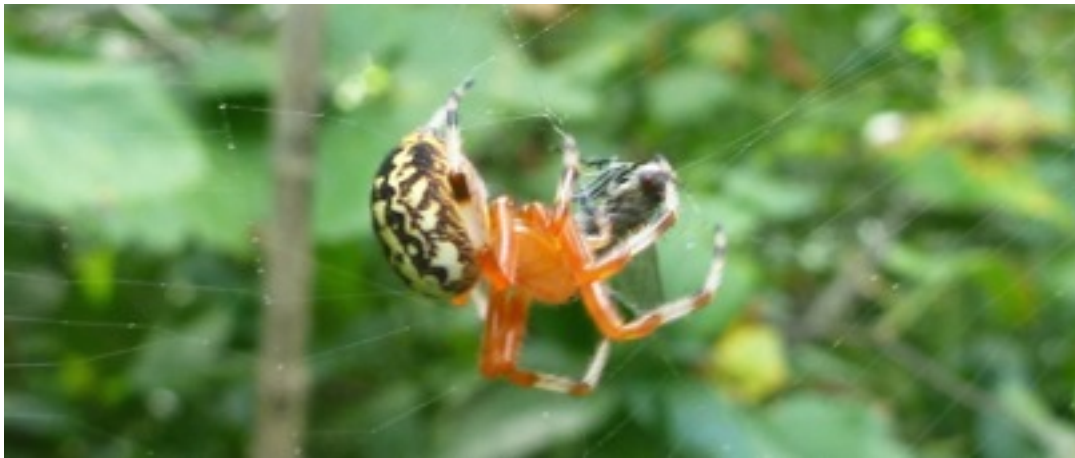


**Date and time:** Thursday August 27 2015 1:10 - 3:55 pm (Friday).

**Weather:** Pr 8 mm; RH 77%; BP 102.3 kPa; overcast; calm; T 19 °C

**Activity:** Overnight stay: sampling for fish and arthropods.

Pat and I enjoyed a stellar overnight stay at Newport Forest, with a surprising number of significant finds (not all new) over the two days. The Marbled Orb Weaver (*Araneus marmorata*), shown below, is a large, gorgeous spider with an orange ground colour on the carapace, white-banded legs and a distinctively “marbled” abdomen. We now have six records for this species.



But let us start at the beginning of this site visit. On the way in, we stopped in the Upper Meadow to examine the recently burned areas to see how the TTLT remediation experiment was going. Lots of new grass was springing up everywhere, along with Milkweed and other typical oldfield plants. It was a relief to find that so many root systems had survived the burn.

After setting up camp in the trailer, we got down to business by searching along the former farm track. Pat found a Flesh Fly that turned out to be new. (See *New Species* below, as well as *IMAGES*.) Later I spotted a Clouded Sulphur (*Colias philodice*) in the same area.

I then walked the trail through the Regeneration Zone, armed with my net. The first thing I noticed were bumblebees and honeybees everywhere I looked. Soon we will be conducting our fourth annual pollinator count along that trail (taking into

account the slowly diminishing goldenrod population). On the trail today I spotted a large Syrphid that I couldn't quite get to with the camera, a Gasteruptiid wasp that refused to land anywhere, a Sphecid wasp with a red mark on its abdomen, and an Ichneumon wasp with trailing legs and yellow tarsi. With only a Black-horned Tree Cricket (*Oecanthus nigricornis*) to show for my efforts, I returned to the Nook to confer with Pat, noting a Shrew (or a Woodland Vole) scurrying so quickly across the path ahead that I couldn't quite make it out. But not fat enough for a Meadow Vole, in any case.

In the Nook, Pat informed me that the raccoon nursery box, which had harboured kits every year for a decade, had lost its grip on the Black Maple, now perched against a log halfway down the creek bluffs. As we sat in the Nook, the sun came out and I glanced at my watch — 3 pm. We discussed the next foray, this time down to the creek. Things were about to get exciting.

On our way down the Fleming Creek Trail we found a troop of clustered orange mushrooms. When I plucked one to get an image of the gills, out came three small white millipedes, a new species for us. Dodging two *Micrathena* webs across the trail, we arrived at the creek flats. It was then that Pat cried, "Oh look!" it was an amazing sight. We hadn't seen a Marbled Orbweaver for years. We teased it up into its retreat (an enrolled leaf) to see it scrunch itself into a defensive ball, knees over carapace, as it were.

Kick-fishing in the Lower Rapids with an aquatic net, I brought out a Greenside Darter (*Etheostoma blennioides*) and a Northern Clearwater Crayfish (*Orconectes propinquus*), neither new, but getting to be like old friends. We set a minnow trap baited with kibble and bread crusts just below the rapids with the intention of leaving it overnight.

Around dinner time, Erin Carroll rolled into camp straight from work as an aquatic Biologist with the St Clair Conservation Authority. Erin is also a Newport Forest Steward. We added the egg salad sub she had brought to our bean stew dinner and all dined heartily. After the meal, Erin and I walked out to the river to explore Mussel Beach. Erin found a few nice valves such as the Purple Wartyback. On the way out we stopped to admire the flowers of a Groundnut vine growing at the Landing. (See IMAGES.)

Following Erin's departure there was just enough time to set up the trailer for the night. Following sunset, the Katydid's began their chorus from high in the canopy of the Gallery Forest and elsewhere. Very loud. "Katy-did, Katy-didn't." They

called until the temperature dropped down to the overnight low of 12° C. The following audio recording barely does justice to what we heard:

<<http://songsofinsects.com/katydids/common-true-katydid>>

The moon was nearing full when it rose above the trees of the Gallery Forest by the trailer. The night sky, still hazy from the day's overcast, was a pale ghostly grey. Some coyotes began a brief chorus across the river, barking and yodelling. Off to the east, just beyond Eva's Woods, beef cattle in the Wilcox pasture began a chorus of moans and bellows, as if objecting to some presence. Over in the Nook, I could hear two Raccoons busily crunching kibble, so I went over for a visit. The flashlight outlined their faces, turned toward me for a second, then back to their midnight snack. It was about this time, shortly after midnight, that I heard a Screech Owl beginning to call from Blind Creek Forest. Whinny, whinny, warble, whinny, whinny, warble. It went on for a good five minutes when, suddenly, another Screech Owl joined in between calls of the first one. It was further away and over to the west in the Gallery Forest. The two went on for another three minutes or so. Pure magic! After listening to the end, I went to check the seed trays for Southern Flying Squirrels. None were about. I then returned from the cold night (12° C) into a trailer that had been warmed to 20° C entirely by three oil lamps! I then settled into Barbara Tuchman's *A Distant Mirror*, immersing myself in wars, peasant revolts, and royal corruption of 14th Century France. I too am a night owl!

Friday dawned cloudy, but the sun soon came out to warm the rest of the day. Up earlier than I, Pat went out to admire the bowl-and-doily spider webs bedecked with dew. She then followed the advice of local naturalist Winnie Wake by doing "the big sit". For nearly an hour she sat on a small bench by the track, looking all about her and waiting. Presently a Hackberry Emperor alighted on her hand, perched there to probe for salt with its delicate proboscis. It then flew away, only to return for another five-minute big sit of its own. Pat also spotted a Great Spangled Fritillary and a Hairstreak Butterfly. But she wasn't done yet.

Back at the trailer, she found a Walkingstick on the trailer deck. It would have nothing to eat there, so she moved it to a tree in the Regen Zone. She also pointed out a Mud Wasp to me. It hovered back and forth over the deck, refusing to alight, so I ended up catching it with my camera in mid-flight. The shots turned out well enough for me to examine the overall morphology and colouring, including the white tarsae on leg 3.

Our second excursion of the day took us to the Elbow in the river trail. Along the way, We spotted two fuzzy white galls on a Nettle leaf. And then, wonder of

wonders, we spotted a Gold Moth larva perched on a nearby plant. The Gold Moth is a rare insect in Ontario. On the way back, Pat pointed out two Wingstem plants with upper stems literally coated in aphids. We'll leave those images for later!

For the very last excursion, we returned to the creek to check the minnow trap. Three fish flipped about when I pulled up the trap. We put the fish in a pail of water, then extracted them one at a time, putting them in water-filled baggies and photographing them through the plastic. Two Shiners and a Logperch. We then released them.

**Trail cams:** #1 caught one Raccoon kit and mother on 25th, adult and kit on 27th, #2 two kits on 20th, one adult on 21st.

**Birds:** (12)

American Crow (TR); Blue Jay (GF); Canada Goose (TR); Cedar Waxwing (TR); Common Grackle (GF); Gray Catbird (FC); Eastern Screech Owl (BCF); Mourning Dove (GF); Northern Flicker (BCF); Song Sparrow (LM); Turkey Vulture (HP); Wild Turkey (LM).

**Phenology:** Goldenrod in nearly full bloom, New England Asters coming into bloom in Lower Meadow, Ground Nut in flower.

**Other Species** found on this visit included the over-abundant Nursery Spider (*Pisaurina mira*), pair of mating Fruit Flies (*Euaresia bellula*), a pair of mating Twice-stabbed Stink bugs (*Cosmopepla lintneriana*) and a Scentless Plant Bug (*Arhyssus nigristernum*).

**New Species:**

'White Millepede'	<i>Petaserped</i> sp.	FCT pdKD Ap37/15
Borer Moth	<i>Papaipema</i> sp.	LM/HBF Au28/15
'Checkered Fly'	<i>Sarcophaga</i> [ <i>crassipalpis</i> ]	LM KD Au27/15
'Knob-tailed Robber Fly'	<i>Cyrtopogon</i> [ <i>evidens</i> ]	GF KD Au28/15
'Margined Hoverfly'	<i>Taxomerus</i> [ <i>marginatus</i> ]	GF KD Au28/15
'White-footed Mudwasp'	<i>Trypoxylon lactitarse</i>	Tr pdKD Au28/15

**Species Notes:**

The seven-odd species of Borer Moth in our area all look so much alike that I have hesitated to pin a specific name on our specimen. Several other species of *Sarcophaga* are checkered, *S. crassipalpis* being merely our best guess. The

Robber Fly and Hoverfly both got the same treatment. The Mud Wasp is the only species of Trypoxylon with a pure white tarsus on leg 3.

### **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:**



The Groundnut (*Apios americana*) is one of a dozen viney plants to be found at Newport Forest, most of them herbaceous. The ground nut, an underground tuber, is edible and once served as a food source for natives.



Just to give readers a break, we weren't going to put any images of arthropods in this issue, but we couldn't resist this clear image of a new species of Flesh Fly that we call the 'Checkered Fly', *Sarcophaga* [*crassipalpis*], in spite of the fact that other species of *Sarcophaga* are checkered.

**Two of the smaller fish that live in Fleming Creek:**



Emerald Shiner (*Notropis atherinoides*)



Logperch (*Percina caprodes*)

We took several images of both species, but these tail-less views serve the purpose of presenting the main features. Note the broad green stripe along the side of the Emerald Shiner and following the lateral line. The Logperch has two dorsal fins, the first being collapsed in this image. A series of alternating broad and narrow bands is a major field mark.