

**Date and time:** Friday June 26 2015 2:05 - 7:20 pm

**Weather:** Pr 7 mm; RH 54%; BP 102.0; sun/cloud; SE 0-10 kmh; T 25°C

**Activity:** Cleaning camp, dodging mosquitoes, and hunting arthropods.

The scene below represents the terminus of our most adventurous walk of the day, making our way to the river through an epidemic of mosquitoes, swatting and muttering. “Why did we ever decide to go to the river?” Once there, we examined a pile of drift from the most recent flood and found a slide that ran down to the water’s edge. Was the resident beaver gathering materials for his latest project?



The mosquitoes were a constant nuisance during our visit, being only slightly less bother out in the meadows or around the trailer. The major cleanup task of the day was to go through the entire pile of lumber at the rear of the trailer, sorting it into pieces that would still be useful for markers or benches and stacking the remainder into a pile of scrap for local wood stoves.

Between times I made little forays into the meadow with the net or hand searching along the edge of the Gallery Forest. A few new species were found this way, not to mention a beautiful new all-white moth perched on the freshly mown grass of the parking area. (See IMAGES below.)

Birding was somewhat better on this occasion, Pat having better ears. She heard a Wood Thrush, a Common Yellowthroat, a Song Sparrow and other birds. I heard Common Grackles clucking away and, later, Mourning Doves calling from the

Blind Creek Forest. The remaining birds showed up at the tray feeder in the Nook. We took a special interest in the father Rose-breasted Grosbeak that kept an eye on its two young, a male and a female, as they visited the tray or pecked on the ground. Either way, the young had to compete with up to four Eastern Chipmunks that scurried around chasing each other, pausing for an occasional seed snack.

Having gotten our gumption up to the breaking point, we set out for the river. I knew it would be bad when I stopped inside the Hole and heard a general hummmm that pervaded the entire Blind Creek Forest. Gone was my steely resolve to pay no attention to the little servants of Count Dracula. It didn't help for us to recall my father talking about the mosquitoes along some of the portages up north. Imagine mosquitoes so thick they would cover your arm with a grey fur. Imagine Blackfly bites so numerous that one's face was a mass of blood. Big, tough men that nothing fazed would toss their canoes and packs into the bush, then run for the lake, throwing themselves in just to get away from the flies.

Mosquitoes are members of the fly family, as everyone knows. And, as everyone knows, only the female draws blood, needing the meal to complete the development of her eggs. Less well known is the fact that mosquitoes home in on the "smell" of carbon dioxide, as exhaled by mammals. This suggests an obvious remedy; we should have simply stopped breathing until we got to the river!

During all this time, Pat was compiling a "Lep list" of all the butterflies we saw. This was in preparation for the Annual Butterfly Count to be held next weekend. The list is not very long, we're afraid: European Skipper; Great Spangled Fritillary; Little Wood Satyr; Pearl Crescent; Eastern Comma; and Least Skipper.

We had earlier thought of staying past sunset, then turning on the van headlights onto a suspended sheet. But the mosquitoes did not abate as 7 o'clock came and went. Finally the mosquitoes succeeded in driving us out. So I drove us out.

**Birds (15):**

American Robin (FCF); Baltimore Oriole (GF); Blue Jay (GF); Common Grackle (GF); Common Yellowthroat (BCF); Eastern Kingbird (UM); Eastern Towhee (FCF); Gray Catbird (LM); Mourning Dove (BCF); Northern Cardinal (GF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (BCF); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (GF); Song Sparrow (HBF); Tree Swallow (Rd); Wood Thrush (FCF).

**Phenology:** Mosquitoes peaking, Monarda not yet in bloom.

## New Species:

Two-spotted Grass Bug	<i>Stenotus binotatus</i>	LM KD Je26/15
Metarrhantis Moth	[ <i>Metarranthus</i> ] sp.	LM kdHC Je21/15
Chalky Wave Moth	<i>Scopula [purata]</i>	Tr KD Je26/15
‘Yellow Snipe Fly’	<i>Rhagio tringarius</i>	GF KD Je26/15
Twelve-spotted Skimmer	<i>Libellula pulchella</i>	UM DM Je27/14

## Species Notes:

We thank Hugh Casbourn for checking the moth image for [Metarrantis], the ID he thinks most likely. We also thank Dave Martin for checking his own records from 2014, finding that he and Linda Wladarski saw a Twelve-spotted Skimmer.

## Readers Write:

After the first batch of The Bulletin went out, Dave Martin sent a correction for the dragon fly that I thought was the long-awaited Twelve-spotted Skimmer. Not only should it have been recorded long ago, but in my haste, I mistook a female Whitetail for the Skimmer: “I was rather surprised when you said that the Twelve Spotted Skimmer was a new species for the property so I took a closer look at it. That species is one of the most common and conspicuous dragonflies around so it should have been recorded before. On close examination of your photo, I can see that your photo is of a female Common Whitetail *Libellula lydia* . . . the female Whitetail and the Twelve-spotted Skimmers are very similar.” (The mistake was corrected in the remaining batches.)

Hamid Mumin, a geologist at Brandon University writes about the scream overheard during our last overnight stay: “The volume of a Vixen screaming in the night is bone chilling. I myself went out one night to rescue a damsel in distress, with no luck finding the victim. Years later we realized that what we were hearing was a fox.”

## Catching up:

Readers who would like to read past issues of the *Bulletin* are welcome to visit the archive at <<http://www.csd.uwo.ca/~akd/newport-forest/>> Scroll to the bottom.

## IMAGES:



If the Scopula Moth (above) is not *S. purata*, then it is almost certainly *S. limboundata*, a very close lookalike with a seemingly overlapping range of variation. The fly is our first Snipe Fly (family Rhagionidae).



Every once in a while one of our trail cams takes an unusual image. This one shows a male Virginia Deer getting up close and personal. The camera is mounted just inside The Hole, a natural “pinch point” at the entrance to Blind Creek Forest from the Lower Meadow.