

**Date and time:** Tuesday July 2 2013 2:10 - 5:35 pm

**Weather:** Pr 15 mm; RH 78%; BP 101.9 kPa; calm; ovcast; T 23° C

**Activities:** Trail maintenance and more arthropods

As usual, Steve had preceded me into camp and had already finished touching up the main trail, as far as Bluebell Woods, when I arrived. The area around the trailer looked almost lawnlike. All was in readiness for the Great Annual July Butterfly count to be held next Sunday in the local area. On that day or on subse-



The Newport Forest “Headquarters” consist of this trailer, a tiny perfect weather station (extreme left) and a Nook (under the trees in behind)

quent ones, butterfly enthusiasts all over North America will be out logging and counting every species of butterfly they come across. The Annual Count provides invaluable information to all who monitor “ecosystem health” (whatever that is).

I brought with me an electric weedeater, a wimpy affair compared to Steve’s gas-

powered model. It sufficed for about 200 m of the Blind Creek Trail before its charge ran out. Steve completed the trail down to the creek. We then sat in the Nook swatting at mosquitoes and discussing the sad state of Delaware languages.

After Steve left, I decided to spend the rest of the afternoon finding what I could in the way of arthropods, although little enough time was left. I swept with the net along the road in in the Lower Meadow, often rediscovering earlier finds such as *Phiddipus clarus*, a brown-sided jumping spider, *Scopula inductata*, the Soft-line Wave Moth, and *Melanoplus bivittata*, the Two-striped Grasshopper, to name a few. Then I switched collecting methods, spreading a white sheet below bushes and striking them with a stick (literally beating the bushes). In this manner I found a new Harvestman, a distinctively marked species of black-and-white *Leiobunum* that found its match in Tom Murray's arthropod galleries.

The final find was a Tabanid fly that may or may not have been a new species of *Chrysops* for us. This fly looked down at me from the underside of an overhead leaf while I gingerly photographed it. "Good heavens!" I exclaimed. "It has blue eyes just like me."

The hot and heavy overcast suddenly dispelled, a cooling breeze sprang up, and mosquitoes called off their kamikaze raids. A Hummingbird darted along the bushes by the road, just as it had on our last visit. Then an Eastern Cottontail hopped out of the Lower Meadow to seek its fortune along the road. It hopped right past me, seemingly oblivious to my presence and on into the Nook. Shortly after leaving the property, I blinked in astonishment. Was that a young Red Fox that dashed across the road in front of me?

### **New Species:**

'Black-and-White Harvestman'      *Leiobunum* sp.      LM/GF KD J12/13

### **Precipitation Report**

Based on a statistical analysis of annual precipitation over the previous ten years, as well as this year's figure to the end of June, we gladly announce that the year 2013 will yield 957 mm, give or take 110 mm with 95% probability! Precipitation to June predicts the total with this degree of reliability. How can you not love statistics? It could well be called an exact science of uncertainty.

### **IMAGES:**



A Soft Line Wave moth graces a leaf in the Nook. Want a challenge? Try holding an Annual Moth Count! The moth species of North America outnumber the Butterfly species by more than ten-to-one! Just as people who watch birds are called “birders”, so those who watch moths should be called ”mothers”, according to one reader. (This may account for the hobby’s relative lack of popularity.)



With over 80 species of the Deerfly *Chrysops* worldwide, many of them in the area and many being lookalikes, I was hard pressed to tell whether this was *C.striatus*, *C. vittatus*, or some other species of *Chrysops*.

The eyes of *Chrysops* spp are amazing when viewed closely. The ground colour is usually gold, green or blue, and marked with dots, stripes and curlicues, as here. Some of these colours are structural in nature (interference patterns produced by multilayered lenses) and some are screening pigments that allow the fly to “see” the complementary colour.