

2 July 2011

by [Bill Harms](#) on Saturday, July 2, 2011 at 4:13pm

Spent 7 hours on the Refuge today.



Green Fringed Orchid

(*Platanthera lacera* (Michx.) G. Don)

The best find today was the **Green Fringed Orchid** (*Platanthera lacera* (Michx.) G. Don). Spotted a single stalk of this orchid, with its ethereal-looking flowers, growing in the middle of a seepage swamp. The stalk was about 3 feet high with a lot of flowers clustered in the terminal spike. My wife Becky says the flowers almost look like ghosts. I have to agree with her. The **Green Fringed Orchid** is one of at least four **Fringed Orchids** (*Platanthera* sp.) reported on the Refuge. This is the first one of the bunch recorded for the North Tract Survey. Like most orchids, this species is considered rare or uncommon, but not threatened or endangered. Even so, its habitat should still be protected to prevent exploitation or harm.



Swamp Milkweed

(*Asclepias incarnata* L.)

In the Powerline Swamp, noticed that the **Swamp Milkweed** (*Asclepias incarnata* L.) was starting to bloom. It will bloom all summer long and its nectar is a favorite of butterflies and other types of insect pollinators. Despite the Milkweed's poisonous foliage, the Monarch Butterfly larva thrives on it. This species prefers wet soil and is commonly grown as an attractive garden flower. It is native to 43 states (not the Pacific Coast States, Arizona and Mississippi.) It is fairly common in Maryland and is found in numerous locations throughout the North Tract. It is also called **Rose Milkweed**, **Swamp Silkweed**, and **White Indian Hemp**.





Wood Fern

Dryopteris sp.

Still determining identification.

This is probably either a **Crested Wood-fern** (*Dryopteris cristata* (L.) A. Gray) or **Clinton's Fern** (*Dryopteris clintoniana* (D.C. Eaton) Dowell). The former has been found in previous surveys (South and Central Tracts) and the latter, while possible, rarely occurs in Maryland.



Bristly Sedge

(*Carex comosa* Boott)

Went out to Lake Allen and along the south shore spotted a clump of **Bristly Sedge** (*Carex comosa* Boott). This sedge has a striking appearance with its nodding heads at the end of long stalks. Interestingly, the distribution of the **Bristly Sedge** is disjunct. It occurs in Eastern North America and in Western North America with a wide gap in the Rocky Mountain States. It is sometimes called **Long-hair Sedge** or **Bottle-brush Sedge**. The teeth at the end of the perigyna (the structure at the end of the ovary/pistil.) Thanks to Wayne Longbottom for determining the identification of this plant.



Purple Loosestrife

(*Lythrum salicaria* L.)

On the west shore of Lake Allen saw a single plant of **Purple Loosestrife** (*Lythrum salicaria* L.). This pretty-looking plant is native to much of Eurasia. However it has a critical flaw and that is its capability to form monoculture populations which can crowd out native plants. It is now naturalized to North America and, according to the Fish and Wildlife Service, occurs in every state except Florida. Here in Maryland, there are numerous well-entrenched populations throughout the state. This is the second known occurrence of this plant on the North Tract and it is not listed in the original surveys of the South and Central Tracts. However, large populations have been seen off refuge in Laurel, Odenton and Fort Meade. So it is reasonable to assume that it may have already invaded the refuge. I pulled up the single plant that I found, but will be on the lookout for more plants during the rest of the season.



Deerberry

(*Vaccinium stamineum* L.)

I hiked around the Peeper Pond and stumbled upon some **Deerberry** (*Vaccinium stamineum* L.) in fruit. I noticed this patch in bloom earlier this season. Decided to take a few pictures and collect a specimen. The fruits were not ripe, but they were on the large side. The fruits are very similar to other members of the *Vaccinium* genus (huckleberries and blueberries.) **Deerberry** is native to much of Eastern USA and into Ontario.



Cutleaf Watermilfoil

(*Myriophyllum pinnatum* (Walter) Britton, Sterns & Poggenb.)

Slogged around Cattail Pond a bit looking for undocumented water plants. Found some **Cutleaf Watermilfoil** (*Myriophyllum pinnatum* (Walter) Britton, Sterns & Poggenb.) on the west shore of the pond. Comparing to what I have seen on the Internet, the plants at the Cattail Pond were not very healthy looking. They looked like they were coated in algae and were dying. Maybe they be healthier later in the season as they grow. They have flowers which grow on the stems in the axils of the leaves. If this identification holds, and I believe it will, this would be a new record for both the Refuge and the North Tract.

Had a good day. Becky came out to the North Tract to eat lunch and spent some time working with me at Lake Allen.

Temps in the upper 80's