

Date and time: Sunday July 31 2016 2:45 - 10:15 pm.

Weather: Pr 9 mm; RH 60%; BP 101.4 kPa; cloud/sun; calm ; T 27°C

Activity: Exploring the beach and running the light trap.

The sky had clouded over and off to the north angry-looking clouds were gathering, with occasional grumblings. I stopped by the gate to inspect the Milkweed patch there, finding the Milkweed Beetle, the Large Milkweed Bug and the Milkweed (Seed) Bug. A network of large cracks covered the soil in all directions. The drought is deepening. I wouldn't have minded being rained out, under the circumstances. The afternoon was scheduled for a walkabout with Steward Darren Jacobs. He did not arrive until 3:30, being unsure of the weather.



Soil cracks are widening throughout the property. Now dollar-sized.

There was a mere 8 mm in the rain gauge but shortly after Darren's arrival it began to spit so we took refuge in the Nook until half an hour had passed and we could set out for the River. Passing the rain gauge again, I found a mere 1 mm had fallen!

As soon as we arrived at the river, we were greeted by a very large Spiny Soft-shell Turtle that crash-dived off the shore. This was followed by the majestic sweep-sweep of Great Blue Heron wings as it flew downriver at eye level. Then we heard the "weep-weep" of Wood Ducks upriver. It was turning into a lively day! But wait. A pair of Bald Eagle flew overhead upriver, one of them immature. A Song Sparrow and a Green Frog called from the opposite shore, while a Gray Tree Frog burbled away on our side of the water.

Darren pointed to the rapids offshore. “Look out there. Those are really big clams with their beaks sticking out of the water.” However, there were enough mussels at our feet to keep us occupied. We sorted through several to see how many we could identify offhand. In the middle of this, we heard someone talking. Voices carry over water and the sounds were coming from upstream. Around the bend came three kayakers. They stopped for a chat. Young men, their names were Jake, Kyle and Tyler. (Taking last names would have been intrusive.)

Working our way back toward the landing, we came upon the tree with the “Coyote” in it. It was not, as we have since discovered, a Coyote, but a Raccoon. The fur had bleached blonde in the sun and the pelt had lengthened like an empty flour sack. A Raccoon skull dangled inside the pelt. Not a Canid, after all. Then we came to a nest hung from the side of a vertical clay bank. Darren looked inside. “There’s an egg in there!” I took a picture of a smallish egg about 12-14 mm in length, grey with black blotches. I sent the image to Dave Martin, our consultant on all things Avian.

More plants for my plant image gallery: I had photographed a healthy stand of Purple Loosestrife toward the end of the beach and now Darren pointed out some Early Goldenrod (*Solidago juncea*) sprouting from the upper bank, then a Sneezeweed (*Helenium autumnale*) and a Common Plantain (*Plantago major*) at our feet. Cup Plants (*Silphium perfoliatum*) could be seen craning their necks over the bank high above us. Yellow Bandwing Grasshoppers (*Psinidia fenestralis*) would occasionally flush ahead of us, while Darren pointed out occasional small grey grasshoppers hiding in their camouflage on the pebbled clay. These turned out to include a new species of Pygmy Grasshoppers and *Psinidia* nymphs.

It was now nearly 6 o’clock, so we headed back to base for dinner. Halfway through the meal, we were startled by a Wood Thrush that flew into the Nook to perch on the old log. It inspected us by turns, then abruptly flew off again. To pass some time we cut the two trees recommended by Donald Craig for removal. They were crowding a beautiful Black Cherry in the Gallery Forest. By 9:00 pm the light trap was set up once more. But this time, we would avoid the mistake of last Thursday. Darren agreed to highlight whatever landed on the illuminated sheet while I took photographs with my trusty Lumix camera.

The first moth showed up by 9:15. Then a large fierce-looking Stag Beetle (that wasn’t), then a Mayfly, then more moths. By full darkness, the screen was replete with moths, mostly small. Larger ones would fly into the beam but disdain to land.

Some of the moths flew to a nearby cooler to light on the lid for a while, making themselves even easier to photograph. Occasionally Darren would go out to the farm track to see if any bats were on patrol. None. Not enough insects? We did not leave the site until 10:15.

Back home I found myself overwhelmed with imagery, especially moths. There would be no way I could identify them all before The Bulletin's timely appearance. It reminded me of the winter I spent identifying moths from Nina Zitani's two malaise traps set up on site 11 years ago, with nearly 100 species of moths in four jars packed with insects in alcohol!

Birds: (18)

American Crow (RSF); American Goldfinch (GF); American Robin (FC); Bald Eagle (TR); Blue Jay (RB); Belted Kingfisher (GF); Black-capped Chickadee (GF); Common Grackle (GF); Common Yellowthroat (LM); Eastern Towhee (BCF); Gray Catbird (GF); Great Blue Heron (TR); Mourning Dove (GF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (GF); Song Sparrow (TR); White-breasted Nuthatch (GF); Wood Duck (TR); Wood Thrush (GF).

Phenology: Sneezeweed in Bloom, Wingstem and Cup Plant not flowering yet; mosquitoes almost completely absent.

New Species: (67% new - not surprising for a light trap.)

Tall Dock	<i>Rumex altissimus</i>	SB WVH My28/16
'Green Mayfly'	<i>Maccaffertium</i> sp.	GF dj/KD J131/16
Hooded Grouse Locust	<i>Paratettix cucullatus</i>	MB KD J131/16
Small Milkweed Bug	<i>Lygaeus kalmi</i> (nymph)	LM aa/KD J121/16
Pole Borer	<i>Neandra brunnea</i>	GF dj/KD J1231/16
'Four-spotted Beige Moth'	<i>Metarranthia angularia</i>	GF dj/KD J131/16
Painted Lichen Moth	<i>Hypopepria fucosa</i>	GF dj/KD J131/16
'Yellow-marked Pyrausta'	<i>Pyrausta generosa</i>	GF dj/KD J131/16
'Gregarious Brocade Moth'	<i>Olethreutes lacunana</i>	GF dj/KD J131/16
Malana Leafroller	<i>Olethreutes malana</i>	GF dj/KD J131/16
'Orange Brocade Moth'	<i>Olethreutes nitidana</i>	GF dj/KD J131/16

(For "Old" species see the end of this Bulletin.)

Species Notes:

The first item on the list is not only a new plant, but gives the TTLT a second S2-rated plant on site — after the Cup Plant. Three species from the same genus is unusual. They're all leaf-tier or leaf-roller moths. (See IMAGES for two of them.)

Readers Write: There is a lot of material on my desktop regarding the apparent worldwide decline in insects, but this issue is already overfull.

IMAGES:



Image: Will Van Hemessen

Tall Dock (*Rumex altissimus*) may be found growing in the Sandbar, deep in the Riverside Forest. The plant is rated as an S2 or species at risk in Ontario.



This vicious-looking beetle flew in early and stayed for a while. The “Pole Borer” is a Longhorn Beetle that looks very much like a Stag Beetle, except its antenna is beaded and not clubbed. The “horn” (antenna) is much shorter than most Longhorns, and that doesn’t help the identification process. The Pole Borer lives in rotted wood, often structural wood, hence the name. I presume it is the larva that does the damage.



Upper left - *Olethreutes nitidana*; upper right - *Olethreutes lacunana*; lower left - *Hypoprepria fucosa* (the Painted Lichen Moth); lower right *Pyrausta generosa*. The *Olethreutes* are Tortricid moths, the Painted Lichen Moth is in the Family Erebididae, while the *Pyrausta* is a Snout Moth in family Crambidae.

Old Species:

Shore Spider (*Arctosa littoralis*); Longhorn Bandwing (*Psinida fenestralis*); Large Milkweed Bug (*Oncopeltus fasciatus*); Small Milkweed Bug (*Hypoprepria fucosa*); Milkweed Beetle (*Tetraopes tetrophthalmus*).

Unidentified: small brown beetle plus ones I haven't given up on yet — as below.

Held Over: Colourful Ichneumon; Green & black Noctuid moth; White-banded micro moth: white banded Geometrid (?); Dusty Grey moth with white edging; multicoloured moth from back of screen.