

Date and time: Friday May 13 2016 2:10 - 5:45 pm

Weather: Pr 12 mm; RH 78%; BP 101.2 kPa; cloud/sun; S 10-15 kmh; T 20°C

Activity: Searching leaf litter and driving the last stake.

Today would be “Arthropod Day” I said to myself as son Jonathan and I arrived at Newport Forest. We drove in, determined to find as many species as we could during our stay. With little new vegetation to attract insects, we decided to search the leaf litter just downslope from the Nook. We used a hoe to scrape large piles of leaves and soil into a regular garbage bag, then brought it up to the Nook table. There we could shake leaves and twigs into spotting trays, as below.



The “take” was better than I expected. (See Below.) Two centipedes, two millipedes, a bug nymph, sowbugs, a Ghost Spider, a Flower Beetle, two earthworms and a burrowing Scarabaeid beetle. Following the litter search I took a short walkabout to see what insects might be out roaming. We found some Honeybees on Dandelions, a soldier beetle, a paper wasp, a tussock caterpillar, and a Muscid fly. (See Below.) We then visited the Raccoon corpse behind the trailer. Something had dragged it a few metres away from its previous location and torn it open. I was

delighted (in a ghoulish way) to find it crawling with beetles and flies. Later, enlarged images revealed that Dermestid (Carpet) Beetles had joined the feast. The body cavity was now splayed open to expose the rib cage and internal organs, as in the IMAGES below. The corpse continues to pay dividends.

Our final project of the day was to mark and drive the last two trail stakes, with the 1700 metre stake being driven just 42 metres short of the Hole (beginning of the Thames River Trail and location of Trail Cam #1). We now have a figure for the total length of the walk: 1742 metres. As we drew the tape along the trail we could hear the chorus of the American Toad at the far end of the ponds, as well as the nearby call of the Gray Tree Frog. There have been remarkably few frogs calling this Spring — or have we just been coming at the wrong time?

Birds: (12)

American Crow (TR); Blue Jay (GF); Canada Goose (FC); Eastern Towhee (BCF); Great Crested Flycatcher (GF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (GF); Northern Cardinal Gray Catbird (LM/BCF); (EW); Northern Flicker (BCF); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (GF); Song Sparrow (LM); Turkey Vulture (BCF).

Phenology: Baby Raccoons and Cottontails out, first Honeybees appearing.

New Species: (17% new)

Ghost Spider	<i>Anyphana pectorosa</i>	GF jd/KD My1316
‘White-banded Larder Beetle’	<i>Dermestes [lardarius]</i>	GF jd/KD My13/16

Old Species:

Stone Centipede (*Lithobius forficatus*); ‘Cylindrical Julid’ (*Cylindroiulus* sp.); Gold Assassin Bug (*Zelus luridus*); Two-spotted Soldier Beetle (*Cyrtomoptera divisa*); Hickory Shoot Curculio (*Conotrachelus aratus*). Leaf Beetle (*Sumitrosis inaequalis*); False Stable Fly (*Muscina stabulans*); Virginia Ctenuchid larva (*Ctenucha Virginiana*), Honeybee (*Apis mellifera*); Northern Paper Wasp (*Polistes fuscatus*). **Notes:** 1. While gathering leaf litter we found a burrowing Scarabaeid beetle, getting partial images, then losing it in the soil. The specimen is not included above, but placed in a file of backlogged imagery. 2. Dermestid Beetles specialize in eating old muscle and flesh, cleaning the skeleton.

Trail Cams:

#1: Wild Turkey (hen); Long-tailed Weasel; Eastern Cottontails (plus young); Raccoons (one with young); Coyote; Virginia Possums (once two); Virginia Deer.
#2: (behind trailer) Two possums show an interest in the Raccoon corpse.

Readers Write:

Two visitors enthuse about last week's Wildflower Walk: Rebecca Smythe: "Ian and I had a wonderful time. Thank you so much!" Pat Fyfe: "I enjoyed the walk so much! The decision among several of us to uproot as many as possible wild garlic plants also provided a degree of competitive amusement, and energized me to do the same thing in my back garden. I had several very comical conversations with other trekkers, which added to the fun."

IMAGES:

Warning: Image on next page may be offensive to some readers: for mature audiences only.



Nymphal form of the Assassin Bug (*Zelus luridus*) was lurking in the leaf litter. Adult appears below (photo credit: [Bug Guide](#))





Raccoon carcass was opened sometime in the last week, exposing muscle, fat, connective tissue, etc. to the attention of Carrion Beetles (*Oiceoptoma noveboracense*). Larvae can be seen in foreground while two adults in the background busy themselves making more larvae. Beside them a Green-bottle Fly imbibes tasty juices, while two Dermestid (at a guess) beetles chew away at flesh. Next customers may be *Trox* Beetles looking for skin.

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