

Date and time: June 23 2013 2:05 - 7:30 pm

Weather: Pr 3 mm; RH 60%, BP 101.9 kPa; clear/haze, SW 5-15 kmh, T 35° C

Activities: We survey the Riverside Forest and hunt for new species

“Look”, said Pat as we drove into the Upper Meadow. “The old Catalpa is in bloom.” I stopped to take a picture. Some people think the Northern Catalpa is



not a “native” tree. It’s certainly native to North America and may well have grown in this area before the last ice age. It thrives in open fields, roadsides and forest edges, not to mention the height of land shown here. This tree is 40-plus years old.

We continued along the farm track beside the Gallery Forest, a long, narrow wood that crowns the creek bluffs. For the record it is the dry oak-hickory type, typical

of area upland forests. Forest types were on my mind as we arrived in camp. Pat went to clip overhang along the trail down to Fleming Creek, while I plastered myself with mosquito repellent in preparation for a circuit of the Thames River Trail -- and a lengthy stay in the Riverside Forest for another go at tree census.

Resting on the River Bluffs bench, I noticed that the Spreading Dogbane was in bloom, delicate pink flowers in twos and threes. The river was down another foot from the last visit, now exposing Mussel Beach. A Summer Azure butterfly bobbed by.

Off the bluffs and into the Riverside Forest via Bluebell Woods. I had intended to make a side trip to the Sand Bar, but it was too overgrown. Weedeater time! Back on the main trail, I picked up the census at the ecotone between the Riverside Forest and what we call the Beech-maple Forest. (It actually has a long way to go before it reverts to that type.) At the moment the percentages of Sugar (and Black) maple, 64%, and White Ash, 13%, make it a maple-ash forest -- so far. I stopped there, having run out of steam and dreaming of the Hogsback bench with a cold coke in my hand. But before leaving, I spotted a troop of trumpet-shaped mushrooms growing on old Bitternut logs. These turned out to be a new species.

I made my way up to the top of the Hogsback to take my reward on the bench there, glorying in the still-cold coca-cola. No rest for the weary. Continuing on down to the Blind Creek Forest, I was dismayed to discover yet another giant Black Willow (X) had fallen over. That makes something like four out of six that have suffered this fate. Why are they doing that? They're not dead, they just fall over radially, with each giant trunk going in a different direction. Does it have something to do with lack of moisture? Last year's precipitation was very low indeed, for example, and the other falls occurred mostly in 2005-2006, following an extended dry spell. (See the **Precipitation Report** below.)

Back at camp, I discovered that Pat had added more birds and butterflies to her lists. She mentioned "miniature grasshoppers" down by the creek, so I went down to sweep for them. Only when I got home did I realize they were wingless and therefore probably nymphal. I also tried to net another example of the Mirid bug I call the "Arrowhead Bug" with no luck. There was still time to search the Lower Meadow for more species. I was lucky to find a new, brightly coloured, easy-to-identify Mirid (See below), as well as a new Weevil that specializes in Milkweed, which is where I found it.

We sat in the Nook to enjoy what was left of the day. Chipmunks continued with

their birdseed shuttle service, rushing down the old Black Maple to make the next deposit in their underground seed banks. Pat went up the road to check on the Indigo Bunting zone, only to miss a visit by her favorite animal, Peter Cottontail. By 7:30 we had locked the gate and were gone.

Birds: (14)

American Crow (EW); American Robin (RSF); Blue Jay (GF/E); Common Flicker (BCF); Common Grackle (LM); Common Yellowthroat (ET); Downy Woodpecker (GF); Field Sparrow (UM); Gray Catbird (FC); Northern Cardinal (LM); Red-bellied Woodpecker (RSF); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (Tr); Song Sparrow (LM); Turkey Vulture (HBF);

Leps: (11)

Cabbage White (RB); Clouded Sulphur (UM); Eastern Comma (LM); European Skipper (LM); Least Skipper (LM); Little Wood Satyr (Nk); Monarch (LM); Red-spotted Purple (FC); Silver-spotted Skipper (LM); Summer Azure (RB); Virginia Ctenucha (Nk)

Phenology: In flower: Blue-eyed Grass, Catalpa, Garlic Mustard; Gray Dogwood, Moneywort, Spreading Dogbane, Wild Garlic. River and creek at normal levels.

Note: The foregoing observations are all made while engaged in other activities, We rarely go “birding” as a separate activity, for example. (We see what we see.)

New Species:

‘Orange-sided Plant Bug’	<i>Lepodea media</i>	LM KD Je22/13
Milkweed Stem Weevil	<i>Rhysomatus palmacolls</i>	LM KD Je22/13
Wood Clitocybe*	<i>Clitocybe ectypoides</i>	RSF/S KD Je22/13
	* to be confirmed	

Precipitation Report: (all amounts in mm)

	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
To June 30	393	268	690	292	518	544	305	453	345	200	260
Year’s total		704	1243	744	926	1227	674	1020	667	617	756
Annual average for area = 973 mm (based on Can. Climate Normals)											

IMAGES:



Lopidea media tries to climb the wall of my sample jar. This is a Mirid bug with a vast range that includes most of the continental US and adjacent (eastern) Canada.



Greenish discoloration below rapids marks the beginning of the annual Cladophora cycle. This filamentous alga will slowly spread upstream until it cloaks the rapids in “green hair”.