

Date and time: Thursday August 21 2014 2:15 - 6:40 pm

Weather: Pr 17 mm; RH 76%; BP 101.7 kPa; sun/haze; calm; T 28° C

Activity: Site maintenance and a survey of mussels on the beach

Today was a maintenance day at Newport Forest. Steve Logan came up from Moraviantown to groom the trails and was already on site when we (Oussama and I) arrived. We could hear the distant whine of the weed-eater as Steve made his way through the Riverside Forest on the other side of the Hogsback. Our planned activity for the afternoon was to make a representative collection of mussels from the beach of that name. This would be a followup to last week's fossil hunt.



Steve takes a break next to an old Cottonwood log at the River Landing. Mussel Beach stretches downriver behind him.

Wanting to learn about Steve's progress, I sent Oussama along the Thames River Trail (TRT - a 1.6 km circuit) to find out how far Steve had gotten. Oussama took the usual route to the river, avoiding the fork to the Landing and following the TRT across the bluffs and into the Riverside Forest. Presently there came static on the walkie-talkie: "He's on the Hogsback and heading down to Blind Creek."

The goldenrod in the Lower Meadow was rapidly coming into bloom (now about

30% in flower), with what seemed to be the normal complement of Honeybees and Bumblebees foraging among them. Shouldn't we at least sample for new arthropods before heading for the river? I was glad we did. Oussama found a Margined Blister Beetle near the trailer. This is our most common Meloid beetle and a frequent guest in entomology books. In addition we found other old friends like the Twice-stabbed Stinkbug, a Polistine Paper Wasp, and a Three-spotted Leaf Beetle. A new species of Mirid bug showed up, beautifully speckled, a possible Mimetus spider, and so on.

Then off to the river. Oussama took a great interest in collecting pairs of mussel valves that matched. We put all the best-preserved shells in a bucket and hauled the treasure back to camp, where we joined Steve for a break in the Nook. It was now late afternoon and I asked Steve to trim one more trail, the old watering trail that leads through the Regen Zone. This took about 15 minutes. We use this trail as a stable base for point-counts of Honeybees at the peak bloom of goldenrods and asters. We expect to conduct the fourth annual "Bee Protocol" in a week or more.

Steve left shortly after that. On our own way out later, we spotted a large, evil-looking fly on the sun visor of the van. I stopped the vehicle to take some careful photographs. The new Robber Fly evidently wanted its name on the list.

Email: Contact us at akd@uwo.ca

New Species:

| | | |
|--------------------------|--|-----------------|
| 'Banded Wolf Spider' | <i>Arctosa lineatus</i> | MB KD Au17/14 |
| Slender Meadow Katydid | <i>Conocephalus fasciatus</i> | RZ KD Au02/14 |
| 'Dappled Mirid' | <i>Neurocolpus nubilus</i> | RZ KD Au21/14 |
| American Ear Moth | <i>Amphipoea americana</i> | Rd kdHC Au17/14 |
| 'White-banded Gelechiid' | <i>Syncopacma larseniella</i> | RZ KD Au21/14 |
| Giant Robber Fly | <i>Asilus sericeus</i> | UM oaKD Au21/14 |
| Wingstem Gall Midge | <i>Asphondylia rudbeckiaeconspicua</i> | LM KD Au17/14 |

Species Notes:

1. Wolf Spiders of many species abound on Mussel Beach.
2. We thank Hugh Casbourn for the great lead in identifying the moth we featured in the last issue. (See his letter below.) It's not a Tussock Moth at all! Great naturalists, Hugh and his wife Betsy are acting co-editors of *The Cardinal*, a popular

local nature magazine. Hugh has gotten good with moths by photographing all the insects that come to his back porch lights at night — then identifying them!

3. The Gelechiid Moth took a *long* time to ID, not in any moth books or moth sites.

4. Tiresome names like the one for the gall midge should be outlawed.

Readers Write:

Jean McKay (London ON) reacts to our resized Bulletins: “It’s great that Kee has figured out how to send the pdfs without it taking so long. Ah, technology!”

Bruce Parker (London ON) writes, “Great report as usual. I am a Devonian fan and quite interested in the brachiopods you found. Have you ever found any Trilobites at Newport [Forest]?” Answer: Not yet, but we’re hoping.

Greg Zeigler (Santa Fe NM) takes us to task for complaining about copulating moths. “I am not sure what the laws are in Canada, but here in New Mexico I think that the tussock moths would be within their rights. I seriously doubt that the RCMP would . . . want to get involved.”

Hugh Casbourn (London ON) “Has anyone voted for the American Ear Moth, *Amphipoea americana*? Another possibility is the Interoceanic Ear Moth, *Amphipoea interoceanica*, which is said to be nearly identical (Robin McLeod in BugGuide). *Amphipoea americana*, however, is said to have the reniform spot filled with white or bright orange. Given your photo, it looks like that character could be sexually dimorphic.”

Jonathan Dewdney (Los Angeles CA) has sent us this alarming link described by his title “Birds igniting in the air over solar farms.”

http://grist.org/news/thousands-of-birds-are-igniting-mid-air-whats-solar-got-to-do-with-it/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=update&utm_campaign=socialflow

Dedication of the Bebensee Tract

Local readers are invited to join others at the Bebensee Tract tomorrow (August 24) at 1:00 pm for the dedication of this rich and marvellous swamp forest within the Skunks Misery complex (across the river from Newport Forest). For a fuller description of the tract and the event itself, visit the following website:

<http://www.thamestalbotlandtrust.ca/index.php/current-properties/bebensee-tract>

IMAGES:



The Margined Blister Beetle appears in formal dress, as though on its way to a wedding. Or is it a funeral? (*Epicauta funebris*) In no hurry for the occasion, it walks sedately along the rim of our net.

Blister Beetles produce a powerful chemical irritant called Cantharidin (aka Spanish Fly). The effect on other insects is to repel them. The effect on humans is blistering of skin topically, but the internal effect is sexual arousal in males, although even a small overdose may result in coma and death. Feeling lucky?



At home Pat and I cleaned and sorted the finds. We could then begin the process of provisional identification, with three specimens tagged at the time of this image: A Deertoe (middle right), A Purple Wartyback (lower left) and a Maple Leaf (between them). For the provisional IDs we use the *Photo Field Guide to the Freshwater Mussels of Ontario* by Metcalfe-Smith, MacKenzie, Carmichael & McGoldrick, St Thomas Field Naturalist Club, 2005.

The process yielded the following list, none of them new:

| Species | no. | length |
|-------------------|------------|--|
| Mucket | 5 | 7 - 16 cm |
| Wartyback | 5 | 5 - 8 cm |
| Maple Leaf | 2 | 8 - 11 cm (one of these <i>might</i> be a Wabash Pigtoe) |
| Purple Wartyback | 1 | 9 cm |
| Three Ridge | 1 | 16 cm |
| White Heelspitter | 1 | 18 cm |
| Fluted Shell | 1 | 11 cm |
| Deertoe | 1 | 5 cm |

The ATBI list for Pelecypoda (clams & mussels) currently has 22 entries. All valves will be returned to the beach at the end of our survey.