

Date and time: Thursday June 12 2014 1:40 - 6:15 pm

Weather: Pr 5mm; RH 79%; BP 100.9 kPa; cloud/sun; SE 0-10 kmh; T 27° C

Activity: trail & trailer maintenance, collecting arthropods

We brought a young friend with us today. Laura Lee has just finished her first year as a science student at Western University. Curious about biology as a discipline, she joined us for an afternoon of arthropod collecting at Newport Forest. She learned to wield an insect net and to search plants and leaf litter for interesting insects and spiders. But more of that later.



Pat and Laura at Mussel Beach

We began an introduction to Newport Forest by walking to the river. Along the way, numerous Jewelwings flew out of vegetation along the path to nab annoying mosquitoes. (The enemy of my enemy is my friend.) Mussel Beach is now almost fully exposed. We examined the tracks of Raccoon and Virginia Deer on the Beach, noting that someone had been dining on mussels, judging from the empty valves

lying about. On the way back Laura found two harvestmen of different species just before we emerged into the Lower Meadow.

Steve Logan arrived with his weed eater, determined to finish grooming the main trail. He accomplished this while Pat and I set up the memorial plaque for Jane Bowles right in front of her Sassafras tree. We are now almost ready for the commemoration ceremony to be held this coming Saturday (June 21) on site. Pat then spent some time working on the trailer, remarking that she had heard no indication that the weasel family were still in the trailer.

Laura and I (finally) got to work searching for new species. We started with leaf litter from the creek bluffs, finding two different species of wood lice, a Hahniid spider, and a Funnel Spider, among other things. On one of the leaves I discovered a small green larva which gave me much trouble later. (See IMAGES.) We then switched to searching on foot through the Lower Meadow. Here Laura's sharp eyes picked up insects that I had walked right past without noticing. Hmm," I thought to myself, "This young lady has promise!" We (rather she) found a new Mirid bug, a new Chrysomelid, and a *Leptoterna* that was already on the ATBI list.

I had gotten ahead of her in the Lower Meadow when I heard a cry of distress. I rushed back to find her staring in horror at an ungainly black "thing" perched on a plant. It turned out to be a pair of mating leaf-footed bugs. I photographed the two for our files, even as they sought privacy by coordinating awkwardly to the underside of a leaf. (See IMAGES.)

We all took a break in the Nook, noting that there had been none of the customary bumpings and churrings from the nursery box overhead. Had the Raccoon family decamped as well? Steve set to work hooking up the new propane supply system while Laura and I repaired to the creek to finish off the aquatic search started during my last site visit. In the sample I had taken on that occasion I found a new Sideswimmer, a common genus called *Gammarus*. This time around, a fine-mesh dip net picked up a school of Water Boatmen along the shore. One of them gave me a very detailed image of its dorsum, enough for genus, according to the images and descriptions on a useful website known as BugGuide.

All day the mosquitoes had been somewhat bothersome, thanks to the humid weather. I had been worried that the flies would put Laura off field biology. Later, when I asked what she thought of the experience, she felt it had been "productive." I had to agree!

Birds: (11)

American Robin (GF); Common Grackle (ET); Downy Woodpecker (GF); Eastern Wood Peewee (BCF); House Sparrow (Rd); Northern Cardinal (EW); Red-bellied Woodpecker (GF); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (GF); Song Sparrow (LM); Turkey Vulture (FCF); Yellow Warbler (LM)

Phenology: Jewelwings out (June 8), Blue-eyed Grass and Ninebark in flower

New Species:

Water Boatman	<i>Corisella [edulis]</i>	FC/LR LLKD Je12/14
Sideswimmer	<i>Gammarus</i> sp.	FC/LR KD Je08/14
European Sowbug	<i>Oniscus asellus</i>	GF/FC KD Je12/14
Small Woodlouse	<i>Trichoniscus</i> sp.	GF/FC LLKD Je12/14
Black and Orange Mirid	<i>Taedia</i> sp.	LM LLKD Je12/14
Knab's Leaf Beetle	<i>Chrysomella knabi</i>	GF LLKD Je12/14
Spotted Funnel Spider	<i>Agelenopsis [utahana]</i>	GF/FC LLKD Je12/14
Hahniid Spider	[<i>Antistea</i>] sp.	GF/FC LLKD Je12/14
Orange Harvestman	<i>Leiobunum flavum</i>	HO KD Je12/14

Note1: The "LL" designation indicates Laura's initials. Those of the finder (in lower case) precede those of the identifier in cases where the two differ.

Note 2: There are only three or four species of *Gammarus* in SW Ontario. My specimen in ethanol had been too damaged by capture to check all the field marks but details of the first antenna were nearly enough by themselves. *Oniscus* may be a non-native sow bug, but I assume the Woodlouse is indigenous. The *Taedia* bug would have been nailed to species, had the scutellum been orange instead of black. (I found several specimens on the web with partially black scutella, however.) Another possible genus for the Hahniid spider is *Hahnia*.

TTLT Event: Remembering Jane Bowles

Friends of Jane Bowles are invited to Newport Forest at 2:00 pm Saturday, June 21 to celebrate her contributions to the development of this conservation area. A Sassafras tree will be dedicated to her memory. For directions, email Pat Dewdney at dewdney@sympatico.ca or phone 519-679-0203.

IMAGES:



These copulating Leaf-footed “Clown Bugs”, also known as *Acanthocephala terminalis*, seem able to perform difficult manoeuvres without losing connectivity, so to speak. Leaf-footed bugs belong to the family Coreidae and this species, the only one of its genus in Canada, is common at this time of year, often found indoors!



Calling all Lepidopterists! This looks like the larva of a slug moth. Such larvae have no legs, as such, but move rather like a slug or snail with the aid of a slimy “foot”. I have examined nearly forty species of slug moth, many of them associated with oak trees. Many also have strange spines and weird outgrowths, but only a few are as featureless as this specimen. Found on a leaf of White Oak leaf in the litter. What is it?