

Date and time: Monday May 23 2016 1:35 - 7:00 pm

Weather: Pr 6 mm; RH 33%; BP 101.9 kPa; clear; calm; T 28° C.

Activity: Holiday picnic: a lunch, a walkabout, and a side order of ATBI.

We arrived in two vehicles, Pat and I in one, and Mousheer Amer, Heather Greenwood, their daughter Sarah, and Grandson Noah in the other. The weather was hot and dry, the ground firm and spirits high. Everyone has their own idea of a holiday, of course. Mine was to catch insects and spiders in my camera.

After setting up camp, we proceeded to the river. Along the way, Heather swept for me, producing a few specimens (not yet plentiful) in the net every ten minutes. We found the following scene at the river, with the clay beach only half emerged.



Three Canada Geese and two or three families of ducks had congregated at the far spit (barely visible above). The beach is home to many spiders; the sun-hardened clay breaks into cracks to make retreats for Wolf Spiders and Fishing Spiders. While Mousheer relaxed at the base of the bluffs, I pursued a very dark, almost charcoal spider scurrying ahead of me by fits and starts. This would turn out to be a new species of *Dolomedes* Fishing Spider, the darkest of all *Dolomedes* species.

Fishing spiders have water-repellent “feet”, enabling them to skitter over the river’s surface to pick off struggling insects, a pretty good living, I think.

On the return from the river, I noticed that the same species of spider was showing up in the net over and over again, a spider that we see regularly every year, but never in such numbers: The Longjawed Orbweaver (*Tetragnatha straminea*) is an endemic species, along with the *Micrathena* orb weavers that show up in June. We stopped at the vernal ponds (still charged) to get a sample of the algae floating there. Once again, Heather volunteered to help, wading into Vernal Pond B to scoop up rafts of algae into a flask. (See IMAGES.) Here also, I stopped to rest on a bench, startled by a beautiful white moth that turned out to be new. It was the White Spring Moth, as in the species list below.

Along the way, I had stopped at every plant in flower, photographing it as part of an ongoing visual plant catalogue. When we got back to camp, Mousheer noticed that the steps on the trailer deck were rotting away and becoming a hazard. In the space of half an hour, he rebuilt the steps using lumber from a scrap pile behind the trailer. In the meantime the picnic things were all laid out and everyone enjoyed watching little Noah (14 mos) eating watermelon with new teeth, while mother Sarah looked proudly on.

After lunch, Sarah volunteered to sweep for me down at the creek. We found an interesting snail that I photographed from many angles, hoping that Western’s new snail expert might help us out on that one. The creek is back to normal levels, even as the river does the same. We came home with cameras full of images that would take many hours to process, a good start to the new ATBI season.

Birds: (13)

American Crow (TR); Bald Eagle (TR); Blue Jay (GF); Canada Goose (TR); Eastern Towhee (GF); Gray Catbird (RL); Great Crested Flycatcher (GF); Northern Flicker (BCF); Northern Oriole (UM); Red-bellied Woodpecker (GF); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (LM); Song Sparrow (LM); Turkey Vulture (LM).

Phenology:

New Species: (20% new)

‘Dark Fishing Spider’	<i>Dolomedes [albineus]</i>	MB KD My23/16
‘Emerald Soldier’	<i>Calleida punctata</i>	LM hg/KD My23/16
White Spring Moth	<i>Lomographa vestaliata</i>	BCF KD My23/16

Old Species:

'Rosy Ghost Spider' (*Hibana gracilis*); Longjawed Orb Weaver (*Tetragnatha straminea*); Filmy Dome Spider (*Neriene radiata*); 'Red-headed Dwarf Spider' (*Hypselistes florens*); Goldenrod Crab Spider (*Mecaphesa asperata*); 'Miniature Jumper' (*Pelegrina proterva*); Twice-stabbed Stink Bug (*Cosmopepla lintneriana*); Tarnished Plant Bug (*Lygus lineolaris*); Spotted Lady Beetle (*Coleomegilla maculata*); Fourteen-spotted Lady Beetle (*Propylaea quatuordecimpunctata*); Two-lined Leatherwing (*Atalantycha bilineata*); Winged Ant (*Camponotus* sp.);

Trail Cam #1: Work Crew carrying out bags of GM; Raccoon (multiple visits); Eastern Cottontail (multiple visits); Coyote (three visits); Virginia Deer; Feral Cat; Blue Jay.

Species Notes:

The new Cantharid beetle gave me lots of trouble because I was sure it was an Ant-like Flower Beetle (Anthicidae). It wasn't. And beware: the 14-spotted Lady Beetle is easily mistaken for the Leaf Beetle *Chrysomela knabi*. Several species remained unidentified, a white Tetragnathid; a nondescript grey weevil, an unusually small Mayfly, a speckled bug nymph, and an unidentifiable firefly sp. owing to poor image quality.

Recycling Tour Now ON!

Anne Boyd, site manager for the Municipal Recycling Facility here in London, has set aside Tuesday, June 21 to host a tour of the facility by local readers who would like to see this eco-techno-marvel for themselves. She has suggested the following itinerary:

10 am arrive
10:05 – 10:40 – presentation, activity
10:40 to 10:55 – prepare for tour (gear on)
10:55 to 11:30 – tour of recycling centre
11:30 – drive to landfill next door
11:35 – landfill tour
Noon finish

If you would like to join this tour, or think you might like to, closer to the time, please get in touch with Bruce Parker at <hayjoe55@gmail.com> and he will add your name to the tour list. Attendance limits are not known at the moment.

IMAGES:



White Spring Moth perches on a violet leaf behind my rest bench.



Cantharid Beetle that I call the 'Emerald Soldier' negotiates two fingers.



A sample of floating algae from Vernal Pond B turned out to contain not only the ubiquitous *Mougeotia*, a Charophyte alga, but *Anabaena*, a common Cyanophyte (blue-green alga). Look for a broken filament of tiny blue-green cells. There are 45 known species of *Anabaena*.

