

**Date and time:** Friday August 23 2013 3:40 - 7:35 pm

**Weather:** Pr 19mm?; RH 38%; BP 102.1 kPa; sun/cld; calm, T 32° C

**Activity:** Looking for plants, animals, and protists

On arriving I scanned the Lower Meadow eagerly. I had visualized the goldenrod (eight species) being in full bloom, abuzz and acrawl with insects. Nothing of the sort. Only about 20-30% of the plants had even begun to flower. Nevertheless, I began a search of the Lower meadow, plant by plant, coming across a bee seven



times in the process, a great improvement over previous counts. I practiced my close-up photography on these creatures, catching one in mid-flight by sheer accident. Overall, there was little to get excited about except for a small black

spider on a sheet web hung from a tall plant. It looked superficially like a Black Widow, but turned out to be the *Frontinella* (Linyphiid) Bowl-and-doily spider of which we had previously seen only the characteristic web.

With little action in the meadow, I turned to plan B for the day: to take a water sample from one of the lagoons out on the beach before they all dried up. Following the trail to the river, I spotted a black moth with white spots on the wings, not the Forester, but the Anania moth. Then a movement underfoot betrayed a young American Toad about an inch long, possibly hatched in 2012.

Before going to Mussel Beach, I took the trail up to the river bluffs to search for the Pointed-leaved Tick Trefoil that Darren saw earlier in the week. Following his directions, I climbed above the trail, arriving after much difficulty, on top of the Hogsback's eastern end. Along the way I had been harassed by Multiflora Rose (really nasty), Prickly Ash (fairly nasty), Blackcap brambles (scratchy), and Hawthorns so thorny that even the thorns had thorns! Motoring on, I continued to look for the Trefoil but found none. Was it over? Somehow I got turned around and, thinking I was descending to the north back to the river bluffs trail, I actually descended south into the Blind Creek Forest. This meant a long walk back to the River Landing, beach and bluffs, with no new Tick Trefoil to show for my pains.

I examined the Dogbane plants above Mussel Beach, pleased to see several Dogbane Beetles at work. (See IMAGES blow.) Down on the clay beach, one lagoon had not yet dried out, so I took a large sample consisting of a rock encrusted by a pale, cottony mass of green filamentous alga. Such masses are like miniature aquatic forests with their own "flora and fauna", so to speak, of tiny protists, along with micro-animals like Cyclops and various species of Copepod. On the way back I changed the sd cards on the trail cams, closed camp and headed home.

As an illustration of the rarefaction process (finding ever-fewer new species), here is a list of today's arthropods, along with the years of record. No new species!

|                           |                                |        |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|--------|
| Bowl-and-doily Spider     | <i>Frontinella pyramitella</i> | (2012) |
| Twice-stabbed Stink Bug   | <i>Cosmopepla bimaculata</i>   | (2001) |
| Alfalfa Plant Bug         | <i>Adelphocoris lineolatus</i> | (2012) |
| Dogbane Beetle            | <i>Chrysochus auratus</i>      | (2001) |
| Eight-spotted Anania Moth | <i>Anania funebris glom.</i>   | (2005) |
| Square-headed Wasp*       | <i>Ectemnius?</i>              | (2005) |

\* sent off for comment in case it isn't *Ectemnius*

**Phenology:** goldenrod 30 % in bloom, Milkweed yellowing

Checking our phenology records I found the earliest goldenrod bloom on August 13, the latest on August 23 -- today's date. So the bloom will be late.

**New species:** (none)

**Note:** At first the alga in the lagoon sample seemed to be be *Rhizoclonium* (a new species), because of its sparse branching and lamellate walls. But when I measured the cell diameters, they turned out to exceed the maximum for that species, keying me immediately over to the already-recorded *Cadophora glomerata*, another filamentous branching alga that shares those characters and grows in the rapids of Fleming Creek.

### **READERS WRITE:**

Steward Darren Jacobs happened to sight the reclusive Yellow-billed Cuckoo (aka The Rain Crow) at the Delaware Nation on August 6 of this year and made a video which he sent to us. Be sure to watch it by clicking on the video icon in the email message containing this issue of the *Bulletin*. Dave Martin, a professional bird expert, was especially interested in the video as it contained calls by this species he had never heard before.

Greg Zeigler, a reader in Santa Fe NM, sends this fascinating website about a wasp that turns a spider into a zombie babysitter!

<http://mentalfloss.com/article/51970/meet-wasp-turns-spiders-zombie-construction-workers#ixzz2bLns9s1K>

Mora Gregg, a reader in Winnipeg MB, sends an account of squirrels bombing people from her walnut tree: "If one was playing, gardening or merely walking by, the squirrels would deliberately peel the walnuts sitting on a branch above one's head, dripping brown juice; if one moved the squirrel would too. There was no avoiding them. They also enjoyed dropping whole walnuts on anything that moved. Family pets made a wide detour around that tree in order to avoid injury. The clothesline was kept well away from the tree . . . too many juicy brown paw prints on the sheets. The nuts make great projectiles not appreciated by [humans] who had to deal with the consequences -- broken windows and bruised noggins."

### **IMAGES:**



This Dogbane Beetle, *Chrysochus aiuratus*, crawls confusedly over the net, swept rudely from its hangout on the stem of a Dogbane plant. Pat and I first met this attractive metallic beetle (which also adorns the cover of Steve Marshall's book *Insects*) during our three-year study of the Kirk-Cousins Conservation Area (A'nowaghi Ponds) from 1996 to 1999. We would often see it on Spreading Dogbane plants above the railroad tracks that ran right through the middle of the Area. At Newport Forest another species, Intermediate Dogbane, grows above Mussel Beach, the beetle apparently happy with either species.



In this image you can see how the Twice-stabbed Stinkbug (*Cosmopepla bimaculata*) got its dramatic name. This is a common and widespread species found throughout southern Canada, the United States and much of Mexico. It overwinters as an adult under dead leaves.