

The Trail to the Sandbar

Newport Forest Wednesday July 21 2010 1:50 - 5:15 pm

weather: prec. 13 mm; RH 52% BP 101.3 kPa; sn/cld; calm; T 31° C

purpose: to complete trail to Sandbar

participants: Kee, Steve

The weed eater whined through the Giant Ragweed and 6-foot Stinging Nettle, with semi-woody stems flying through the tropical heat. Multiple layers of vines collapsed onto the trail and Steve's face ran with sweat. This is the Sandbar, an ever-growing accumulation of nutrient-laden soil deposited by winter floods among the leaning Box Elders on the riverbank. The Sandbar is located downstream from the Riverside Forest point bar and here the current slows, to release its suspended load of sand and silt.

Steve had to leave early, so there was no time to search for the planted trees: Pawpaw and American Hazel. I found an abandoned burrow along the (new) trail back to the main trail. The diameter was about 6" and we speculated about what might have lived there. It may well have died there too, the Sandbar area being so prone to flooding. On the way back across the river bluffs trail, we were startled to find a headless Chipmunk that hadn't been there two hours earlier. It was a clear case of murder, but who was the perp? Steve thought a hawk. I thought a feral cat. (If anyone knows a predator that likes to eat the head of a rodent first, please get in touch.)

A Giant Swallowtail reminded us it was time to get back to camp. After Steve left, I walked about looking for insects to photograph. I found a beautiful Dog Day Cicada on a grass stem by the creek. Later, I did not have the camera ready in time to catch a new beetle by the Hole. A drawing made immediately after it flew off enabled me to conjecture* a new species. Although I didn't bother with birds today, I did hear a Red-winged Blackbird down by the creek. Strangely, we rarely see or hear them by the creek and only occasionally out by the river.

New species: (?)

Black-and-orange Ground Beetle *Badister neopulchellus* HI KD J121/10

*I will not enter this record until I see the beetle again to confirm some details.

IMAGES:

(click on image to enlarge)



The Sandbar in all its overgrown vegetative glory: Photo taken July 2009

Tree across the river are visible through gaps along the upper frame.

(click on image to enlarge)



Predated Chipmunk minus head -- a fresh kill

(That could be a chewed-up head toward top of image.)

(click on image to enlarge)



Dog-day Cicada (*Tibicen canicularis*) clings to a grass stem by the creek

This is the only cicada in our insect inventory, first heard last year and now seen.

Recently we recorded our 499

th insect, well short of the
2000 + that probably inhabit
the site. Meanwhile the
number of logged arthropods
is 541.