

## 2017 Summary

**Including:** Best images;  
ATBI summary  
The year's bird list  
Visits and projects  
Visitors, assistants, and workers  
Onsite weather

2017 was a good year, overall, but not without its challenges, including an ongoing loss of trees, excessive dryness, drought-level precipitation, and insect decline. The images in this summary are selected in a variety of categories: aesthetics, unusual scenes, or extraordinary animals.



*A wasp met a moth in the asters one day  
Said the wasp, "Do tell me thy name, I pray."  
Said the moth, "I shan't; it sounds like a rant,  
And it's too damned tricky to say."*

## **All Taxa Biological Inventory (ATBI)**

The total number of new species, 140, is subdivided into counts within categories:

Insects	75
Arachnids	16
Other arthropods	3
Invertebrates	27*
Herbaceous/woody plants	3
Fungi and lichens	4
Protists	1
Fish	9
Birds	2

\*includes 26 nematodes as collected by Tom and Kris Powers.

The ratio of Arachnids (Araneae & Opiliones) to insects has some interest for ecologists who study food webs. The ratio 16/75 or 21% yields roughly five insect species per spider species, roughly echoing the predation ratio.

### **Birds (aka Dinosauria)**

After years of no new bird species found on site, 2017 brought two new species into view: The Pine Warbler and the Canada Warbler. The list follows:

American Crow; American Goldfinch; American Robin; American Tree Sparrow; American Woodcock; Bald Eagle; Black-capped Chickadee; Black-billed Cuckoo; Blue Jay; Blue-winged Warbler; Brown-headed Cowbird; Canada Goose; Canada Warbler; Cedar Waxwing; Chipping Sparrow; Cliff Swallow; Common Flicker; Common Grackle; Common Yellowthroat; Eastern Bluebird; Eastern Kingbird; Eastern Phoebe; Eastern Towhee; Eastern Wood Pewee; Field Sparrow; Great Blue Heron; Great Crested Flycatcher; Gray Catbird; House Sparrow; Hairy Woodpecker; House Wren; Indigo Bunting; Killdeer; Mourning Dove; Northern Cardinal; Northern Flicker; Northern Oriole; Northern Parula; Pileated Woodpecker; Red-bellied Woodpecker; Red-breasted Nuthatch; Red-winged Blackbird; Rose-breasted Grosbeak; Song Sparrow; Tufted Titmouse; Turkey Vulture; Tree Swallow; White-breasted Nuthatch; White-crowned Sparrow; Wild Turkey; Wood Duck; Yellow-billed Cuckoo; Yellow Warbler. (59 spp)

## **Butterflies:**

American Snout; Black Swallowtail; Cabbage White; Common Wood Nymph; Eastern Comma; European Skipper; Giant Swallowtail; Great Spangled Fritillary; Little Wood Satyr; Monarch; Mourning Cloak; Northern Crescent; Orange Sulphur; Pearl Crescent; Red Admiral; Red-spotted Purple; Silver-spotted Skipper; Silvery Checkerspot; Spring Azure; Summer Azure; Tiger Swallowtail.



The July 2nd Butterfly Count was somewhat of a disappointment for counters Betsy Baldwin, son Garth Casbourn and Rick Symmes (who took this image). Monarchs were very abundant but several of the “usual” species failed to show.

## **Site Visits and Visitors**

Of all the holdings of the Thames Talbot Land Trust, Newport Forest has attracted the most visitors, not even counting our own frequent attendance on site. To begin with, we made some 33 site visits over 2017, with only one overnight stay. In years past we had been making between 50 and 60 visits a year.

Other visitors were divided between annual TTLT events at Newport Forest and special visits by scientists, naturalists and family friends. In order of occurrence, they were: Mat 14: Spring Wildflower Walk (14 participants)

July 2: July Butterfly Count (5 participants)

July 5: Visit by Steward Darren Jacobs and friend Karolina Jonsson  
July 26: Biologist Allen Woodliffe tours site  
August 5: Kee's birthday with the Logan and Amer families attending.  
August 12: Aquatics Day organized by Erin Carroll (6 participants)  
August 20: Fish census with Will Van Hemessen and Corey Hayes.  
September 3: Visit with Amer family after Moraviantown Powwow  
October 18: Naturalist Chris Dewdney visits for a tour of the woods.  
(No Fall Fungus Foray was held this year.)



The fearsome Starbellied Orbweaver, *Acanthepeira stellata*, makes us happy that we don't share its dimensions. It is one of the most unusual spiders on site.

## Assistants and workers

We thank all the assistants who volunteered their time over the year, as well as workers who carried out maintenance on site, principally trail work; without trails, Newport Forest would be that much less accessible.

**Volunteers:** Muriel Andreae (Wildflower Walk leader); Erin Carroll (Aquatics Day leader); Layla Amer (5 visits as field assistant); Yunus Amer (1 visit as assistant).

**Workers:** Brian Cornish (3); Will Cable (2); Donald Craig (1); Darren Jacobs (1); Steve Logan (3); Herb Snake (1).



A Common Burrower Mayfly (*Hexagenia bilineata*) lands on my glasses at the River Landing. (Photo by Layla Amer.)

## On Site Weather:

As indicated earlier in this summary, the main weather story for the year is the lack of rainfall. Although regional average precipitation (rain & snow) averages vary between 860 and 1050 mm, the following figures tell a sad story, subtitled drought.

<b>year</b>	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
<b>prec.</b>	593	596	683	768	704	1243	744	926	1227	674	1020	667

Of the 12 figures shown above, only four show adequate/normal precipitation/ The last five years show a steady string of inadequate years, laying a heavy drying stress on trees, enfeebling their chemical defences and inviting in a host of destructive borers and fungi. We have lost, at a guess, about 100n trees in five different species: Bitternut Hickory; White Ash; White Elm; Black Willow,



A Coyote says goodbye to 2017 and a second Coyote looks ahead to the new year

