Monitoring Nature

Date and time: Sunday July 21 2013 2:45 - 6:50 pm
Weather: Pr 2 mm; RH 45%; BP 101.7 kPa; sun/cld; N 0 - 10 kmh; T 30º C
Activity: Pat & Kee collect plants & arthropods

The dog days of summer are upon us! This Dog Day Cicada (*Tibicens canicularis*) warms its "vocal chords" (stridulating organ) in the sun before attempting its first

songs. The Dog Day Cicada is the only species of cicada found so far at Newport Forest and we knew what it was immediately. The same is not true of the species described below. But to make the prose a little smoother, we'll pretend to have known them (or not) on the spot.

We have made no serious efforts to collect plants so far this year, so we began to collect again, just a few at a time, as some of them may take hours to identify. Ideally, one wants to have either flower or seeds, along with the entire plant, roots

and all. With occasional help from Jane Bowles and other professionals, Pat has added some 477 species of plants, both woody and herbaceous, to the ATBI list.

As we set up camp, we noticed lots of bumblebees around, but searched in vain for honeybees. We walked to the river along Edgar's Trail (once again Mosquito Alley) and found ourselves serenaded by a Common Yellowthroat everywhere we went. Was that because I kept trying to imitate its call? The beach was hot, but mostly exposed as the still-muddy river slowly returns to normal levels. I found the tracks of a turtle that had come to sun itself on the beach recently, probably a Spiny Softshell, since that is the only turtle we ever see on the beach. (about 20 sightings in 13 years).

Ahead of me on the beach, Pat searched for American Snout Butterflies, while I busied myself with a wolf spider scurrying among the rocks. Later at the Landing I snagged a new Mirid, a narrow bug called *Collaria*. I also collected two plants for Pat (picking up a third later at the creek later). She identified two of the plants as Yellow Sweet Clover (*Melilotus officionalis*) and Yellow Pimpernel (*Taenidia integerrima*). Neither of them was new.

It was to be a day of nymphs. A small green bush cricket with extremely long antennae turned out to be a nymph of *Conocephalus,* a genus of Katydids. Later I found a beautiful miniature brown grasshopper, only to realize that it too was a nymph (no wings), but of a species I could not even guess at.

As we left the landing, winding our way up the steep and nearly overgrown trail, Pat spotted a cicada that I must have passed within a foot of, but missed. This reminded me of Pat's informal name in Delaware: "Pataway-yusawk" or "She brings the animals". Darren's translation is shorter: "Animal Magnet" Along Edgar's trail I spied a moth and caught it, a beautiful *Drapana* Hooktip moth.

Pat came to the Nook a bit late, as walking is now a challenge for her. As we relaxed, a Gray Tree Frog called twice. But our attention was diverted by an Eastern Chipmunk foraging at the base of the Black Maple. Something was wrong. The chipmunk kept falling over onto its right side, as though it had some kind of neurological damage. Could it be the virus known as Lacrosse Encephalitis? This is a mosquito-borne disease of rabbits, squirrels and chipmunks.

The Lower Meadow yielded a modest harvest of earlier finds: an Andrenid Bee foraging on Monarda flowers and a Tarnished Plant Bug (*Lygus lineolarus*), one of the most common bugs in the area. Again, I searched every flower I could see

for honeybees. None. Just a myriad of Bumblebees roaring this way and that!

The Nook proved more fruitful than the meadow. A female Blue-fronted Dancer, deceptively dressed in yellowish brown, sunned itself on a nearby log. Then, crawling right in front of me on the cedar table, was an immature stage of a plant bug, *Leptoterna* sp. (Again with the nymphs) Also on the table was a small black beetle that looked like a Nitidulid (the kind that likes to attend human picnics and fall into their drinks) marked with four little pink spots, a Four-spotted Sap Beetle. Finally I got up to stroll around, only to find a diminutive brown nymph with spiny legs and upturned abdomen on a leaf. No other nymph resembles that of the Coelidia Plant Hopper, apparently.

On the way out we stopped in the Upper Meadow to check a patch of teasels, now in flower. Nearby were several areas in the long grass hollowed out by resting deer, a small herd of four. Daybeds or night beds?

Birds: (13)
American Crow (UM); American Robin (RB); Blue Jay (GF); Canada Warbler (RL); Conmmon Grackle (HO/VP); Common Yellowthroat (RL); Field Sparrow (UM); Gray Catbird (GF); Red-winged Blackbird (TR); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (Tr); Song Sparrow (LM); Tree Swallow (Rd); Turkey Vulture (Rd)

Phenology: no Honeybees to be seen, Bumblebees abundant.

New species: (All species imagery is available on request.)

"Wavy browncaps"	[*Clitocybe irina*]*	CP kdGT Jl16/13
"Lemon Bolete"	[Boletus spadiceus]	CP kdGT Jl16/13
Thin-legged Wolf Spider	[*Pardosa lapidicina*]	MB KD Jl21/13
Coelidia Plant Hopper	[*Coelidia olitoria*]**	GF KD Jl21/13
'Red-legged Plant Bug"	*Collaria meilleurii*	RL KD Jl21/13
Four-spotted Sap Beetle	*Glischrochilus quadrisignatus*	Nk KD Jl21/13
Arched Hooktip Moth	*Drepana arcuata*	ET KD Jl21/13

* Generic synonyms are *Lepista* and *Xerocomus*, respectively. Greg would need the specimens to firm up either of these IDs.
** This was a nymph. Such forms are often unique to their corresponding adults and can be identified on that basis in such cases.

IMAGES:

This Andrenid bee explores florets of Monarda for unconsumed nectar. Its face and thorax are covered with an orange-yellow pile, as here. The genus Andrena contains over 1500 species. They are generally called “mining bees” because they nest under the ground.

A thin-legged Wolf Spider (genus *Pardosa*) prowls the clay beach, looking for prey among the rocks & clay. At some point, it lost Leg 4 on its right side, but it ran surprisingly fast, in any case.

This species is highly variable in its markings, including none! Our specimen has the right size and length of leg, a vague white medial stripe on the carapace, long spines on legs, and matching the following habitat description (from Kaston's *How to know the Spiders*): "These spiders run about swiftly over rocky shores, among stones and clay banks, and among rocks on talus slopes." (a fitting description of the clay beach at the foot of the river bluffs.)