

Date and time: Sunday April 30 2017 2:10 - 4:05 pm.

Weather: Pr 17 mm; RH 72%; BP 101.5 kPa; overcast; SE 20-30 kmh; T 15°C.

Contents: A lull in the showers permits a sampling visit.

It had rained this morning and would do so again later in the afternoon, so I tried to get everything done while the lull lasted. Once again, in spite of the recent rains, the ground was dry enough to drive. In fact, some of the bare spots in the track had already developed mud cracks.



A herd of four (or more) Virginia Deer enjoy an early morning visit to Fleming Creek for some salad and a drink on the morning of April 24.

Standing in the Nook, I looked down the Fleming Creek bluffs to check the water level. The creek was running normally, with rapids exposed. Suddenly, I realized that I was also looking at a clear area of the Fleming Creek Forest that ran right to the bank somewhat downstream from the rapids and visible in the image above. Somehow the word “sward” popped into my mind. We’ll call it the Sward, for now. Right then and there I decided that on our very next visit I would wade the rapids and check it out. Something exciting may be in store there.

The weather was comfortable, even balmy. However, clouds to the south looked ominous, pregnant with rain. Time on site would be limited, so I took a quick walk to the river and back, hearing the shriek of a Pileated Woodpecker on my way. At the vernal ponds, I noted some splendid patches of algal growth, cottony masses of a pale green alga known as *Mougeotia*. Darn! I hadn't brought any sampling ware with me, so I had to improvise something from a large plastic bottle, cutting off the

neck and fitting a new lid. Back at the vernal pond I succeeded in scooping up a healthy swatch of algae, sure to contain some micro-animals in it, as well.

The rest of my time on site was spent walking about to photograph the blooms on various trees. Some of these can be seen in the IMAGES section below. At about 3:30 distant thunder began to roll across the sky and small spits of rain began to fall. Instead of heading home, I drove down to the Rez (Moraviantown) to check up on Steve who's been doing poorly lately.

Back home, I examined my sample from Vernal Pond B, finding an Ostracod or Seed Shrimp (a Crustacean) as well as a new species — not to mention a new order — for the property. When I first saw it I said, “Aha, a *Daphnia*.” This was an organism I was well familiar with, having collected hundreds much earlier in life, to feed my “pet” Hydras. It wasn't actually the genus *Daphnia*, but a close relative. See “New Species” and IMAGES below.

Birds: (6 - not great weather for birding.)

American Crow (EW); American Robin (HBF); Blue Jay (GF); Northern Cardinal (EW); Pileated Woodpecker (BCF); Song Sparrow (UM).

Phenology: Creek in flood on April 22, creek and river now back to near-normal levels. Garlic Mustard in bloom; most trees leafing out — except for Walnuts.

New Species:

‘Pond Water Flea’ [*Simocephalus*] sp. VP-A KD Ap30/17

Species Notes:

Simocephalus belongs to the water flea family Daphniidae and is common in ponds in the Great Lakes area. There are there species known in the area, but they are usually separated by analysing protein in the “postabdominal claw”. Beyond me!

Readers Write:

Daria Koscinski, TTLT Property Manager, writes about the mystery of the bare meadow; there had been no remediation project there, but she makes a suggestion that works about as well as our “over-browsing” one: “The meadow/thicket areas are certainly patchy with respect to where there are trees vs more grass. Grass is not an easy thing for native trees or wildflowers to grow in and goldenrods are one of the few species that manage it. I can look at it next time I am there, but there is nothing specific that comes to mind that has happened recently that would explain why goldenrod or trees would be gone from that specific patch . . .”

The Spring Wildflower Walk



The TTLT Spring Wildflower Walk will be held on Sunday May 14 at 1:30 pm. For directions or more information, contact Par Dewdney at the following address: <dewdney@sympatico.ca> Please park inside the gate, off-track.

IMAGES:



Source: *Discover Life*

Simocephalus vetulus (above) would certainly be a candidate species for the water flea we collected. Cladocerans swim by beating their modified antennae which are also highly sensitive taste organs.



Redbud in the Lower Meadow (*Cercis*)



Bladdernut at the Hole (*Staphylea*)



Thorn Tree by the Nook (*Crataegus*)



“Heritage” Apple by the Nook (*Malus*)

Deer Humor



Deer usually turn on their headlights at dusk.



A deer goes eye-to-eye with Trail Cam #2 “What *is* this gizmo?”