

**Date and time:** Sunday October 02 2016 2:10 - 6:05 pm

**Weather:** Pr 30 mm; RH 74%; BP 102.1 kPa; sun/haze; SE 00-10 kmh; T 22°C

**Contents:** Finishing the trails and searching leaf litter.

By prior arrangement I was to meet Steve Logan and Rick Goodwin on site today, both veteran workers at Newport Forest. Today's job was to walk the trails and clear dead trees off the path, as well as cleaning out the trail through the Regeneration Zone (RZ). The recent heavy rains in the area made Steve think the property would be difficult to drive, so he brought his tractor.



By the time I arrived, the two had already been working on site for two hours clearing trails. Before I could get down to my own version of work, we spent an hour in the Nook, listening to Rick's adventures up north. Rick earns his living as a truck driver but, needing some time off, he ending up in a fishing camp, about five hours drive north of Thunder Bay.

A keen observer of nature, Rick had noticed a link between the three animals that frequented the garbage dump behind the camp: bears, eagles and seagulls. As his pickup would start out for the dump with a load of fish parts, the seagulls would get very excited and fly on to the dump. Their cries would alert the eagles (Bald Eagles, I assume) and the eagles would fly in next. The ruckus would finally bring the bears out of the woods just as Rick arrived. "Aren't you afraid of the bears," I

asked. “As long as you’ve got food that will interest them, just throw it down. What they’re *not* interested in is fish heads or fish guts. But you won’t believe what interests them more than anything else.” We were in suspense as Rick paused. “Diapers. They love disposable diapers. They even fight over them. You can see bits of diapers in their droppings.” Apparently some young couples (with babies) were on a fishing vacation at the camp. That, too, is ecology.

Only after Steve and Rick left could I get down to a thorough examination of the contents of a garbage bag full of leaf litter, gathered from the Fleming Creek Bluffs. To see what might be crawling about in the litter habitat, I use a hoe to scrape an area of one or two square meters clean of litter, depositing it in a garbage bag. I then give the bag a good shake, discard a handful of leaves from the top, shake it again, and so on, until nothing is left at the bottom but small twigs, dry soil and, hopefully some arthropods. I then deposit small portions of the residue in a white plastic tray for further examination. After an hour at this, I ended up with one sow bug, a small, but very long millipede, a large red millipede, a small brown beetle, an earwig, several very small earthworms, an incredibly tiny fly, and several small brown ants. No spiders or Harvestmen! Was there a new species there? The only ones I could identify were the beetle and the earwig, neither new. I could not take the long millipede to anything more specific than family Parajulidae.

I went to the river to change the sd card in Trail Cam #2, little suspecting the amazing images it contained. (See IMAGES below.) While fussing about the camera, I spotted a new Bumblebee prowling some asters nearby. It had a reddish band about its abdomen. This could be *Bombus ternarius* or, better still, *Bombus affinis*, the Rusty Patch Bumblebee which has become very rare over the last decade. The three images I managed to get were all out of focus and the bee flew off before I could take better pictures. More may yet come from this department.

On the way back from the river, I discovered that the tree that Trail Cam #1 was attached to had fallen over, being more rotten than I had realized. The tree had gone over near the end of September, according to the time stamps. Then, while facing the sky for several intervening days, it had taken thousands of images of the over-head canopy with an opening across which one could see the clouds move. It took me two hours to delete all the extra images that evening. This is perhaps the main drawback of trail cams. You have to be very careful where you aim them.

Back in the camp, I had some luck simply prowling around the trailer, finding a second species of Paper Wasp and a peculiar-looking fly (also new) that I should have recognized, but didn’t. It looked exactly like a house fly, except for an

orange/red abdomen with a narrow black stripe running down the middle. It was common enough to have a common name, as I would discover much later after more than an hour of mistakenly searching the Flesh Flies and Dung Flies: it was a Muscid (House Fly) called the Face Fly, and a new species, as well.

As I drove out of the property, I glanced to my right, noting that a few trees had already started to turn yellow or red. *Après moi, l'hiver!*

**Phenology:** About 5% of trees beginning to turn colours.

**New Species:** (20% new)

Face Fly	<i>Musca autumnalis</i>	Tr KD Oc0516
'Banded Paper Wasp'	<i>Polistes [annularis]</i>	Tr KD Oc0516
Red-banded Bumblebee	<i>Bombus [ternarius]</i>	RL KD Oc0516

**Species Notes:**

The image is blurred. The Bumblebee is probably *B. ternarius*, with an outside chance of being *B. affinis*, rather unlikely given the scarcity of that species. This would be our first *B. ternarius* in any case.

**Note on rarefaction:** The percentages that we have been recording in *The Bulletin* are forming a downtrend called *rarefaction*: the more species we list, the fewer new ones remain to be found. However, like many statistical time-series the numbers are bound to fluctuate, sometimes wildly. We have added below a little bar-chart to convey the idea, starting on March 12 of this year. and not counting light trap data. The average percentage was 23.2%. Next year (if we're still around), one might expect a slightly lower percent, given the enormous number of arthropods on site and still waiting to be found, as it were.

**Number of percentages in each of nine categories.**

45	**
40	*
35	*
30	*
25	***
20	*****
15	**
10	**
5	*

## Readers Write:

Naturalist Susan Sparling writes about our occasional injections of humour:  
“Thanks for yet another interesting and informative report. I also was quite amused by the humour in this one concerning the spider's point of view when you crashed into the web ( I often think from this perspective when treading in other's habitat) as well as the description of musical pitch of the Canada geese. Adds a personal point of view to the detailed information you so thoroughly record and makes the reader smile.”

## 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:

This Face Fly (*Musca autumnalis*) suns itself on the trailer's hot skin.



Originally a Eurasian fly, this species has spread over much of North America since its arrival in the 1940s. It feeds on the eye secretions (or blood) of horses and cattle. According to Bug Guide, it likes to sun itself on walls. It is also called The Autumn Fly.

One of most valuable monitoring assets on site are the two trail cams. This one, stationed on a tripod at the River Landing, took some half-dozen images of this individual Great Blue Heron as it struck a variety of poses, many of them gallery quality.



**Reappearances:**

Parajulid Diplopod; European Sowbug (*Porcello scaber*); 'White-bordered Jumper' (*Eris flava*); European Earwig (*Forficula auricularia*); Box Elder Bug (*Boisea trivittata*); 'Spotted Broadnose Weevil' (*Sciaphilus asperatus*); Northern Paper Wasp (*Polistes fuscatus*); Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera*).

**Holdovers:** short red centipede, possibly a Stone Centipede, small brown ant.