

Date and time: Wednesday August 2 2017 2:00 - 7:30 pm

Weather: Pr 0mm; RH 50%; BP 101.7 kPa; sun/cloud; winds calm; T 26°C.

Contents: Trail maintenance, ATBI, and a storm's near miss.



As we drove toward Furnival Road (next to Newport Forest) we couldn't help noticing this popup storm resembling a miniature atomic bomb. When we arrived at the property, the gate was open and we could see Steve Logan's truck perched on the rise of the Upper Meadow. We joined him.

Steve, who had come to finish grooming the Thames River Trail, stood staring toward the southwest. The storm shown above was looming just to the southeast. Would it miss us? A sudden wind came up, cool and sustained, the arriving cold front. "What do you think?" "Well, no rain yet, we might as well head down."

Pat and I had come with the intention of staying until sunset, taking our dinner in the Nook. At sunset, we would run a light trap to see what appeared. Meanwhile, we set up camp while Steve donned his overalls and gassed up the weedeater. Lightning stabbed the air with loud rumbles almost overhead. "Look at the Hoary Mountain Mint," called Pat. I went over to the spot where we had planted some last year, a gift from Darren Jacobs. He had brought it from the Rez where it seems to be plentiful. "There's a whole field of it there" claimed Steve. Elsewhere it's an endangered species. A few drops of rain fell while I read the weather instruments.

That was it. Steve went off into the woods and we sat in the Nook to plan the day.

With great ambition, I dedicated myself to searching the leaf litter for the usual suspects. But the ground was very dry and no arthropods appeared. None. I searched in several different places on the creek bluffs, but continued with nada, giving up in the end. Upending a piece of wood, I found two Carpenter Ants.

Back to sweeping. I don't know why I don't use different collecting methods. Here is a quote from my new book*: "No other group of organisms [arthropods] has more collecting techniques applied to it . . . Arthropods may be captured in light traps, pitfall traps, malaise traps, Berlese funnels, emergence traps, aspiration bottles, pan traps, and by sweeping, fogging, hand-collecting, beating, observing, and so on." Next time I will literally beat the bushes, causing perched insects and spiders to fall onto a white sheet.

The first sweep brought in a nice Brown Stink Bug, a green midge, a Goldenrod Crab Spider, Ebony Bug, a green hopper nymph, many tiny black beetles, etc. Pat called me over to look at a *Micrathena* spider in its web by the trailer, then suddenly noticed a large dark insect clinging to the trailer wall, a Coreid bug nymph.

By five o'clock the sky had clouded over again. Steve came out of the woods all covered with a green debris from the weed-eater. Doffing his overalls, he joined us in the Nook for refreshments and a long chat about everything from doings on the Rez to the sweet corn harvest now under way. When he left, we had no idea he'd be back within half an hour, bearing eight ears of the finest sweet corn ("Peaches & Cream"). He bore the news that Environment Canada had issued a tornado watch for the Chatham-Kent area. We all agreed that if a tornado ever came to Newport Forest, it would head straight for the trailer! Then he left in his ancient Silverado.

A second sweep down by the creek brought in two new species as below, a very young Marbled Orbweaver, two plant hopper species we hadn't seen for a few years, a Katydid nymph, and the usual oversupply of tiny, unidentifiable bugs and beetles. It began to spit rain. Steadily. So much for the light trap idea. On our way out we stopped at the property gate to check the milkweed plants there, garnering a Milkweed Beetle and a Large Milkweed Bug.

*To see the book, search on "Dewdney Stochastic Communities CRC".

Birds: (9)

American Crow (BCF); American Robin (FC); Blue Jay (FC); Canada Goose (TR); Common Grackle (LM); Common Yellowthroat (LM); Grey Catbird (RSF); Mourning Dove (GF); Northern Flicker (GF).

Phenology: Cicadas singing; mosquitoes rare to absent; Ironwood seed fall.

Biological Inventory (ATBI)

New Species: (11% new - arths only)

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Sharp-fruited Rush | <i>Juncus acuminatus</i> | EW/TR WVH J129/17 |
| Fathead Minnow | <i>Pimephales promelas</i> | FC Ia/JS J119/17 |
| Round Pigtoe | <i>Pleurobema sintoxia</i> | MB WVH J126/17 |
| 'Two-spotted Rhagio' | <i>Rhagio lineata</i> | FC/ KD Au02/17 |
| 'Happyface Marsh Fly' | <i>Tetanocera [melanostigma]</i> | FC/ KD Au02'17 |

Species Notes:

Every visit, some species simply come to us, or wait to be noticed, here and there. Today's adventives are marked below with an asterisk. We are grateful to botanist Will Van Hemessen for a new plant species and a find on Mussel Beach of the rare Round Pigtoe Mussel. (Will is branching out into malacology.) We also thank John Schwindt for working on the Fathead Minnow.

Recurring Species:

Northern Crab Spider (*Mecaphesa asperata*); 'Teapot Spider'* (*Micrathena gracilis*); Marbled Orbweaver (*Araneus marmoreus*); 'Pale Planthopper' (*Anormenis chloris*); Two-striped Planthopper (*Acanalonia bivittata*); Meadow Katydid (*Conocephalus [fasciatus]*); Large Milkweed Bug* (*Oncopeltus fasciatus*); Ebony Bug (*Corimelaena pulicaria*); Green Stink Bug* (*Chiava hilaris*); Brown Stink Bug (*Euschistus servus*); 'Brown-tailed Coreid' (*Acanthcephala terminalis*); Milkweed Beetle* (*Tetraopes tetraphthalmus*); Japanese Beetle (*Popilla japonica*); Eastern Bumblebee* (*Bombus impatiens*); Mound Ant* (*Formica exsectoides*); Carpenter Ant (*Camponotus* sp.).

Holdovers & Discards:

Unid. sm black wasp; yellow leafhopper nymph; possible *Talavera*; unid. spider with banded legs; unid. Sphecid wasp; bright green Mirid nymph; Katydid nymph. white hopper nymph.

Readers Write

Will van Hemessen: "I found a few interesting things today, including Sharp-fruited Rush (*Juncus acuminatus*), Tawny Emperor (*Asterocampa clyton*, a butterfly) and Round Pigtoe (a mussel). Are any of these new to your list?"

John Schwindt is a biologist with the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority: "My best guess at the fish pictured would be a fathead minnow. Features check out

but it seems to be oddly shaped. This could be due to the perspective of the photos, or you captured an oddly shaped specimen.”

Susan Sparling is an accomplished naturalist and sister of Allen Woodliffe featured in our previous Bulletin: “We were so fortunate to grow up on a farm . . . My dad was a natural born naturalist and when we were hoeing in the fields with him, he would stop when he heard a bird and point his finger in the direction of the call. He then proceeded to tell us all he knew of each species just because he had spent his lifetime observing them. The cultivator was always lifted for a killdeer's nest and wildlife was watched respectfully. Every Sunday afternoon after church he and mom would take us to Rondeau Park where we went on trails and identified birds, trees, wild flowers, and other plant and animal life. On Saturday nights in the summer he would show wildlife films using the old projectors to campers in a pavilion at Rondeau. We grew up with a nature heritage . . . I did my environmental specialist and plugged away in the school system teaching everything I could from a nature point of view . . . 'If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in.' [Rachel Carson] . . . Thank you for sharing your blogs. I always enjoy them.”

Image Gallery



The body of this Fathead Minnow is bent slightly over a supporting finger, making it seem too wide in the middle. Just above the lateral line, a series of diagnostic black streaks can be seen slanting upward.



Finished with the trail, Steve poses for a picture with Pat, her raincoat at the ready behind her. Both Steve and Pat are smiling, perhaps because they have both had the same eye operation recently and neither needs glasses anymore.



Deer on the property continue to be very suspicious of Trail Cam #2 which is perched on a tripod at the Elbow. Here a doe (with a deer fly in her head) eyes the camera for any signs of hostility, then gets up close and personal for a smell test.



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