

Date and time: Sunday July 7 2013 1:05 - 7:35 pm

Weather: Pr 14 mm; RH 81%; BP 101.7 kPa; ovcast; S 0 - 10 kmh; T 28° C

Activities: Annual Butterfly Count & a trip up the river

The afternoon began with heavy overcast and a few spotty showers. Would the Butterfly count be canceled? Steve had already arrived by van and Darren by boat. Pat and I sat in the Nook with them, discussing the big news: Darren had spotted a Map Turtle near the riverbank just downstream from the Landing yesterday, as in the image here. Steward Erin Carroll, a specialist in aquatic biology, agreed with



Darren Jacobs

the identification. Since it was in the Newport portion of the river, we get to add it to the ATBI list. By no means rare, this species has nevertheless been declining in abundance and declared of “special concern.” Darren says the turtle was basking near the “Sandbar” area of the forest, a massive ridge of flood-deposited sand and an ideal nesting site. Naturally we’re hoping for a breeding pair!

The “butterfliers” were late. While I waited for them to arrive in camp, Darren took Pat upriver in his motorboat to show her an interesting wildlife zone. They spotted a Bald Eagle, a “family” of four Belted kingfishers, Spotted Sandpipers, and an Osprey on their trip. Steve picked Blackcaps at the Landing while he waited for their return.

Seven members of the butterfly counting team led by Gavin Platt and Ann White finally arrived, setting right to work. Meanwhile, Darren and I decided to visit the mouth of Fleming Creek. This involved a trek across the waste field next to Newport Forest and into a subtropical tangle of River Grape, Poison Ivy vines and thick, humid foliage until we found ourselves perched on a steep bank just above the mouth of the creek. Darren had wanted to show us the floating dock he had salvaged from the river during a recent flood. Later he will tow it elsewhere.

Behind us lay the old “mouth” of Fleming Creek leading into the chain of vernal ponds that we call Blind Creek. We turned and followed Blind Creek until we intercepted the main trail. Along the way we spotted several Green Dragon plants, some with “flowers” (a long yellow spadix like a dragon’s tongue) still present.

Back in camp, Pat collected a bucket of ripe Blackcaps, giving it to Darren, who particularly enjoys the fruit. She had never seen so many Blackcaps on site. The population seems to be expanding. While examining one bush, she spotted a Carrion Beetle, *Silpha americana*, resting on a leaf nearby and sniffing with its antennae for the windborne scent of rotting flesh or dung.

When the butterfly counters returned to camp, we fed them cookies and drinks. Among the more interesting finds was the Little Glassy Wing, a skipper. Perhaps the most common butterfly on site over the day was the Little Wood Satyr. They seemed to be flying everywhere one looked! Notable by their absence were Crescents, Coppers, and Monarchs, but we have seen these on earlier visits. Weather conditions may have put them off their game.

Birds: (21)

American Crow (UM); American Goldfinch (LM); American Robin (FCF); Bald Eagle (TR); Bank Swallow (TR); Belted Kingfisher (TR); Blue Jay (GF); Common Grackle (GF); Common Yellowthroat (LM); Field Sparrow (UM); Gray Catbird (BCF); Great Blue Heron (TR); Mourning Dove (BCF); Northern Cardinal (FC); Osprey (TR); Red-bellied Woodpecker (EW); Red-eyed Vireo (BCF); Song Sparrow (LM); Spotted Sandpiper (TR); Tree Sparrow (HP); Wood Thrush (EW)

Butterflies: (16) (Raw list: no location codes, no counts)

American Lady; Cabbage White; Clouded Sulphur; Coral Hairstreak; Eyed Brown; Delaware Skipper; Dun Skipper; Eastern Tailed Blue; European Skipper; Great Spangled Fritillary; Little Glassy Wing; Little Wood Satyr; Red Admiral; Summer Azure; Tiger Swallowtail; Wood Nymph

Phenology:

Monarda and Yellow Loosestrife in Bloom, Blackcaps about 50% fully ripe.

New species:

'Yellow-collared Mirid'	<i>Prepops insitivus</i>	Tr KD JI02/13
'Two-lined Mirid'	<i>Stenodema vicinum</i>	LM KD Je27/13
Green Shield Bug (nymph)	<i>Palomena prasina</i>	LM KD Je27/13
Bagworm Moth	<i>Psyche casta</i>	Nk KD JI02??
Northern Map Turtle	<i>Graptemys geographica</i>	TR/SB DJ JI07/13

Readers Write:

Darren Jacobs, a Newport Forest Steward, has written to warn that Ontario's environmental protection laws are being gutted. Legislation passed two weeks ago has opened the way for developers to clear wetlands and woodlots almost at will. A fuller story appeared recently in the Globe & Mail:

<http://thestar.blogs.com/worlddaily/2013/06/cabinet-passes-endangered-species-decision-engos-see-red.html#.UbHpiNd73wo.email>

Websites of Interest:

Readers should bookmark Erin Carroll's website, "Nature in Ontario's Banana Belt". Always changing, the site may soon display one of Darren Jacobs' great images of the Belted Kingfisher. <http://erintown.blogspot.ca/>

New readers wishing a crash course on Newport Forest may visit Kee Dewdney's website and click on "Newport Forest". Read the history and then scroll to the bottom for archives where over 800 site visit reports may be accessed by simply clicking on a date: <http://www.csd.uwo.ca/~akd/>

IMAGES:



This larval home of the Bagworm moth *Psyche casta* may be compared with several dozen just like it by entering the phrase “Psyche casta” into the Google Images search engine. The “cases” or “bags” of moths in the family Psychidae are unique to their larvae. The adult is a drab little grayish-brown moth.



Our best insect close-up yet features the front half of a Northern Green-striped Grasshopper, *Chortophaga viridifasciata*, a species first recorded in July of 2011. Note the “false-pupil” effect. As explained to us by entomologist Stan Caveney, the compound eye of an insect is composed of ommatidia, long narrow cones, each gathering light from a small sector of ground or sky. In some insects the ommatidia that happen to have your eye in their field of view appear dark because you happen to be looking down them, a kind of digital pupil. Thus no matter what angle you view such an insect from, it appears to be watching you, as indeed it is!

Here, the grasshopper rests on the warm hood of a parked vehicle. Is that a tiny mite at the hind corner of the grasshopper’s thoracic sclerite (ie. armour-plate)?