

Date and time: Thursday June 14 2018 1:55 - 6:05 pm

Weather: Pr 0mm; RH 43%; BP 101.5 kPa; sun/haze; NW 10 kmh; T 24° C

Contents: Continuing the search with a colleague from Western University.



Today we were honoured by the presence of a colleague, Ron Martin, who volunteered to come as assistant for the day. You can't see his face very well in the accompanying image because I took the picture up-sun instead of down. Ron is an analytic chemist who teaches environmental chemistry at Western University. We go back to the early 1990s when we were part of a teaching team in the environmental science program at Western.

We drove in and caught up on news in the Nook, then made a collecting plan, heading out into a warm afternoon that seemed ideal for insects. As things turned out, it was.

As I swept along the trail through the Lower Meadow, I demonstrated the sweeping technique to Ron so that we could alternate as the day wore on. One thing I have always regretted is the lack of an accurate bag count. Ron agreed to count everything that crept or flew out of the bag, regardless of what insect or spider I was shooting. The bag counts turned out to be interesting. The sweep just described produced some 43 arthropods, most of them plant bugs and hoppers but no wasps, hover flies or bees, except one, a new Sweat Bee.

Entering the Blind Creek Forest through The Hole, I spotted a Common Whitetail dragonfly parked on a nearby bush, a nice clear image. Inside the forest, Ron took the next sweep along the trail as far as the Elbow. The bag count came in slightly lower at 38 this time, with more spiders than usual and our lone Bumble Bee of the

day. It flew off before I could get a good image. Our Bumblebee list is nearly complete so it was probably already on the list, in any case.

From the Elbow we made our way to the River Landing. There seemed to be no more mosquitos in the woods along the trail than were there on previous visits. Has their population (as such) peaked? The population of Ebony Jewelwings that hunt mosquitoes was correspondingly sparse. At the River Landing I did the next sweep amid the Cup Plants, Irises and anything in flower. However, the tricky trail down to the beach distracted me and I inadvertently emptied the bag on my way, a senior moment. Better Ron should sweep — so he swept along the vegetation above the clay beach at the base of the bluffs. We examined the bag and ended with only 15 individuals. This didn't surprise me in view of the sparseness of the plants there.

We then abandoned sweeping and decided to search around on foot, so to speak. Ron pointed out a dead Raccoon with a barely recognizable subadult corpse, a young one that may have starved to death last winter. (Forget Beatrix Potter!) Last summer our trail cams revealed at least two late litters (2-3 month delay) among the Raccoon population and I had winced at the thought of how they would fare through the winter. I spotted a dragonfly parked on the beach nearby. A Midland Clubtail, apparently*. Then came an American Rubyspot damselfly.

We chased two furtive, fast running spiders over the mud cracks of the beach. No doubt members of the Mussel Beach community of Wolf, Nursery Web, and Fishing spiders. This is frustrating work. Normally I wait for my quarry to run out of gas so that I can swoop in for the image. But these little devils dive into mud cracks to refuel so I have to catch them on the run. No IDs there, in any case. We walked to the end of the beach where lagoons have formed. There we spotted what I thought was a water boatman, except that it crawled out off the water and onto the shore, dragging its meniscus along with it. It had what looked like a posterior spine or narrow tube. Still no idea. (We need another Aquatics Day.)

Back to the camp we went where, after a brief rest, we walked along the edge of the Gallery Forest to knock on branches, shedding their parkers onto a drop sheet. A few ants appeared, along with a few Basswood Leaf Miners. I cancelled a planned visit to the creek to sample the rapids and that left only the trail cams to check. I therefore let Ron get home for supper while I attended the cameras. I'm still not sure if it was the weather or Ron's presence that produced today's abundance. We'll just have to say it was a combination of the two.

*Identified tentatively — and later — by Stan Caveney.

Biological Inventory (ATBI)

New Species: (new arthropods 19%)

Pirate Spider	<i>Trebacosa marxi</i>	LM KD Je14/18
Common Green Capsid	<i>Lygocoris pabulinus</i>	LM KD Je14/18
‘Slater’s Plant Bug’	<i>Fulvius slateri</i>	LM KD Je14/18
‘Decorated Chironomid’	<i>Chironomus [decorus]</i>	BCF KD Je14/18
‘Cerulean Sweat Bee’	<i>Lasioglossum coeruleum</i>	LM KD Je14/18

Species Notes:

The percentage of new arthropods has jumped from a consistent pattern of being in the low teens to the high teens. It may be that our larger samples brought in more of the less abundant species, including the new ones.

Recurring Species:

‘Chalky Harvestman’ (*Leiobunum [calcar]*); Common Whitetail (*Plathemis lydia*); Midland Clubtail (*Gomphurus fraternus*); American Rubyspot (*Hetaerina americana*); Ebony Jewelwing (*Calopteryx maculata*); European Alder Spittlebug (*Aphrophora alni*); Alfalfa Bug (*Adelphocoris lineolatus*); Meadow Plant Bug (*Leptoterna dolabrata*); Two-spotted Grass Bug (*Stenotus binotatus*); Tarnished Plant Bug (*Lygus lineolaris*); ‘Two-lined Mirid’ (*Stenodema vicinum*); Scarlet Plant Bug (*Lopidea media*); ‘Rose-winged Damselfly’ (*Nabis roseipennis*); Green Immigrant Weevil (*Polydrusus formosus*); Four-spotted Sap Beetle (*Glischrochilus quadrisignatus*); Basswood Leaf Miner (*Baliosus nervosus*); Giant Swallowtail (*Papilio cresphontes*); Northern Crescent (*Phyciodes cocyta*); Chickweed Geometer (*Haematopis grataria*); Common Greenbottle (*Lucillia sericata*); Bumblebee (*Bombus* sp.)

Deferred or Discarded:

Grasshopper nymph; black beetle; firefly; unID’d Ichneumon; unID’d Calliphorid; aquatic nymph; black beetle larva; green Mirid nymph; unID’d Mirid; escaped bumblebee; green hopper; brown hopper; khaki hopper nymph; mosquito; unID’d Wolf Spider.



Image Gallery

The 'Decorated Chironomid' is listed under New Species as *Chironomus* [*decorus*]. The square brackets simply mean that the ID is not certain enough, owing to a close lookalike, *C. ochreatus*, both species occurring locally. The balance of characters for the specimen above favoured the named species, however. The colours on the thorax make an unusual combination of lead-blue and dark red.

Bug Challenge: I cannot find this bug, presumably a Mirid, anywhere on the web or in my books. It has slight resemblance to the Two-spotted Grass Bug (*Stenotus binotatus*), but the architecture is different and the markings on the head and scutellum below are absent in *Stenotus*. If you think you know what it is, please get in touch! No prize — just a credit.





This young buck has just started to grow his rack for the fall rut. Like the young Raccoon we found on the beach, he has had a tough winter judging from his ribs. But at least he survived. All he has to do now is browse!

(Time stamp requires an offset to read properly: + 3/3/8)

