

Date and time: Tuesday October 27 2015 12:05 - 3:00 pm.

Weather: Pr 0 mm; RH 71%; BP 103.2 kPa; overcast; SSE 0 - 10 kmh; T 12 °C

Activity: Two visits in one, with fishing in both.

Sunday October 25: We were favoured by a visit from my Brother Peter, his wife Gaye and daughter Lizzie. We walked to the river to visit Mussel Beach. Peter, the geologist of the family, was intrigued by the “thunderstones,” cracking one open to find a cluster of iron sulphide crystals. Gaye and Lizzie then continued along the Thames River Trail through the deep woods where Gaye, a photographer, took this wonderful image near a stand of American Beech and Sugar Maple:



Back in camp, we all sat in the Nook to do some serious (albeit passive) birding. Peter spotted a Brown Creeper then Pat spotted a Tufted Titmouse, our two best birds of the day. Unfortunately, I had neglected to bring my cameras, so there was little or no ATBI activity during the visit. I took Gaye and Lizzie down to the creek to sample fish in the rapids. Gaye was delighted to catch some 12 darters and minnows there, a prelude to the roaring success of our next visit two days later:

Tuesday October 27: I met fish experts Dave Johnson (Upper Thames River Conservation Authority - UTRCA) and Lindsay Bennett (Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority - LTVCA) and followed their truck down to the camp. We wasted little time in getting down to the creek, where the pair began sampling in the Lower Rapids, both above and below, then went upstream to sample around the Upper Rapids, as shown in the image below. They were “electrofishing.”



Dave operated the probe, which sends a hefty electric current into the water, stunning all fish within its range. On each occasion, one or more fish would rise to the surface, momentarily unable to swim. Lindsay would scoop them up in her net and dump them into a pail which Dave carried between them. When enough fish had been caught, they would bring the pail ashore, where Dave would empty it back into Lindsay’s net. She would keep the net just below the surface of the creek and each time she raised it, Dave would pick out a fish, examine it and call out the common name of the species for my benefit. Then he would hold it out for me to photograph, throwing it quickly back into the water.

We retired to the Nook for a break before the pair drove off to their next site. Dave is helping out the LTVCA with its fish sampling program. I asked Dave if many fish were killed by this method of collection. He replied that such deaths were rare. “More die in seine nets,” he said. We also discussed the Golden Redhorse which they had found in good numbers in Fleming Creek. Dave remarked that the creek appeared to be a spawning ground for the species. Reconciling our two lists, we arrived at a total of 15 species found in today’s sampling effort. Six of these were new species for the ATBI list, as shown in **New Species** below. It remains only to add what a pleasure it was to work with such cheerful and competent individuals as Lindsay and Dave were.

After Lindsay and Dave had left, I cleaned up by removing all the flags from the Regen Zone that marked the counting stations for the bee protocol conducted in September. I checked some pan traps for beetles, finding nothing. Then I took a walk to the Elbow on the river trail where I dismembered a log near the trail. I thought I had found a centipede with a red head, along with a Wood Louse. But no. Both turned out to be beetle larvae! The first was a wireworm (Click Beetle?) while the second was probably the larva of a Ground Beetle or a Carrion Beetle.

Birds: (combined visits - 12)

American Crow (EW); American Robin (GF); Blue Jay (GF); Brown Creeper (GF); Common Grackle (BCF); Mourning Dove (BCF); Northern Flicker (GF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (BCF); Red-tailed Hawk (FCF); Tufted Titmouse (GF); Turkey Vulture (TR); White-breasted Nuthatch (GF).

New Species:

Spotfin Shiner	<i>Cyprinella spiloptera</i>	LR DJ/LB Oc27/15
Common Shiner	<i>Luxilus coronets</i>	LR DJ/LB Oc27/15
Mimic Shiner	<i>Notropis volucellus</i>	LR DJ/LB Oc27/15
Spotted Sucker	<i>Minytrema melanops</i>	UR DJ/LB Oc27/15
Bluntnose Minnow	<i>Pimephales notatus</i>	LR DJ/LB Oc27/15
Central Stoneroller	<i>Campostoma anomalum</i>	UR DJ/LB Oc27/15

Old Species: (ratio of new species is 33% of total examined)

Sweet Bracket (*Daedaleopsis confragosa*); Eastern Yellowjacket (*Vespula maculifrons*); Johnny Darter (*Etheostoma nigrum*); Fantail Darter (*Etheostoma flabellare*); Rainbow Darter (*Etheostoma cerebellum*); Greenside Darter (*Etheostoma blennioides*); Logperch (*Percina caprodes*); White Sucker (*Catostomus commersoni*); Northern Hogsucker (*Hypentelium nigricans*); Golden Redhorse (*Moxostoma erythrurum*); Creek Chub (*Semotilus atromaculatus*); Hornyhead Chub (*Nocomis biguttatus*).

Species Notes:

The Spotted Sucker has been recently reclassified as a species at risk.

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:



Looking like a refugee from a tropical aquarium, this Rainbow Darter was caught above the Lower Rapids. The colouring of the male shown here will intensify come the Spring breeding season. The female has a similar coloration, with brownish bars along her side. Its distribution includes the central US and southern Ontario.



Despite its unsavoury name, this Northern Hogsucker is a good indicator of high quality waters, according to Johnson. It has a high oxygen demand so when you find one, you have a well-oxygenated stream. The Northern Hogsucker has a distribution similar to that of the Rainbow Darter.



Neither of the two species on the previous page are new to the ATBI list, but this Central Stoneroller is a new species for us. Widely distributed across the north-central and northeastern US, this fish occurs in Canada only in southwestern Ontario. Stonerollers get their name from nibbling at rocks from which they scrape algae to eat.