

**Date and time:** Wednesday May 9 2018 2:25 - 5:00 pm

**Weather:** Pr 9 mm; RH 55%; BP 101.6 kPa; sun/haze; S 00-20 kmh; T 27° C

**Contents:** Searching for arthropods once again!



When I arrived at the property, I found the Thames Talbot work truck already parked by the trailer, with no one in sight. The sound of a distant chain saw told me that Property Manager Daria Kocsinski and her work crew were already busy clearing the Thames River Trail for the Spring Wildflower Walk this coming Sunday. Presently the crew emerged. Donald Craig took off before the idea of a group photo struck me, but I caught everyone else in the image above. From left to right: Mark Wilson, Rebecca Launchbury, Daria Kocsinski, and Ashley Turner. Before leaving, Daria mentioned that the Virginia Bluebells seemed to be at their peak and all ready for the Sunday show.

With the departure of the TTLT people, I could get down to the main business of the afternoon, feeling somewhat pessimistic about my chances, given the apparent scarcity of insects about me. It's a subjective impression, to be sure, but I just wasn't picking up the "hum" of activity that I remember from past years, even in the early spring.

Checking the temperature in the nearby woods, I found what looked like a leaf-tier moth perched inside the thermometer housing. An awkward shot getting the camera inside. As I stood by the thermometer, I looked around me, noticing that the

trout lilies were all gone — the flowers, that is. Upslope, a lone white bloom remained, but that was it. Meanwhile, as for the arthropods, the only real test was to do a sweep or two and see what emerged. It took a good half hour to clean the sweep net from the accumulation of stick-tight seeds (*Bidens* sp.) that plagued us last fall — nasty and also rightly known as “Devil’s Pitchforks,” I swept both overhanging branches and the veg along the Gallery Forest by the track. The take was not impressive, but better than nothing: One Bowl-and-Doily spider, an interesting checkered beetle (that turned out to be a new species of *Enoclerus*), and the amazing sight of nearly a dozen Basswood Leaf Miner beetles. stumbling dazedly among the folds of the net. Since we normally find them in profusion over the summer and fall, I had to assume that these individuals had wintered over. There is very little information about their life cycle on the web, so we don’t even know when they do their egg-laying. Anyone know?

Time to check the river and harvest the sd cards from the trail cams. An Eastern Comma (presumably) flittered by as I passed the Elbow. At the River Landing I was impressed by the large mounds of fine sand, silt and clay left by the most recent flood. While staring at the debris, my eye was caught by a reddish wasp or fly pursuing a rapid and erratic course among the newly emerged plants that dotted the sand. The colour made it easier to track, but no less easy to approach. It would land at an unpredictable spot for a second or two, then take off before I could do a camera swoop. Image followed image with no time to check their focus for fear of losing my target. Without knowing anything about the images, I finally quit the chase, trusting in statistics to give me a few clear shots. Later I would find this mysterious red “fly” to be a new species of *Nomada*, a Nomad Bee.

Not to mix up bees and flies any further, but the flies that look like bees, namely bee flies, were once again notably absent at a time of year when they are normally ubiquitous. Back at the Nook I gathered my things for the trip home, along with its two detours.

**Trail Cam Report:** We have noticed, over the years, that the Virginia Deer seems to have no particular nocturnal/diurnal schedule. If anything, they are more nocturnal than diurnal. The trail cams have been picking up night views about two-to-three times more often than daylight ones.

**Birds:** (7)

American Crow (TR); American Robin (BCF); Blue Jay (GF); Killdeer (Rd); Red-bellied Woodpecker (BCF); Red-winged Blackbird (UM); Turkey Vulture (LM).

**Phenology:** small trees and bushes 30-50% leafed out; large trees 5-10%

### Biological Inventory (ATBI)

**New Species:** (25% new arthropods)

Cresson's Nomad Bee	<i>Nomada cressoni</i>	RL KD My0918
'Four-spotted Checker Beetle	<i>Enoclerus [nigrifrons]</i>	GF KD My0918

### Species Notes:

Both species listed above are abundant in eastern North America, including our area. Our specimen of Cresson's Nomad had interrupted circular bands on its abdomen, instead of the more frequent continuous ones. But some of the specimens in the Bug Guide Galleries had interrupted bands as well, with no other species showing them in combination with the other characters of the specimen.

### Recurring Species:

Bowl & Doily Spider (*Frontinella pyramitela*); Basswood Lead Miner (*Baliosus nervosus*); Eastern Comma (*Polygona comma*); Bumble Bee (*Bombus* sp.); Black Ant (*Formica* sp.); Carpenter Ant (*Camponotus* sp.); Northern Paper Wasp (*Polistes fuscatus*).

**Deferred or Discarded:** Dingy leaf-tier moth.

### Image Gallery:



This mystery animal passed Trail Cam #1 one night recently. If it's a Raccoon, it has no bands on its tail and it's unusually low to the ground. (See next image.)



Here, the animal has progressed along the game trail, showing a somewhat flattened, unstriped tail and still low to the ground. Our best candidates — besides a short-legged Raccoon — are (in order) Beaver, Groundhog, Muskrat, all known on the property. Reader opinions are welcome. Note: To get the correct time stamp, do the following math: year+3, month+3, day+17, time+13:33.



First Crayfish Chimney of the year recently erupted beside this log at The Elbow. People on this Sunday's Flower Walk may look for it as they go by.



10:53AM 01/31/15 46F

