

Date and time: Sunday May 10 2015 12:10 - 3:50 pm

Weather: Pr 15 mm; RH 90%; BP 102.1 kPa; ; calm; sun/haze; T 25° C

Activity: Spring Flower Walk and Vernal Pond Probe

Fears of a thunderstorm on the day quickly evaporated under a warm, hazy sun. Waiting for the Flower Walkers to arrive, we heard tiny churring noises from the Raccoon nursery box high in the Black Maple at the Nook. Mother's Day, indeed.

The same celebration had kept some walkers away at other events, but by 1:30 we were set to go. The image below shows walkers assembled in the Nook: (left to right) TTLT Stewards Bruce Parker and Erin Carroll, Diane-Lynne Ayotte, Marg



Hulls, Walk Leader Muriel Andreae, Wendy and Tim Carroll, Rudy Pilz, TTLT Board Chair Linda McDougall, and Steward Pat Dewdney. Not in the image are Stewards Nina Hurdle and Kee Dewdney (taking the picture).

Pat was delighted to see her old friends, the Baltimore Oriole and Rose-breasted Grosbeak back on site in good numbers. (For other birds, see the list below.) Would the Indigo Bunting be back to its old haunt at the Snag — a dead trunk some distance up the road? The Snag has finally fallen, with no Bunting to report.

While Pat held the fort and walkers followed the main trail to Bluebell Woods, Kee and Bruce went off to the Vernal Ponds. Kee, still recovering from heavy surgery, used a walker to get there. Ponds C and D had dried up, but A and B were still

well-charged. A large pickle jar would hold our finds of tiny crustaceans, mostly Amphipods. There were no Fairy Shrimp present, but a strange swimmer caught our attention. It resembled a damselfly larva, but turned out to be a beetle larva, thanks to aquatic biologist Erin Carroll, returning later from the walk. More than that, it was the larva of a predaceous Diving Beetle.

According to walkers, the Virginia Bluebells were at their peak. As the image blow shows, the patch of blooms is now larger than ever. Other ephemerals were nearly done; False Mermaid (*Floerkia*) still bloomed on the Hogsback and a few Trout Lilies bloomed along the way. Gathering in the Nook, we enjoyed healthy treats brought by Muriel, Wendy and Nina, supplemented by health food from Tim Hortons and lemonade from Pat.

Birds: (14)

American Crow (FCF); American Goldfinch (UM); Baltimore Oriole (GF); Blue Jay (GF); Common Flicker (GF); Common Yellowthroat (UM); Eastern Towhee (FCB); Killdeer (Rd); Northern Cardinal (GF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (GF); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (GF); Tree Swallow (Rd); Turkey Vulture (LM); Wood Thrush (BCF/HB)

The trail cameras continue to supply an unending stream of interesting images, even though we can't always identify them. Two images of the trailer weasel showed up, along with one appearance of a feral cat and four of a Possum:

Trail Cam #2: (No. of appearances between Ap24 and My10)

American Robin (1); Eastern Cottontail (21); Eastern Gray Squirrel (5); Feral Cat (1); Long-tailed Weasel (2); Raccoon (35); Red Fox (1?); Virginia Possum (4); White-crowned Sparrow (1); Wild Turkey (3).

Phenology: Spring Ephemerals almost all over by now, except for Bluebells.

New Species:

Lesser Diving Beetle [*Acilius*] sp. (larva) VP-A KD My10/15

Readers Write:

Kee Dewdney (co-editor of this *Bulletin*) wishes to thank the many, many people who wrote in with good wishes for the surgery on his aorta.

IMAGES:



photo: Linda McDougall

Virginia Bluebells liven the Point Bar Forest (Bluebell Woods) to round out the spring ephemeral season.

A mystery mammal (blurred by rapid motion) and a mystery bird have defied our ability to ID with any certainty. Anyone with an idea or two is welcome to send it in.



Both animals appeared by the ramp at the trailer deck.