

**Date and time:** Friday September 15 2023 2:40 - 4:20 pm.

**Weather:** RH 64%; BP 99.6 kPa; Pr 78 mm; clear, 21<sup>a</sup> C, winds calm

**Contents:** We sample three meadows amid a mosquito airforce.



The Upper Meadow in the distance is yellow with goldenrods.

Despite the bucolic, peaceful outward appearance of the property, the Lower Meadow turned out to be an instant hellhole of constant humming and countless bites, itching and scratching. It was the worst swarm of mosquitoes I have ever encountered. Days later, I am still beset by ghost itches rising from the dead.

It was a test of courage and discipline to carry out our sweeps. Grim-faced I swept the Lower Meadow while Brian, our Assistant for the day, went to retrieve the trail cameras; it was time for new batteries and fresh sd cards. On his way back, he swept the Blind Creek Forest trail. When I opened my bag, I had to maintain a steady rhythm of slap/click, slap/click. The shots were hasty, resulting in a higher percentage of blurry photos than usual. Brian's bag got the same treatment.

Taking field notes was out of the question. But I can recall an unusual number of spiders. Here, in the middle of what I call The Goldenrod Season, the hunt was clearly on. Count the spider app in the recurrence list below, Having done **two** bags we made a hasty departure for the "Middle Meadow" where we carried out two more sweeps on either side of the track. We spread the drop cloth on the hood of

my care to examine the bags. The mosquitoes were only slightly less plentiful there. We then drove to the Upper Meadow to carry out yet another two sweeps , using the car hood, as before, grateful for yet another modest decline in the attacking forces. When we left the property, there was only one remedy for our bites. Not a remedy, perhaps, but more like a distraction: Ice cream in Wardsville.

## Phenology: Goldenrod in full bloom

### Biological Inventory (ATBI)

#### New Species:

‘Burnt-tail Tachinid’	<i>Xanthomelanodes arcuatus</i>	Nk HC Au13/23
‘Northern Carpenter Ant’	<i>Camponotus nearcticus</i>	UM KD Sp15/23
Speckled Sharpshooter	<i>Paraulacizes irrorata</i>	BCF kdSP Sp15/23

**Species Notes:** Our thanks go to Steve Paiero for ID-ing our all-black Hopper, and to Hugh Casbourn for his excellent images of the Rabid Wolf Spider and the Tachinid fly. There were perhaps as many as three other spiders that could not be identified, all of them jumpers. That would bring the total to nine spider spp. out of 17 in total — more than half! Other misses included a darkish Sharpshooter.

#### Recurring species:

Rabid Wolf Spider (*Rabidosa rabida*); Six-spotted Orbweaver (*Araniella displicata*); Crenellated Nursery Web Spider (*Pisaurina mira*); Six-spotted Jumper (*Forficula auricularis*); Northern Crab Spider (*Mecaphesa asperata*); Variable Longjaw (*Tetragnatha versicolor*); Two-striped Planthopper (*Acanalonia bivittata*); Buffalo Treehopper (*Stictocephala alta*); European Earwig (*Forficula auricularis*); Tarnished Plant Bug (*Lygus lineolaris*); Spotted Cucumber Beetle (*Diabrotica undecimpunctata*); ‘Three-striped Leaf Beetle’ (*Ophraella [americana]*); Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera*). Metallic (Green) Sweat Bee (*Augochlora [pura]*).

## A Computer Glitch

While recording all the new moth species after issuing the previous *Bulletin*, something went badly wrong. My files lost two years worth of entries and my desktop was replaced by a Volkswagen ad ! At first I thought I had been attacked by a virus but I have learned never to attribute to malice what can be attributed to stupidity. Did I press too many keys at once? Even with a “time machine” (back up drive) last used a month ago, it was a near thing for the staff at the Mac Outpost to clean up the machine and restore (most of) the original contents.

## Images



The 'Burnt-tail Tachinid', (*Xanthomelanodes arcuatus*) photo: Hugh Casbourn

Flies in the family Tachinidae are parasites, laying their eggs directly on the host insect. The eggs hatch into larvae that burrow into the host, developing into adults even as the host is destroyed. Because many such hosts are destructive in agricultural settings, Tachinids are thought to be beneficial insects.

The species shown above is widely distributed over NE North America.



Rabid Wolf Spider (*Rabidosa rabida*); Casbourn caught this spider in its natural habitat. Such photos have a higher value than photos taken against a drop sheet.

Wolf Spiders (family Lycosidae) are not quite as ferocious as their names sometimes imply. Like other spiders, they do not spin webs, being cursorial hunters with excellent eyesight. So far we have recorded 17 species of Wolf Spiders.



I had an awful time identifying this apparent Leaf Hopper. In fact I never succeeded and sent my images to Hopper expert Steve Paiero at the University of Guelph. To Steve we owe this ID: Speckled Sharpshooter (*Paraulacizes irrorata*), a new species for the ATBI list.

The “speckles” are whitish and barely visible in this image.



This image shows a stand of Goldenrod in the Lower Meadow. Taken in the late summer of 2017, These stands were about twice as large as today's, as the "Regeneration Zone" slowly succeeds into young forest. The plants shown here are a little more advanced in their summer season, nearing senescence. By now, the plants we recently visited resemble the ones above than they would have last week

Meanwhile, there are seven years of growth between the two scenes. The corresponding stand reported here is barely half the size of the one above. Meanwhile the trees in the present Lower Meadow are about twice as tall and twice as numerous as they were in the image above. In fact, in about 20 years this area (also known as the Regeneration Zone) will be young forest, pretty much filled in with trees and, at that point, it will become be the final link in bringing all the forested areas of Newport forest into one interconnected whole. That was the ultimate purpose of the planting project that Pat and I managed from about 2002 to 2006.