1075 The Newport Forest Bulletin Je21/17
Citizen Science & Monitoring Nature

Date and time: Wednesday June 21 2017 1:50 - 5:00 pm
Weather: Pr 32 mm; RH 55%; BP 101.5 kPa; sun/cloud; winds calm; T 21ºC
Contents: First day of Summer: the hunt heats up.

Our cover image shows the entrance to Newport Forest on the Fleming Line. The road (a former farm track) has been mowed, thanks to TTLT Property Manager Daria Kocsinski. The Tree Swallows that inhabit boxes along the roadside were all a-twitter at my arrival and the extensive patch of Milkweed behind the gate was frosted with the pink of opening flowers.

Today was not only the first day of Summer, but an ideal day to hunt arthropods, with warm temperatures and no wind to speak of. At the trailer I was greeted by various insects flying around, some perching on the Ox-eye Daisies that were sprouting everywhere. The vegetation all looked fresh and with the special shade of green that comes with plentiful rain.

Insect populations seemed plentiful so I set to work once more with the net, sweeping first along the track at the edge of the Gallery Forest. Here emerged one large blackish Crab Spider, several Plant Bugs, a few small Lady Beetles, a black Stink Bug, along with lots of ants. The Crab Spider turned out to be new. I sometimes stage a walkabout, prowling through bushes and vegetation, around the trailer where flies, bees and even spiders like to bask in the metallic heat. I found a Robber Fly on the trailer, a Damselfly on the deck, a bee and a Calliphorid fly.

At this point I took a break to visit Fleming Creek and change the card on Trail Cam #3 which these days keeps and eye on the Lower Rapids for mammals crossing over. Ebony Jewelwings fluttered all around me, snatching a mosquito at every opportunity. On the way back up to the Nook, I swept periodically along the bluffs trail, ending with a black Ground Beetle, a Nursery Spider and little else. However, I stopped to search the leaf litter, puzzled that I hadn't seen a Harvestman so far in 2017, whereas they've been ubiquitous every year up to now. Also, no millipedes or centipedes, just modest little scarlet cup fungi and Hickory nuts everywhere. (Do the Wild Turkeys know about this treasure?)

My next port of call was the Elbow, a sharp bend in the trail that leads to the river. Before I got as far as the Blind Creek Forest, I was treated to the sight of a beautiful blue dragonfly that cooperated going enough for me to get several good shots. It was a Midland Clubtail and only our second record of this species. I then swept from the Elbow all the way back to the Hole (forest entranceway), taking my haul back to the Nook for a more relaxed examination of the net's contents: there were many Ebony Bugs in the bag, along with a Nursery Web Spider, an Orb Weaver that turned out to be new, many mosquitoes, flies, and a Dwarf Spider or two.

That was it for the day, except for a stop in the Upper Meadow on my way out to look for Wild Strawberries, presumably now fully ripe and amazingly sweet. (California strawberries taste like cardboard in comparison.) I couldn't find any, but spotted a female Widow Skimmer, a common dragonfly at Newport Forest.

Cam #1 note: At the Hole where Cam #1 is located, I see many different mammal species turning off the main trail and ducking into the vegetation across from the camera. It seems to be the entrance to a game trail in general use: so far, Raccoons, Eastern Grey Squirrels, Cottontail Rabbits, and Virginia Deer.

Phenology: Blackcaps ripening to red stage; Milkweed half in bloom; Mosquitoes still rather sparse and not yet a bother., track mowed.

Biological Inventory Project (ATBI)

New Species: (18% new)

Lattice Orbweacer	*Araneus thaddeus*	BCF KD Je21/17
'Three-banded Ground Crab	*Xysticus ampullatus*	LM KD Je21/17
'Yellow-striped Plant Bug'	*Plagiognathus obscurus*	LM KD Je21/17
Black Blow Fly	*Phormia regina*	LM KD Je2117

Species Notes:
This makes our eighth species of *Araneus* Orb Weavers and our fourth fourth species of *Xysticus*, the Ground Crab Spiders; the remaining two species had already been logged to genus, so the count does not go up for them.

Recurring Species:
Drwarf Spider (*Hypselistes florens*); 'Crenellated Nursery Spider' (*Pisaurina mira*); Midland Clubtail (*Gomphus fraternus*); Widow Skimmer (*Libellula luctuosa*); Blue-fronted Dancer (*Argia apicalis*); Ebony Jeweling (*Calopteryx maculata*); Meadow Katydid (*Conocephalus* sp); European Alder Spittlebug (*Aphrophora alni*); Tarnished Plant Bug (*Lygus lineolarus*); Alfalfa Plant Bug (*Adelphocoris lineolatus)*; Ebony Bug (*Corimelaena pulicari*a); Twice-stabbed Stink Bug (*Cosmopepla lintneriana*); 'Blackbelly Rhopalid' (*Arhyssus nigristernum*); Immigrant Green Leaf Weevil (*Polydrusus formosus*); Hairy Flower Scarab (*Trichiotinus affinis*); Orange-spotted Lady Beetle (*Brachiacantha ursina*); 'Shoebrown Click Beetle' (*Limonius agonus*); 'Black Sweat Bee' (*Lasioglossum* sp.).

Held Over or Discarded:
immature earwig; possible Robber Fly - unidentifiable from image; small red Mirid nymph; unidentifiable March Fly; black leaf hopper; muscid fly.

Readers Write

In the previous issue of The Bulletin, we put out a challenge to identify a moth from an image of its caterpillar. The first to write in was Dr Steve Paiero of Guelph University with a suggestion of the Virginia Ctenuchia Moth — which turned out to be correct. (I missed it completely!) The second to write in was Hugh Casbourne, an avocational moth expert, who made the same identification. So Paiero wins the promised prize. What else but a copy of my new biodiversity book!

Image Gallery

Sometimes we take a picture which, by sheer accident, displays an artistic quality, as though premeditated. Nothing of the kind, but there it is, a healthy Milkweed plant growing in a large patch of its fellows by the property gate. Every time we arrive and swing the gate open, I visit the patch to check for Milkweed Beetles and Milkweed Bugs (both red with black spots) on the plants. Not yet, we guess. And no Monarch larvae yet, either.

The ‘Shoebrown Click Beetle’, *Limonius agonus*, showed up in one of today’s sweeps. Here is a description of why this animal is called a click beetle: “When a click beetle is touched, it falls on its back and plays dead. To right itself the click beetle bends its head and thorax forward, hooking a spine into a notch on the abdomen. When the spine is released, it makes a click, and the beetle is hurled into the air. Click beetles usually feed on leaves at night.” (*Encyclopedia Britannica*)

The Hairy Scarab Flower Beetle, *Trichiotinus affinis*, gathers pollen from the head of an Oxeye Daisy. The “hairy” part can be seen as a white pile that emerges from beneath the elytra (wing covers) Trichiotinus belongs to the subfamily Cetoniinae of the Scarab family, the Fruit and Flower Chafers. There are over 100 species of this subfamily in North America.