

Date and time: Wednesday October 21 2015 2:40 - 7:05 pm

Weather: Pr 3 mm; RH 62%; BP 102.4 kPa; overcast; calm; T 19 °C

Activity: Scanning Mussel Beach and fishing Fleming Creek.

Out on the beach today I found lots of animal tracks, including a first: adults *and* *young* of three different mammals: Virginia Deer, Coyote, and Raccoon. I found two Lycosid spiders, one of them new, then turned to a study of erosion on the beach. Here, for example, we see a hummock that has detached itself from the base of the bluffs, creeping on its way to the river. Somewhat whimsically I think of it as a kind of life form that leaves the mother mass and heads for water, there to break up into individual propagules — sort of like some bacteria.



The rest of my time on site was spent on walks, keeping my eyes open for new organisms — including viruses, as it turns out. On the way back from the river, my attention was diverted by a great many fallen Hackberry leaves with strange little spots that I first thought were galls. But no occupants and no chamber, to speak of. A web search much later brought me to a well-known affliction of Hackberries called “Hackberry Island Chlorosis.” (More to come at the end of the Bulletin.)

I returned to the trailer to sit in the Nook and to enjoy the unusual congregation of birds flying about from tree to tree. For the first time since last winter, I saw White-breasted Nuthatches and a Tufted Titmouse. Other birds were much smaller, Kinglets and Warblers, at a guess. At my level of birding they were little more than elusive silhouettes. Were all these birds migrating *in* or migrating *through*? I also pondered the very low level of precipitation we have been recording for much of the summer. Perhaps the rain gauge was faulty. Earlier I had filled it to a known

level, intending to check it before leaving. Somewhere down in the Fleming Creek Forest I heard an animal scream, possibly a Red Fox.

While retrieving my rubber boots from the trailer, I spotted an attractive moth clinging to the door jamb and a beautiful reddish combfoot spider on the water dispenser. I was on my way to the creek for a spot of fishing, even as the sun began to peep out through the overcast. Down in the creek, I kicked rocks in the rapids, with little result. I had more success sweeping with the black aquatic net just above the rapids. Here I picked up a Johnny Darter and what may be a Blackchin Shiner. I will consult with fish expert, John Schwindt, on that one.

I was preparing to leave when a pickup truck rolled into camp. It was our neighbour down the road, Randy Ovecka and her partner Mark Kerruish. There was no time for a grand tour of the property, but I took them down the bluffs for a look at the creek. Randy asked if I had seen her deer. She keeps deer in a pen beside her house. Recently two of them got away. She said that rattling the feed pail usually brought them home again, if within earshot. I took the opportunity of questioning Randy once more about the melanistic cougar she claims to have seen back in the early spring of 2001. She had spotted it jumping out of her barn, then coming out to the road. It was a glossy jet black and had a long, ropy tail “as long as the body itself.” When it passed her mailbox, its “massive” head was level with the box! I was surprised to learn that Randy was not on the Bulletin list, so we exchanged email addresses. They drove off and later I did the same. But not before checking the test-fill of the rain gauge. Same level, no leak, no mistake.

Birds: (7)

American Crow (UM); Blue Jay (GF); Northern Flicker (GF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (GF); Tufted Titmouse (GF); Turkey Vulture (TR); White-breasted Nuthatch (GF).

New Species:

Hackberry Island Chlorosis	‘H.I.C. Virus’	BCF KD Oc21/15
‘Log Funnel’	<i>Pseudoarmillariella ectypoides</i>	RSF kdGT Oc14/15
‘White-striped Tigrosa’	<i>Tigrosa helluo</i>	MB KD Oc21/15
‘Boreal Combfoot’	<i>Steatoda borealis</i>	Tr KD Oc21/15
‘Brocaded Pinion Moth’	<i>Lithophane hemina</i>	GF/Tr KD Oc21/15
Creek Chub	<i>Semotilus atromaculatus</i>	FC/LR kd/JS Sp06/15

Old Species: (Ratio of new species: 50%) Winter Polypore (*Polyporus brumalis*); ‘Daddy Shortlegs’ (*Odiellus pictus*); Northern Crab Spider (*Mecaphesa asperata*);

Tarnished Plant Bug (*Lygus lineolaris*); Hickory Tussock Moth (*Lophocampa caryae*); Johnny Darter (*Etheostoma nigrum*).

Species Notes:

As soon as the new virus receives a name, it will replace the present place-holder name. Mycologist Greg Thorn used the phrase “might be” in connection with the fungus ID, but we hesitate to add square brackets. He also apologizes, in effect, for the rather long name. The genus *Tigrosa* is a new Wolf Spider genus for us, part of the Mussel Beach Arachnid community. An image of the Boreal Combfoot appears below. It was spotted first two years ago, but identified only tentatively. The fish was identified by John Schwindt of the Upper Thames CA.

IMAGES:



This comb-footed spider *Steatoda borealis* had spun a mesh web just below the business end of this water dispenser in the trailer. Here it tries to get away from me by climbing the dispenser, but keeps skidding on the wet surface. The family Theridiidae includes the Widow Spiders.



The Pinion Moth genus *Lithophane* has 37 species, all with square shoulders, like this one. Many of these species wear richly embroidered cloaks, as it were. The moth is slightly out of focus, but the appearance of double images is illusory. The wing markings really are doubled.

The dead Hackberry leaf above shows the final appearance of Hackberry Island Chlorosis, the “islands” being the isolated whitish areas, each bounded by veins. Not particularly harmful to the tree, H. I. C. was recently shown to be due to a virus — identified as such, but not yet named.