

Date and time: Thursday April 20 2023 2:20 pm - 4:55 pm

Weather: BP 101.8 %; Humidity 44%; T 15°C; haze/sun; winds variable S.

Contents: We discover an arthropod over-wintering site.



The river is “in spate”, a greenish hue attributed to dissolved calcium carbonate.

Today’s assistant, Brian Cornish, was no more enthusiastic about going through leaf litter than I was when we started loading a garbage bag with litter from the Nook. But it didn’t take long to realize that today’s haul was quite different from all previous samples, being about three times as rich.

As usual we half-filled one of those domestic black garbage bags with leaves scraped from the ground. Brian then gave the bag a good shaking to help concentrate potential finds to the bottom of the bag. As we sorted through the leafy contents it quickly became apparent that we had an unusually large collection of insects and spiders. Interestingly the spiders amounted to half the arthropods

When we went out to see what wildflowers had emerged, I was astounded at the scarcity. We walked out to the river, our usual pattern these days, finding only the two violets in the woods along the way. At the river we found the water relatively clear, but having a greenish tinge. I used to think this meant algae. But it doesn’t. As one aquatic biologist explained it to me, the river is “in spate”, due to dissolved limestone.

We changed the sd cards on both cameras before returning to camp. After extensive searching after that, including the vast Trout Lily beds just below the Nook, we found exactly one species among each of the plants listed under “phenology” below. A remarkable outcome.

Phenology: half of trees now in bud. Following plants now in bloom: Yellow Trout Lily; Cutleaf Toothwort; White Trout Lily; yellow wood violet; Bloodroot; purple Wood Violet; Spring Beauty.

Biological Inventory (ATBI)

New Species:

Flower Bud Weevil	<i>Nanophyes marmorata</i>	Nook bc/KD Ap20/23
‘Red and black Rove Beetle’	<i>Astenus [americanus]*</i>	Nook bc/KD Ap20/23

*IDs by Steve Paiero and Hugh Casborne — sp shown is provisional.

Recurring Species:

European Sowbug (*Oniscus asellus*); ‘Orange Ghost Spider’ (*Hibana gracilis*); ‘Red-marked Jumper’ (*Hentzia mitrata*); ‘Black jumping spider’ (no ID); Redspotted Ant Mimic (*Castianeira descripta*); Black Mirid (no ID); Strawberry Rootworm (beetle) (*Paria fragariae* complex); Ground Beetle [*Poecilus*]; Mound Ant? (*Formica exsecta* gp.); Black Myriaped (lost in debris).

Remark: Taken altogether, these 13 ‘quality’ species outnumber all previous ground search results by nearly three-to-one. We interpret these numbers to imply that the species listed above are still in their winter quarters, so to speak. They will migrate out to the meadows once the vegetation is well developed.

Readers Write

A richer collection of wildflowers was sent to us by David and Winnifred Wake, after a recent walk in the Coldstream Conservation Area:

[≤https://www.dropbox.com/s/oexi7hu856snas6/Coldstream_2.pdf?dl=0>](https://www.dropbox.com/s/oexi7hu856snas6/Coldstream_2.pdf?dl=0)

Sandra Eadie, a local naturalist, sent us this advisory - which I am now free to follow up on: “Last night I heard Colin Jones of the Natural Heritage Information Centre in Peterborough speak: “Ontario Insects: inventory, monitoring and discovery in the digital age.” They are very keen on collecting natural sightings and particularly insect ones. They use iNaturalist to get data as well as many other sources. . . . I am sure that they would love to have access to your data.

Their web site is

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/natural-heritage-information-centre>

IMAGES



‘Orange Ghost Spider’ (*Hibana gracilis*)

Generally given a pale colour, the Ghost Spiders (family Anyphaenidae) are found most frequently in leaf litter. This species is widely distributed in eastern North America



Flower Bud Weevil (*Nanophyes marmorata*)

We have collected several kinds of weevil over the years, most of which have their antennae sprouting from their head. So why does this kind of weevil have them sprouting from an extended snout. Is it for sensing buried or inaccessible food?

This beetle appears to be found in northeastern North America, according to Bug Guide, but not yet in Ontario. Other databases may show that it has

already been found here.



The insect I call the “Black-and-red Rove Beetle” joins ten other species of Rove Beetles in our collection. Rove beetles have a segmented abdomen, are fast runners and, when progressing in that mode, hold their tails raised. Distributions of *Astenus* spp appear to be eastern, but rather spotty.



Two flowers that I call “wood Violets” appear just below a party of Spring Beauties. I grew frustrated after using several flower identification guides to identify these violets, I decided to stick to my usual informal names for them: The “Blue Wood Violet” and the Yellow Wood Violet.” Any reader who knows the actual names is free to send them in to me.



Our modest collection of wildflower images terminates with this Cutleaf Toothwort (*Cardamine concatenata*) shown here. Brian found it only by descending the creek bluffs to the very bottom, next to Fleming Creek itself.