

Date and time: Saturday September 6 2014 1:25 - 5:35 pm

Weather: Pr 17 mm; RH 76%; BP 101.7 kPa; ; N 5 - 20 km/h; T 23° C

Activity: Bee Protocol and Pollinator Survey

We held the Annual Fall meeting of the Newport Forest Stewards Group this afternoon, missing only Stewards Erin Carroll and Darren Jacobs. In the image below (left to right) Nina Hurdle, Donald Craig, Bruce Parker, Pat Dewdney, and Marg Hulls enjoy a break after the meeting. I remained out of the picture to take it. The Group decided, among other things, to recommend that the TTLT Property



Manager oversee see two important pending projects: a drain for the “mudhole” on the property track and partial replacement of the fence along Fleming Line. The Group also decided to ask Greg Thorn to hold another of his popular Fall Fungus Walks in October, this time with an honorarium attached to acknowledge his professional status. Other items of business will be found in the meeting report, as filed with the Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT).

Just before the meeting I was having some anxiety about the portable trail camera that we had left out on Mussel Beach last week. A line of heavy storms had passed through the area on the previous night, leaving a swollen River in its wake. Had the trail cam already been washed away in the resulting flood? We persuaded Don and

Bruce to double-time out to the river to rescue the camera, if it wasn't already too late. They came back carrying the tripod with the camera still attached — and with a tale to tell: As they arrived at the river, they could see most of the rig submerged, the camera still above water like the head of a swimmer. However, two men in a motor boat were just then in the process of removing it! Don, thinking quickly, made his presence known by bursting out of the woods. "Hey guys, thanks for retrieving that camera for us. Much appreciated!" They handed the rig over to Don, then motored off up the river. Hmmm.

After the meeting I carried out a proper Honeybee Protocol, noting that the golden-rod was already in the process of going to seed. This would be our last chance to take a census. The winds were relatively light and everywhere I looked I saw Honeybees. The report below outlines the results of the census in comparison with previous years. Besides a plenitude of bees in the Lower Meadow, I also noticed a great many Syrphid flies out on the flowers. If we ever ran out of honeybees for pollination, I wondered, could we still get by on Syrphids?

I visited the property last Thursday to do another census, hopefully with better results. I was assisted by a sometime handyman on the property, Brian Cornish. The results were hardly better than the count of September 1, when Pat and I did a trial run. It was windy both days. Brian and I also changed the sd cards on the trail cams. High hopes for the river location were justified, as in the IMAGES below.

With the recent rains, fungi are now more abundant on site. Many of these have been endemic locally and we know them well. Images of others have been sent to Greg Thorn, our consulting mycologist, for comment.

We are continuing the new practice of recording species that are already on the ATBI list. Thus the field Cricket *Gryllus pennsylvanicus* found on Mussel Beach last week or the large Syrphid Fly *Helophilus fasciatus* found today appear as new entries beside the old ones, only the data tags being different.

We removed the meeting tablecloth from the Nook table, cleaned up camp, gathered our things, and left the site: "Do you feel like an ice cream cone?" "I don't know. Do you feel like one?" Half way home we stopped for one.

Birds: (10 - Thursday and Saturday)

American Crow (GF); American Robin (BCF); Bald Eagle (TR); Blue Jay (BCF); Gray Catbird (BCF); Mourning Dove (GF); Northern Cardinal (GF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (GF); Song Sparrow (GF); Turkey Vulture (LM);

New Species:

| | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| Metallic Mud Dauber | <i>Trypoxylon politum</i> | Tr KD Sp04/14 |
| Long-horned Bee | <i>Melisodes illata</i> | LM KD Sp06/14 |

Honeybee Protocol:

Today we used ten counting stations, the remaining potential stations now shaded out by young trees. Readers may recall that the area we call the Lower Meadow is also known as the Regeneration Zone (RZ), where a developing forest is slowly shading out the goldenrod cover. However ten stations were still surrounded by goldenrod and therefore suitable for the census. Winds were light and had little effect on the count: As well as 85 Honeybees, we counted two “other” bees, 5 Bumblebees, 18 flies (large and small, almost all Syrphids) and two large wasps. The appropriate scaling factor (35.4) resulted in a density estimate of 3009 Honeybees per hectare (HB/ha).

Changes in the local Honeybee population over recent years are hinted at by the following little table:

| | | | | |
|---------------|------|------|------|------|
| Year: | 2009 | 2010 | 2012 | 2014 |
| HB/ha: | 6053 | 5856 | 3080 | 3009 |

The usual statistical caveats apply: The error term could easily be 10% (at the 95% level of significance) so the figures for 2012 and 2014 are not significantly different and the local population might be described as “temporarily steady”. However the decline since 2009 is quite significant and probably part of a regional (or continent-wide) decline. Two honey producers operate hives along Fleming Line, one about a km away to the west, the other two km to the east. Also, over the years we have observed colonies of wild Honeybees, one in the Riverside Forest and in one in the Blind Creek Forest.

Reports to come:

1. Mussel Report
2. Climate Report with predictions for the coming winter

(These will be sent out to readers as separate pdfs.)

IMAGES:



WILDVIEW

09-02-2014 19:37:40



While it was still operational on Mussel Beach, the portable game camera caught this romantic image of a Great Blue Heron watching the river as the sun set downstream. On the previous day, the camera caught a large, 8-point buck, head lowered, as though about to charge the camera.



The Long-horned Bee (*Melisodes illata*) explores the florets of this “River Daisy” (*Helianthus* and *Heliopsis* spp) bloom. Several of these bees were in evidence today. Long-horned Bees tend to visit such plants exclusively, eschewing goldenrods and other blooms. In case anyone was wondering, they belong to the Eucerini one of 13 tribes in the sub-family Apinae of the Apidae.