Date and time: Thursday September 11 2014 2:30 - 8:25 pm
Weather: Pr 57 mm; RH 80%; BP 101.7 kPa; cloudy; NW 0 - 10 kmh; T 14º C
Activity: A fungus walk along the Thames River Trail.

The sharp eyes of today's assistant, Sama Abid, brought us several species that I simply would have overlooked as we walked the 1.5 km Thames River Trail. The trail begins in the Lower Meadow at a forest portal called The Hole, heads for the river through the Blind Creek Forest, then angles sharply up and over the river bluffs (north end of the Hogsback) and down into the Riverside Forest, mostly old growth. At the south end of that wood, the trail leads up to the top of the Hogsback, where I took this image that looks down into Blind Creek Forest, still recovering

from the loss of nearly 100 Bitternut Hickories. (These were wiped out by the Hickory Twig Borer in the dry years of '05 and '06.) The trail then winds through the Blind Creek Forest, rejoining the main trail not far from The Hole.

The weather was distinctly cool and cloudy, but perfect for the many fungi encountered on the way: Two recent heavy rains had penetrated soil and dead wood to the point where fungi were finally encouraged to sprout. We brought a shopping bag to carry samples, then set out along the trail to the river. In the first 100 yards, along

Blind Creek, the finds began. Some of these were already known to me, others are merely described briefly:

1. Several medium-sized mushrooms (light grey caps. dark grey gills) on a log.
2. A small leafy white fungus on a log.
3. Numerous Eyelash Cups dotting a dead log in the Blind Creek bed.

On the way to the River Landing, Sama pointed out a pretty caterpillar with dark blue bands and rows of orange dots. Could it be a Black Swallowtail? We had already seen an identical caterpillar in the Lower Meadow. Further on, nearly at the landing, Sama bent over excitedly. "You gotta see this. Something is attacking this Harvestman." I went to look. All I saw was a lone Harvestman stumbling about in one place. "No, no. Lift up the leaf. It's under the leaf." When I lifted the leaf I was astonished by the sight of a completely new insect, a brightly coloured predatory bug that was, indeed, attacking the Harvestman. Out came the camera. The rest, as they say, is history. (See New Species.)

Gaining the River Bluffs, I rested on a viewing bench while Sama swept nearby with the net. We then had a clam-throw. Valves from the mussel survey had to be returned to the beach below. Regaining the trail, we spotted several Two-spotted Tree Hoppers accompanied by a blue-green plant hopper that would later give me trouble to ID. The trail descended into the gloom of the Riverside Forest where older trees of Sycamore, Silver Maple, Slippery Elm, Black Walnut, White Ash, etc. predominate at first, giving away further on to a Maple-Beech forest toward the slope of the Hogsback. Along this trail we found:

4. Rubber cup fungi that appeared to be the *Geopora* sp listed below.
5. A group of small brackets of *Trametes suaveolens* on a vertical dead branch.
6. A possible White Cheese Polypore on standing deadwood.
7. A faintly zoned grey and white bracket on standing dead wood.
8. A Dryads Saddle (*Polyporus squamosus*) on a dead trunk.
9. Artist's Conk *Ganoderma applanatum* on another dead trunk.
10. A small troop of dark pink mushrooms on a log, possibly *Noleana* sp.
11. The comb fungus *Heracium Coralloides* (see IMAGES below.).
12. A possible *Clitopilus*, looking like a chanterelle on steroids.

The climb up the Hogsback was slow, with many stops. A large patch of bending grass invited samples. (Pat latter identified them as *Glyceria striata*) After another rest and lookabout atop the Hogsback, we made our way through a dense thorn forest under power lines, then an easy descent into the Blind Creek Forest where

the fun began again. I decided to strip loose bark from a Bitternut log, only to be startled by a fast-moving metallic blue insect that I simply couldn't catch with the camera. We tried to herd it back to the centre of the bare patch, but it made quickly for the edge of the patch and dove into the vegetation below, never to be seen again. I finally realized that it was a rove beetle running about in its threat posture, abdomen carried high like a scorpion. It was the right size and shape for a genus called *Dinothenarus*, close relative of a beetle called The Devil's Coach Horse. More fungi followed:

13. A single Orange mushroom somewhat past it.
14. A fleshy gilled bracket that I (for no reason) nicknamed 'Bear Paws'.
15. Several yellow-capped mushrooms resembling *Amanita fulva*.
16. A large troop of *Coprinus micaceus*, an Inky Cap, at the base of a tree.
17. *Cerrena unicolor* (?) on a log.
18. Pear-shaped puffballs (*Lycoperdon perlatum*) on a log.
19. A multitude of *Trametes pubescens* on a log.
20. On a log: a large troop of tiny red spherical fungi studded with raised dots.

On the way though the dense vegetation that crowds the Blind Creek Forest, an explosion of whirring wings signalled the flush of a game bird from nearby. Sama saw it better. Later, back at the trailer with a bird book, he thought it looked more like the Ruffed Grouse than the smaller American Woodcock. Finishing the trail, we passed the corpse of the fifth giant Black Willow to fall over in the Blind Creek forest since 2005! The large trunks, already leaning outward, simply fall in that direction, leaving a "star" of trunks. We have no idea what is affecting these Willows. Are we to blame via some subtle ecological influence? Or have they simply come to their natural lifespan? Once they lined Blind Creek, perhaps more than a hundred years ago, when it was still Fleming Creek. Back in camp we had a late "lunch", then left the property.

New Species:

	Fungi	
'Dirty Goblets'	*Geopora sepulta**	RB saKD Sp11/14
'Bear Paws'	*Plicatoropsis crispa**	BCF KD Sp1114
	Insects	
'Dappled Mirid'	*Lygus* [*unctuosus*]	LM KD Sp06/14
Predatory Stink Bug	*Podibrus* [*serieventris*]	TRT/RL Sp11/14
Metallic Blue Rove Beetle	[*Dinothenarus*] sp.	BCT/HB KD Sp11/14
	Mussels	
Rainbow Shell	*Vilosa iris*	MB KD Sp28/14

Notes: The two new fungi are subject to confirmation; The dappled wing covers on the *Lygus* bug, along with the clear cunaeus and dark colouring made L. *unctuous* the most likely species. Mirid species tend to be rather variable in both pattern and colour, but more conservative in structure; Stink bugs tend to be notoriously difficult to ID from their nymphs. In this case I lucked upon an identical nymph from a student studying nymphs at the University of Missouri. Because it's a nymph, however, on go the caution brackets; *Dinothenarus* is the only genus of Rove Beetle I could find that had metallic blue species. A good image might have told us which one; The Rainbow Shell is endangered, being no longer found in Lakes Erie or Huron. It is still found in watershed rivers, however.

Announcement:
Local readers take note: The NEWPORT FOREST FUNGUS WORKSHOP is scheduled for Sunday October 19 with mycologist Prof. Greg Thorn. The Walk will begin at 1:00 pm. More details to come on registration — but set aside the day.

Readers Write:

Allen Woodliffe, formerly with the Aylmer MNR, writes about the Rusty Bumblebee: "According to the Rusty-patched Bumblebee Recovery Strategy: 'The only occurrence of Rusty-patched Bumblebee in Canada from 2002 to 2010 has been at the Pinery Provincial Park (one in 2005 and two in 2009); this is despite thorough survey work performed throughout Ontario (Colla and Packer, 2008; Colla unpublished data). I'm not sure if any records have been found since, as this Recovery Strategy is dated 2011.'"

Bruce Parker the Monarch Guy writes of goldenrod and eclosion: "I always appreciate your mentioning of the percentage of Goldenrod bloom this time of year. I have been doing the same in my Monarch migration notes for several years. I follow the bloom in a field in which I tag at Hawk Cliff . . . My question: You mentioned last report that the bloom at Newport was about at 20%. Do you feel the Goldenrod is blooming earlier this year?" [Answer: According to our phenology records, earliest peak bloom Aug 11, latest peak bloom August 30.]

"Here is one of my eclosion videos. The process of pupal emergence, wing inflation, and the telescoping of the abdomen usually takes 15 minutes or so. I left this one at 3 minutes."
Sept 5 3 min .MOV

IMAGES:

This *Podibrus* nymph is just as deadly as the adult form. Here it attacks a Harvestman, another predator, but an Arachnid. The Harvestman is trying to pull away, but seems to be stuck to Podibrus' beak. Predatory Stink Bugs like *Podibrus* take their nutrition through such stabbing beaks, like a soda straw, much the way Arachnids suck their prey dry through hollow fangs. Turnabout is fair play.

The Comb-tooth Fungus, *Heracium coralloides*, is a sometime colleague of other fungi at Newport Forest, especially after heavy rains. Of course, the “real” organism is always with us in the form of a mycelial network that permeates wood or soil. The elegant display here is the reproductive organ, with numerous spore-producing teeth protruding from the fruiting body. We note that a tooth is simply a pore turned inside out, an alternate strategy for maximizing the spore-producing area.