

Date and time: Thursday June 3-4 2015 1:25 - 3:35 pm

Weather: Pr 52 mm; RH 63%; BP 102.4 ; clear; SE 0-10 kmh; T 25°C

Activity: Two-day stay with a focus on arthropods.

Although the Wardsville area received over 50 mm of precipitation last Sunday, the open areas were completely dry when we drove in. The ground was thirsty. We stopped in the Upper Meadow on The Rise (site of a former homestead, pictured below) to check on the Milkweed plants. (See Phenology.)



We drove on down to the trailer where we found twelve bags of Garlic Mustard that had been pulled by a team of students under the supervision of TTLT Property Manager Daria Koscinski a few days ago.

Once free of preparations for an overnight stay, I set out to survey the 100 or so trees that we planted in the Regeneration Zone (RZ) in the ten years from 2000 to 2009. Heights varied from 40' (*Populus* spp) down to the stragglers at 4' - 8' in height. All the Tulip Trees are thriving, between 8' and 19' in height. The remaining species include: Bigtooth Aspen, Black Maple, Black Walnut, Bur Oak, Honey Locust, Quaking Aspen, Red Oak, Silver Maple (one dead, one dying), Sugar Maple, White Ash, White Elm, White Oak, Yellow Buckeye. The Black Walnuts are all volunteers, so to speak, the rest being planted deliberately. The original idea behind the Regen Zone was not only to regenerate open meadow back into forest, but to make a demonstration forest — with a maximum number of species. Not a great idea, as it turns out.

The so-called Gallery Forest (GF) is, in fact, a “gallery forest”, perched along a dry ridge overlooking Fleming Creek. Principal components include Bur Oak, Chinkapin Oak, Red Oak, White Oak, Shagbark Hickory and Bitternut Hickory, along with some American Basswood, Black Maple and Sugar Maple. The trailer nudges this forest and the Jane Bowles memorial Sassafras grows beside it.

I swept with the insect net in the Lower Meadow and searched along the edge of the GF, getting few insects or spiders, but two specimens turned out to be new.

Pat wondered about a plant with a raceme of tiny flowers growing in the Nook. A quick lookup in *Newcomb's Wildflower Guide* revealed it to be Field Peppergrass (*Lepidium campestre*), first found by Jane Bowles in the year 2000. As far as we know, the plant list for the Newport Forest Site must be close to complete.

As night fell we lit the oil lamps and I strewed kibble over the Nook in anticipation of a Raccoon count. I stayed up to read, with only occasional scrabbling noises made by Wendy the trailer Weasel behind the walls. I went out several times with a flashlight to see if I could spot any Southern Flying Squirrels. They often raid the seed trays at night, being nocturnal. What I saw chilled my blood. There was a Raccoon hunting flying squirrels. In the hunting posture, the Raccoon stands upright on the seed tray, with front legs out-stretched around the girth of the tree. When a flying squirrel comes rushing down the bark, the Raccoon seizes it, then gives it a killing bite. (We saw a Raccoon successfully perform this operation several years ago, descending the tree with the limp squirrel in its mouth.)

Around midnight I turned in with a count of just two Raccoons. We could hear them growling occasionally, snarling over kibble. Then, around two a.m. I was awakened by two screams, seemingly from an animal larger than a Raccoon. The screams were both descending in pitch, ending in a growl, loud enough to be audible a few hundred metres away. (I won't say what I thought.)

Day broke with an overcast of dull grey clouds and a gloomy silence. Apparently the dawn chorus of birds had been cancelled. By 11 am the overcast had cleared and we decided to chance a walk to the river. Pat spotted a new species of Wolf Spider on a log at Edgar's Elbow and, a little later, our first Giant Swallowtail of the year fluttered across the trail in front of me, as though eager to be noticed. The river was a good metre higher than normal and the clay beach was submerged.

Back in camp, I went looking for more insects along the edge of the GF, ultimately coming upon a gregarious pile of small brown chafer-like beetles enjoying a four-

way of some kind. Another new species. Later Pat would spot a new moth on the handle of our insect net as it leaned against the trailer. The rest of our finds are listed below:

Old Friends: Four-lined Plant Bug (many nymphs); Brown Stink Bug (*Euschistus servus*); *Leptoterna* sp (two nymphs of this Plant Bug in different stages); Orb Weavers *Gea Heptagon* (a “four-legged” spider); *Mangora placida*, and *Araniella*, a small Orb Weaver.

New Finds: Four Leaf Beetles *Sumitrosis inaequalis* piled up on a Basswood leaf; Large Lithocodia Moth perched on handle of our insect net (!); Green Stink Bug (*Chinavia hilaris*) in the Nook; Yellow-legged Mirid (*Ceratocapsis nigellus*) in the Lower Meadow; the Wolf Spider (*Schizocosa crassipes*) on a log at Blind Creek.

Birds: (20)

American Crow (EW); American Robin (BCF); Blue Jay (GF); Canada Goose (FCF); Common Grackle (GF); Common Yellowthroat (LM); Field Sparrow (LM); Gray Catbird (EW); Great Blue Heron (HBF); Great Crested Flycatcher (LM); Mourning Dove (BCF); Northern Cardinal (GF); Northern Flicker (GF); Redbelly Woodpecker (GF); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (LM); Song Sparrow (GF); Tree Swallow (Rd); Turkey Vulture (UM); Wild Turkey (Rd); Yellow Warbler (LM).

Phenology: Buttercups in bloom, Milkweed half grown, first Ebony Jewelwings out, mosquitoes sparse to absent, first Giant Swallowtail.

New Species:

Green Stink Bug	<i>Chinavia hilaris</i>	Nk KD Je03/15
‘Yellow-legged Mirid’	<i>Ceratocapsis nigellus</i>	LM KD Je03/15
Large Mossy Lithocodia Moth	<i>Protodeltote muscosula</i>	Tr pdKD Je03/15
Hispine Leaf Beetle*	<i>Sumitrosis inaequalis</i>	GF KD Je03/15
Brush-legged Spider	<i>Schizocosa crassipes</i>	ET pdKD Je03/15

Species Notes:

* Not a Scarab, although it resembles a Chafer in appearance. It belongs, instead, to the Tortoise Beetle subfamily, Cassidinae, of the Chrysomelid family of beetles.

Catching up: Readers who wonder what past issue of the *Bulletin* were like are welcome to visit the archive at <<http://www.csd.uwo.ca/~akd/newport-forest/>> Scroll to the very bottom to find nearly 1000 site visits archived.



IMAGES:

This *Schizocosa* spider has specialized front legs, densely covered with a brush of black hairs on the tibia. A member of the Wolf Spider Family, Lycosidae, this species can be found running over forest floor litter. Very little seems to be known about the exact role played by the brush in its ecology. We can perhaps *suggest* a display function.



This moth led me on a merry chase through various websites, including Bugguide and Tom Murray's magnificent "Arthropoda" photo galleries. Finally, I resorted to the *Peterson's Guide to Moths of Northeastern North America*. Under the Noctuids I got a definite "Bingo" with the Large Mossy Glyph (aka the Large Mossy Lithocodia Moth, as in the New Species list).