

**Date and Time:** Saturday August 17 2013 1:45 - 6:30 pm

**Weather:** Pr 4 mm; RH 50%; BP 102.6; clear; calm; T 31° C

**Activity:** trail maintenance and a riparian roundup

Darren Jacobs and his uncle Glen were on site when we (Pat, Kee and our son Jonathan visiting from LA) arrived. Waiting for Erin, we heard about Glen's recent visit to a powwow in Wisconsin. After Erin arrived, she and Pat, along with Darren, went out to the river to visit the bluffs. The rest of us groomed the trail to the river, heavy work that left me a bit dizzy. Glen wielded a machete!



It was hot out on Mussel Beach. While Glen and I searched for mussel shells, Erin found a living example of the Spike Clam (*Elliptio dilatata*), as above, stranded but still heavy with its inner life. We also examined examples of Warty-back, Maple Leaf, Heel-splitter, Mucket, and other species, not to mention a generous helping of some 350 million-year-old brachiopods. We know one as *Spirifer pinnatus*, but have avoided the temptation to list it. (Erin rehabilitated the clam.)

Coming in earlier, Pat and Erin had watched a flock of Killdeers flying over the river, accompanied by two smaller birds that Erin thought might just be Least Sandpipers. Up on the bluffs to reexamine last week's reported Bush Clover, they

spotted two Eastern Garter snakes. As for the plant, Darren also took a second look, then searched for new plants along the bluffs for a while. As an experiment he walked a transect straight up and over the bluffs -- actually one end of the Hogsback, where it meets the river nearly head-on. Crossing that end, he encountered a potential new species of *Desmodium*, as below.

Eventually we all repaired to the Nook for cake, grapes, and soft drinks, discussing our finds in the shade of the giant Black Maple. There were few birds about, owing to the heat. Meanwhile, Jonathan tested a high-powered telescopic zoom lens, finding that one leaf of a walnut some 80 m away filled his image plane. That should work well for distant birds!

While the others lazed in the Nook, Erin and I showed our grit by heading down to the Lower Rapids of Fleming Creek. Here, she waded barefoot, while I was content with "soakers". We dislodged enough rocks to net a Rainbow Darter, a Bluntnose Minnow (if not a Spot-tail Shiner), and three Northern Clearwater Crayfish. But the real fun came when Erin started to examine some of the immature forms clinging to the rocks in fast-flowing water. I wasn't too surprised by the nymphal mayflies, but amazed when she announced (pupal) Blackflies. Aren't they supposed to be up north? For sure, but present here, as well, apparently. On a riparian site it helps to have an aquatic biologist on the team.

It had been a beautiful day but, with six people on site, a somewhat disorganized one. The maintenance operations had gotten short shrift, but the search for new species brought a bounty. Reluctantly, we followed the others out to the road.

**Birds:** (8)

American Crow (TR); Belted Kingfisher (TR); Cedar Waxwing (TR); Killdeer (TR); Gray Catbird (RB); Mourning Dove (GF); Northern Cardinal (GF); Rough-winged Swallow (TR);

**Leps:** (8)

American Snout (MB); Giant Swallowtail (BCF); Hackberry Emperor (MB); Milkweed Tussock Moth (RL); Monarch (RB); Red-spotted Purple (FC); Silver-spotted Skipper (MB); Summer Azure (ET)

**Phenology:** Cicadas calling, Sweet Joe-pye Weed in full bloom

## **New Species:**

Showy Tick Trefoil	<i>Desmodium [canadense]</i>	RB djPD Au10/13
Pointed Tick Trefoil	[ <i>Desmodium glutinosum</i> ]	HB/E DJ Au17/13
Net-spinning Caddisfly	Hydropsychidae	LR EC Au17/13
Black Fly	Simuliidae	LR EC Au17/13
Flat-headed Mayfly	Heptageniidae	LR EC Au17/13
Small Squaregill Mayfly	Caenidae	LR EC Au17/13
Small Minnow Mayfly	[Baetidae]	LR EC Au17/13

## **Species Notes:**

Allen Woodliffe, a retired MNR botanist, has reviewed the imagery for the Bush Clover reported in the last Bulletin and thinks we have *Desmodium*, instead. Pat and Erin took a sample and keyed the plant out to *Desmodium*, concluding Showy Tick Trefoil. They also found other plants which will be examined at leisure. The pointed Tick Trefoil reported by Darren will be suspended, as above, until we have good imagery or a specimen.

The five families of stream invertebrates found by Erin are all new. In order, the metamorphic stages were: larva, pupa, nymph, nymph, nymph. (an Insect cheer?) Erin says of the last find, "I also saw a probable baetidae (nymph), but I need to get that one under a scope to be sure."

The ATBI list works as follows: A new family counts as a species since there must have been at least one species present for the family to be observed. Later, if we identify a species in that family, the record is replaced by a more detailed entry, but the count does not change.

## **Nature in Ontario's Banana Belt:**

Readers might wish to bookmark Erin's website and blog with the above title at:

<http://erintown.blogspot.ca/>

By checking it every week, readers can follow Erin around southern Ontario as she reports on her finds. She works for the St Clair Conservation Authority in Strathroy. The latest blog shows imagery from today's visit, including a Coyote!

## **IMAGES:**



Erin and Pat on the beach, keying out plants (above). Later, Pat showed us a Water Hemlock they found nearby (not new). Every part of this plant is deadly poisonous. (with apologies for cracked background)





This nymph of the stink bug *Eustichus variolatus* gave me much trouble to nail down. I knew it was a nymph, but initially took it for a shield-back, a family close to the stink bugs. Interestingly, the close relationship of the two families produced enough lookalikes to keep me going for a considerable period, continually bedeviled by the nymphal approximation to the adult form. Examining the head more closely, I slapped my own forehead. Of course! It's a stink bug. The prize came at last: a dead match from a reliable source, nymph and all. Unfortunately, the species was already on the list. We found an adult in a sample dated July 12/05 from a malaise trap installed by entomologist Nina Zitani.