek trail a second time, hacking, whacking and puffing. I noted that the trail could also use a good scraping with a hoe to level it. Reluctant to leave, I had a coffee in the Nook, only to be visited by the creature I call the "Swamp Coon", based on the rural legend of an all-black Raccoon. This one was nevertheless very dark, with a solid mask that took up most of its facial real estate. I broke camp and drove out. Peter Rabbit was late saying good-bye, dashing across my track as I passed under the power lines and on to the Upper Meadow.

### **Birds:** (13)

American Robin (HBF); Blue Jay (GF); Common Yellowthroat (PL); Downy Woodpecker (GF); Field Sparrow (PL); Gray Catbird (Nk); Great Blue Heron (FC); Mourning Dove (GF/W); Northern Cardinal (FCF); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (Tr); Song Sparrow (LM); Tree Swallow (Rd); White-breasted Nuthatch (BCF)

**Phenology:** Butter-and-eggs, Ox-eye daisy, Wild Garlic, Honewort, Hop Tree, all in full bloom.

### **New Species:**

|                             |                              |                  |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|
| 'Little Dingy Jumper'       | <i>Zygoballus nervosus</i>   | LM KD Je19/13    |
| 'Bug-eyed Mayfly'           | <i>Stenacron</i> sp.         | LM KD Je19/13    |
| Virginia Creeper Treehopper | <i>Telamona ampelopsidis</i> | LM KD Je19/13    |
| Meadow Plant Bug            | <i>Leptoterna dolobratus</i> | LM KD Je19/13    |
| 'Candy-striped Dryomyzid'   | <i>Dryomyza [anilis]</i>     | LM KD Je19/13    |
| 'White Agaric Hypomycete'   | <i>Hypomyces</i> sp.         | LM/GF KD Je19/20 |

**Note:** For every arthropod examined and photographed, there are about five, on average, that I despair of identifying, owing mainly to their small size or nondescript appearance.

**Calling all Entomologists:** Here are two problems: 1. Is *Leptoterna dolobratus* a synonym for *Miris dolobratus*? 2. Does the Golden Tortoise Beetle sometimes lack the small black spots entirely? {image available on request}

### **IMAGES:**



This long-jawed orbweaver, *Tetragnatha straminea* by name, is our most common spider in the genus. Its very large chelicerae (a pair of “jaws” for seizing and holding prey) sport fangs that inject the victim with venom, liquifying\* its internal organs. I will skip the sordid details of what happens next. Here, the spider faces left, with its jaws at a 45° angle downward in front. (Net has a 1-mm+ mesh so the body is about 1 cm in length.)

\*as most spiders do, in any case



One good fungus deserves another. Here, the underside of a Meadow Mushroom (at a guess) is attacked by a fungus belonging to a genus of Ascomycete called *Hypomyces*, visible as a cottony mycelial network on the surface of the mushroom. Using the *Hypomyces* pages of the PEET Project -- Systematic Mycology & Microbiology Lab -- I narrowed the possible species of *Hypomyces* from 35 down to eight, but had to leave it there, owing to lack of information about the spore-producing tissues. The genus has 53 species worldwide.