1089 The Newport Forest Bulletin Sp11/17
Citizen Science & Monitoring Nature

Date and time: Monday September 11 2017 1:55 - 6:45 pm
Weather: Pr 2 mm; RH 71%; BP 102.4 kPa; sun/haze; winds calm; T 20ºC
Contents: An ideal day with a record haul of arthropods.

A week of cold nights have started the fall colours,

Having watched treed areas on the drive down to Newport Forest, we were not surprised to find some trees already beginning to show some colour, as above. Meanwhile all about us, several species of goldenrod had burst into bright yellow flames in the Lower Meadow. Almost immediately, we happened to notice that the sparsely vegetated area just south of the Regeneration Zone (RZ) that I had worried about last May was also covered with goldenrod blooms, but the plants there were less than half the height of the ones in the RZ right beside it! Were they different species? Probably not. Were the planted trees in the RZ somehow encouraging mycorrhizal connections with the herbaceous plants there? In any case the sparse area had the highest concentration of Honeybees that we would see all day.

Getting down to business, we put out two kinds of bait on the old log in the Nook. One consisted of canned chicken breast crumbled over the log; the other was corn syrup poured down its flank. I went out to do some stalking just to assess the general abundances of the day, welcoming the sight of numerous pollinators, grasshoppers and what have you. When I returned to the Nook, I found a Silphid beetle already at the meat; a Gold-necked Burying Beetle munched away (see images below) while a number of small brown ants (which I didn't try to ID)

busied themselves carrying morsels back to their nest. Other diners at the chicken buffet included several yellowjackets and greenbottle flies. At this point, Pat spotted a House Wren perched on a nearby crabapple tree.

Returning to the "sparse zone" I continued to stalk. That technique seemed more productive than sweeping or beating, given the general abundance of arthropods on the day. Besides numerous honeybees and bumblebees, I found a Crane Fly and another, very odd-looking fly with a brown abdomen and two "wings" on its tibiae, looking almost like a Leaf-footed Bug. Wild with excitement at such a remarkable find, I was disappointed later to discover the fly already on our list. (See below.)

Back in the Nook we girded our loins for a walk to the river. We move more slowly these days, but this turned out to have a hidden advantage, as we missed fewer insects along the way. I stopped to photograph more plants for our image file: Wingstem, Jewelweed, Jumpseed, and Stinging Nettle. Arriving at the Landing, I was surprised by a small swarm of Bald-faced Hornets circling about the very tree that Trail Cam #3 was attached to. Did they have a nest nearby? Out on the beach, I stalked spiders, finding only the usual suspects — the 'Shoreline Spider', *Arctosa littoralis* (a Wolf spider). Continuing our plant image project, I photographed a Cocklebur and a White Snakeroot near the beach, Pat supplying the IDs.

I did a quick sweep of the foliage along the foot of the bluffs, finding little of note, then back to camp we went, where I did a final sweep of the Lower Meadow, getting a Lady Beetle, a wasp, some Crab Spiders, and some unidentifiable hoppers. As for the log, corn syrup seems a rather poor bait. No takers. We were starting to pack up the van when a horrible scream came echoing up from the creek area. I said it was probably a vixen in heat, without really being sure.

In the next issue we hope to publish the precipitation records from our 17 years at Newport Forest, comparing them with the regional average. It isn't pretty!

Biological Inventory (ATBI)

New Species: (13% new arths)

Riparian Sac Spider	*Clubiona riparia*	RL KD Sp11/17
'Northern Brown Caddisfly	*Frenesia* sp.	RL KD Sp11/17
'Dimidiate Flower Fly'	*Eristalis dimidiata*	LM KD Sp11/17
Common European Crane Fly	*Tipula* [*paludosa*]	LM kd/SP Sp11/17

Species Notes:

The name of the new spider matches its habitat nicely enough. Our Caddisfly mage was not clear enough to distinguish species of *Frenesia*. Steve Paiero helped with the Crane Fly so he gets an "SP" as the identifier of record.

Recurring Species:

'Shoreline Spider' (*Arctosa littoralis*); Bowl-and-doily Spider (*Frontinella communis*); 'Teapot Spider' (*Micrathena gracilis*); 'Black-barred Mangora' (*Mangora gibberosa*); Shamrock Spider (*Araneus trifolium*); Say's Trig (*Anaxipha exigua*); Black-horned Tree Cricket (*Oecanthus nigricornis*); Green Hopper (*Chlorotettix* sp); 'Pale Damsel' (*Hoplistoscelis pallescens*); Tarnished Plant Bug (*Lygus lineolaris*)); Honey Bee (*Apis melifera*): Metallic Sweat Bee (*Augochlora pura*); Great Northern Bumblebee (*Bombus fervidus*); Two-spotted Bumblebee (*Bombus bimaculatus*); Bald-faced Hornet (*Dolichovespula maculata*); Northern Paper Wasp (*Polistes fuscatus*); Eastern Yellowjacket (*Vespula maculifrons*); Japanese Beetle (*Papilla japonica*); Mason Wasp (*Ancistrocerus adiabatus*); Asian Lady Beetle (*Harmonia axydris*); Gold-necked Burying Beetle (*Nicrophorus tomentosus*); Strawberry Rootworm Beetle (*Paria fragariae* complex); Hoverfly (*Chrysotoxum* sp.); 'Sun-loving Flower Fly' (*Helophilus fasciatus*); 'Wing-footed Tachinid' (*Trichopoda pennipes*); Common Greenbottle (*Lucilia sericata*).

Deferred or Discarded:

Yellow crab spider; small wasp; unid. Syrphid. unit. jumping spider, possible Gold Moth.

Readers Write

Dr Gregory Zeigler of Santa Fe NM has sent this alarming report of insect decline in the UK: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-4827190/Windscreens-free-inects-signal-alarming-decline-bugs.html>

In spite of today's relative riches, rumours of insect decline continue to circulate.

Image Gallery

A *Nicrophorus* beetle dines on chicken breast, trying to ignore the sickening smell of fresh meat. Meanwhile, an ant makes off with chicken dinner for a royal banquet back at the nest.

One of three species of Feather-legged Fly in our area, the Tachinid *Trichopoda pennipes* has curious black “wings” growing on the tibiae of leg 3. The abdomen is a bright orange, unusual for a fly, the rest of the body being entirely black. “Pennipes” is academic Latin for wing-feet. The genus *Trichopoda* is parasitic on Stink Bugs, Coreids and others.

A doe makes her way to the river during the morning of today's visit. For some reason, I have trouble omitting these noble animals from the last page. My "macrofaunal bias" perhaps. Still, there's something endlessly fascinating about trail cam images, a sort of voyeuristic quality.