This information is taken from the Four Seasons Environmental Centre materials prepared in 2007. Many thanks to Ken Duncan and Kela Graphics for spearheading the project and Glen Hvenegaard, Chad Winger, Susanna Bruneau, and Kim Macklin for the research and writing on the FSEC project.

The FSEC was a project of the Rotary Club of Camrose funded in part with a Government of Canada Rural Economic Development Grant.



Invertebrates

Introduction

The invertebrates of Alberta and Camrose are an underappreciated natural wonder. Invertebrates are important to the ecosystem, as predators, prey and pollinators. They are also an easily accessible source for anyone who wants to explore the diversity of our area. All one has to do is take a close look in their own back yard. Although you have to look closer, once you know where to look, you will believe that these tiny critters are part of the most diverse group of organisms on the planet.

In the Camrose creek valley, the riparian areas of the stream offer vast habitats for insects and other invertebrates. A drop of pond water will contain zooplankton, a jar of water may host larval forms of dragonflies or diving beetles, and along the shores you may encounter butterflies and other larger insects. The number of habitats is endless, so keep an eye open and you may be amazed with what you find.



More information on Invertebrates

Of all animals described by science, only 5% are vertebrates, or those that possess a backbone. The other 95% are invertebrates, or those that do not have a backbone. Invertebrates are a very diverse group, containing members from the Rotifera (Rotifers), Mollusca (Snails, clams and slugs), Annelida (earthworms and leeches) and Arthropoda (spiders, insects and shrimp)¹, many of which can be found in the Camrose area. (LISTS).

We don't know how many invertebrates are found in the diverse habitats of Alberta. Due to their size and the overshadowing of larger organisms, these relatively small creatures are often overlooked. Many have yet to be studied thoroughly enough to determine accurate ranges, number of species and their ecological significance. In Alberta alone, there are approximately 20,000 insect species alone, making them the best documented class. There are also close to 80 mollusk species, 5 families of annelids, and countless other invertebrates. We can separate these invertebrate classes based on their size, large ones

being macroinvertebrates (those that are visible to the naked eye) and microinverterates (those that require magnification to see).

Approximately 500 species of invertebrates can be found in the aspen parkland region of Alberta, there are here, but because of the lack of research done on this group in this area, this number is likely much larger. Publications such as Butterflies of Alberta suggest that about 100 species of butterflies might be encountered in this area. Other publications, such as the Damselflies of Alberta, Tiger Beetles of Alberta, and Bugs of Alberta, show that 17 Damselfly species, 10 Tiger Beetle species, and 76 other bug species can be found in the aspen parkland region that is home to Camrose.

In Stoney Creek, a few species of microinvertebrates may be found which originate from Driedmeat Lake. These representatives are the Rotifers (Zooplankton), Copepods, and Cladocerans (water fleas). The macroinvertebrates are much more diverse and easier to view and study. A sample of them includes the Giant Diving Beetle, the Six-Spotted Fishing spider, the Four Spotted Skimmer and the Canadian Tiger Swallowtail.

To view the microinvertebrates of the area, you need a microscope, or at least a magnifying glass to view the large representatives. Therefore, identification and viewing of these invertebrates is reserved for the dedicated observer. Macroinvertebrates are much larger which makes them easier to find and identify. A magnifying glass is still a useful tool to see details of an invertebrate's body. The majority of the macroinvertebrates are arthropods, so it is valuable to know the general characteristics of this diverse phylum.

All arthropods have a segmented, hard exoskeleton with jointed appendages. Insects all have three pairs of legs, while spiders have four and crustaceans can have three or more, with centipedes and millipedes having up to 200+ legs. The arthropods can be terrestrial or aquatic, or both, so their habitats vary, but this also means that you can find them just about anywhere. To give you an idea of a few of the invertebrates that are found in our area, we'll describe some general characteristics, their habitats and how you can find them.

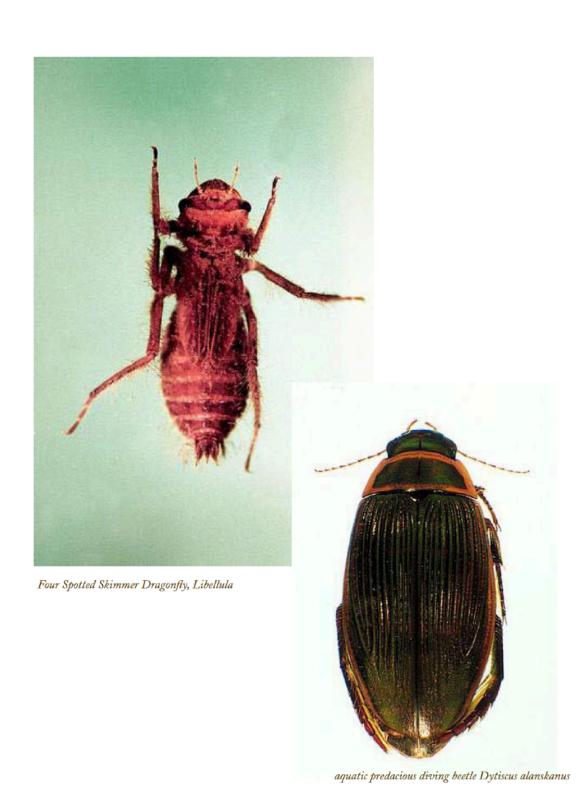


The Macroinvertebrates

The majority of these invertebrates are from the class Insecta, the first belonging to the true fly order, Dipterans, and family Chironomidae, the midge. These are small two-winged flies, closely related to mosquitoes, but these flies don't bite. Their larvae look like long, skinny maggots, but this changes as they develop into their pupal stage, which resembles mosquitoes. They are long brownish tubes with white frilled gills that draw oxygen from the atmosphere above the waters surface. The adults are much like mosquitoes with feathery antennae. These flies are hearty individuals and can tolerate a vast array of conditions and environments. As long as there is an adequate food supply, they can survive in clean or polluted waters, on rocky, muddy, or sandy bottoms, in rivers or ponds. They are mostly found close to shore on or near shoals where blue-green algae, their primary food source, is most abundant².

The next arthropod is among the fastest and oldest species of insects. With a wingspan of up to 50mm, the Four Spotted Skimmer Dragonfly, Libellula quadrimaculata is one of the most fascinating insects in both of its life stages. The Four Spotted Skimmer can be found throughout Alberta, but is common to slow moving streams, ponds, or bogs. The larval and adult stages are both very active predators. The larvae are large, stout ambush predators that rely on camouflage to creep up on prey. Then they grasp their prey with their lightning fast extendable labium³. This modified lower lip is used for grasping prey such as other aquatic invertebrates and even small fish. The larvae will shed their exoskeleton 10 or more times before climbing up onto vegetation to emerge as an adult⁴. The adult skimmer is a surface hunter, hence its name. It flies close to the water's surface, then skims for prey on or just above the surface. The skimmers have long flattened bodies and are grayish green in color. The four spotted skimmer actually has ten black spots in total on its wings, but the four on the tips of its wings provide the characteristics for its name.

The next fascinating arthropod comes from the most diverse order of insects: Coleoptera, the beetles, which alone boasts about 250,000 described species. The aquatic predacious diving beetle Dytiscus alanskanus can measure between 20 and 40mm and can be found throughout Alberta among vegetation in ponds, sloughs and slow moving streams⁴. Its larval stage, known as the water tiger is as vicious a predator as the adult form; both are known to take small fish as well as other invertebrates. Both the larvae and the adult must surface to breathe atmospheric air. When they come up to the surface, their rear end breaks the surface tension of the water and a cavity underneath their wing covers trap air which they take down with them when they dive to search for



prey. As the bubble gets smaller, the concentration of oxygen actually increases as carbon dioxide and nitrogen diffuse out, increasing the foraging time for the beetle⁵. Large hairs (setae) and well-developed rear legs make the predactious diving beetle a very quick swimmer, which is a must for evading predators and catching prey such as small minnows and tadpoles. These beetles can be caught in a pond net, but you have to be quick or else they can disappear in the muddy bottom of the pond. They can also be found in Camrose far away from water in the late fall as they fly around looking for places to overwinter.

The next arthropod, the Canadian Tiger Swallowtail, Papilio canadensis, is one of the prettiest specimens present in our area, belonging to the order Lepidoptera, the butterflies. With its large black and yellow wings and the hint of blue and orange on its tail, it looks like it belongs in the tropics, although it can be found all across Canada. This Alberta native can have a wingspan up to 10 cm^3 , and it also has a small fragile tail that extends from the rear of each wing. These tails fall off easily when grabbed, which saves the rest of the wing and the butterfly when a predator is after it³. This insect has a long proboscis that it uses to feed on nectar. Hairs on its body also collect pollen while feeding that helps to pollinate the flowers from which it feeds. The swallowtails are the only butterflies that flutter their wings while they feed, perhaps to confuse predators into thinking it is just part of a plant, moving in the wind. They can be found around poplar bluffs where they first emerge and where they will mate and lay eggs at the end of their flight season, which lasts



Canadian Tiger Swallowtail, Papilio canadensis

from May to August³. Males of this species like to gather and patrol streams, forest edges and hilltops in search of a mate, and will often form groups around puddles where they can drink mineral rich water. Their caterpillar stage is large and green with a fake snake head to ward off predators. In order to catch one of these, a good bug net is needed and care must be taken when handling the butterfly because the colors on the wing are actually tiny scales and can rub off when handled, disabling the butterfly's flight.

The next arthropod is not an insect. From the order Aranea, spiders differ from all the above insects by having eight legs. A common spider found in riparian areas such as the Stoney Creek valley is the Six Spotted Fishing spider, Dolomedes triton. These spiders hunt on and below the water's surface. They can walk on top of the water like a water strider, as well as climb down vegetation and hunt underwater while breathing air trapped on the hairs of their body³ The females of this species are larger than the males⁴. They can usually be found along the edge of ponds and streams around vegetation where they prefer to hunt. They usually eat other invertebrates, but will also take small fish³, 2000). These spiders are part of the nursery-web family, that is they don't use their webs for trapping food. Before spiderlings begin to emerge from the egg sac that the female carries, she fastens it to terrestrial vegetation where they can safely develop until they emerge⁴. Like most spiders, mating is a sad story for the male, as he is usually used as a post copulatory meal.

Six Spotted Fishing spider, Dolomedes triton.





freshwater shrimp, Gammarus lacustris

The Microinvertebrates

Despite their small size, microinvertebrates are crucial to ecosystems, both as primary consumers, and prey for both invertebrates and vertebrates. With their small size (between 1-5mm), you would need a microscope to see anything more than just a tiny brown speck, but if you fill a jar with pond or creek water, you are bound to come across several different kinds of microinvertebrates. Collectively all the aquatic invertebrates between 2 and 15 mm are classified as zooplankton.

The first and largest member of our local zooplankton community is a small crustacean, the freshwater shrimp, Gammarus lacustris. These shrimp measure around 15 mm and can sometimes be found in large numbers in clean standing waters or shallow areas of ponds, lakes and slow streams⁴. Their bodies are laterally compressed, taller than they are wide, and they have 11 pairs of legs: 2 for grasping, 5 for walking, 3 for swimming and 1 for eating. They are semi transparent, so their color depends on what they have been eating². They are bottom feeders that will scavenge on anything from dead animal matter to leaf litter, but their primary food is plant material and algae, so they usually have a slight greenish tinge. They can also be brown to red depending on the mud in which their food particles are ingested. They may also appear orange when they are carrying eggs². These tiny crustaceans can be easily caught with a pond net and viewed in a glass jar.

The next microinvertebrate is much smaller, measuring only 2mm, which is still on the large side. The water fleas, Daphnia pulicaria, are tiny transparent filter feeders found in small still water bodies. Like most zooplankton, they strain out mostly plant matter and detritus. They have an interesting life cycle. Starting in the spring, only females in the population will reproduce by a process known as parthenogenesis, which means the eggs don't need to be fertilized in order to develop. Once this cycle repeats several times and when the population is large enough, usually by mid summer, a different type of egg is produced, that when not fertilized, will develop into a male (Clifford, 1992).

Copepods are the next largest species of zooplankton. The species Diaptomus sicilus are most abundant in Driedmeat Lake, and may also be found in Stoney Creek. Like the water fleas, they are filter feeders that feed on plant matter and detritus⁴.

The smallest zooplankton are the Rotifers, Hexarthra spp. These are also called wheel animals because of the way they feed. At the top of their body, there is a ring of hairs that beat in a wavelike pattern, making the effect of a turning wheel. These hairs strain out microscopic plant matter, bacteria and plankton⁴.



is a project of the Camrose Rot:

water fleas, Daphnia pulicaria

Diaptomus sicilus

Rotifers, Hexarthra spp

History and Developments

In the past, mosquitoes and flies were deemed to be pests. Camrose was the first municipality to use an insecticidal fog control system. Composed of 5 parts diesel fuel to one part chlorane DDT, the mixture was heated up and the smoke worked to keep the pests down. Since then the use of DDT has been linked to detrimental effects on the ecosystem, multiplying its effect as it works its way up the food chain. There have been numerous studies that show that raptor and waterfowl breeding success is greatly affected by organochlorines and DDT and their use has been banned since 1970 ⁶.

Insecticides can have a number of effects; the most noticeable ones are the direct effects, where the insecticide directly affects the species in question, either poisoned, or impairing their reproductive capabilities⁷. The other larg effect is indirect, where habitats or food resources are affected, depleting a productive environment. This commonly happens when invertebrates are removed from an ecosystem that depends on them as a primary food source⁶. Animals such as fish, and amphibians are largely affected, as they prey, to some degree, on invertebrates for food.

There are a number of insect control methods that are not harmful to the environment, such as integrated pest management (IPM) and biological control. IPM involves limiting the loss of a crop, while minimizing the effects on the surrounding environment and those organisms that depend on it⁵. This means that a deep knowledge of the particular pest is needed. Their breeding times and habits, natural predators, and their ecological role are all factors that must be considered in IPM. Biological control is controlling a pest with the introduction of a natural predator, or a predator

that will target only the pest, and not harm the crops⁵. This also involves a deep knowledge of both insects because the introduction of a new species may work to rid a crop of a particular pest, but can also lead to outbreaks of the introduced insect in other environments where it could become invasive to native species.



An advanced mosquito-fly control program is carried out each summer by the public works department. Above is the "fogging machine" in operation. The 45-gallon capacity combustion equipment has been mounted on a jeep. The mixture used, made up of five parts diesel fuel to one part Chlordane DDT, is put through a heating unit and distributed from the back of the machine in the form of a heavy fog over lanes, parks and the Victoria Park golf course.

Bugs of the Aspen Parkland

Scientific Common

Antheraea polyphemus Polyphemus Moth (Lepidoptera)

Hyalophora comlumbia Columbian Silk Moth

Smerinthus cerysii One Eyed Sphinx

Pachysphinx modesta Big Poplar Sphinx

Hemaris diffinis Snowberry Clearwing

Hyles gallii Galium Sphinx

Arctica caja Garden tiger moth

Lophocampa maculata Spotted Tassock Moth

Gnophaela vermiculata Police Car Moth

Ctenucha virginica Virginia Ctenucha

Malacosoma disstria Forest Tent Catarpillar Moth

Catocala relicta White Underwing

Catocala unijaga Once Married Underwing

Campaea perlata Pale Beauty

Carabus nemoralis Purple Rimmed Carabus (Coleoptera)

Calosoma caliderm Fiery Hunter

Pterostichus menaricus Sidewalk Carabid

Nicrophorus sp. Burrying Beetle

Creophilus maxillosus Hairy Rove Beetle





Bugs of the Aspen Parkland Part 2

Scientific Common

Phyllophaga spp. May Beetle

Ctenicera resplendens Resplendant Click Beetle

Ctenicera aeripennis Sapphire Winged Click Beetle

Glischrochilus quadrisignatus Beer Beetle

Lytta nuttali Nuttal's Blister Beetle
Coccinella septempunctata Seven Spot Ladybug
Adalia bipunctata Two Spot Ladybug
Hippodamia tredecimpunctata Thirteen Spot Ladybug
Otiorhynchus ovatus Strawberry Root Weevil

Formica spp. Wood Ant (Hymenoptera)

Camponatus spp. Carpenter Ant

Bombus nevadensis Nevada Bumblebee

Sirex cyaneus Blue Horntail

Vespula maculata Bald Faced Hornet

Vespula spp. Yellow Jacket

Ammophila spp. Threadwaisted Wasp

Family Pompliidae Spider Wasp

Family Syrphidae Hover Fly (Diptera)

Hybomitra spp. Horse Fly
Laphria spp. Robber Fly

Tipula spp. Giant Crane Fly

Chrysopa spp. Green Lacewing (Neuroptera)

Brachynemurus abdominalus Snap Trap Antlion

Chlorochroa sayi Big Green Stinkbug (Hemiptera)

Callicorixa audeni Auden's Water Boatman

Limnoporus dissortis Kayak Pond Skater

Notonecta undulata Common Backswimmer

Lethocerus americanus Giant Water Bug Cosmopepla bimaculata Wee Harlequin Bug

Dissosteira carolina Road Duster Orthoptera Arphia conspersa Red Winged Grasshopper Pteronarcys californica Giant Stonefly Plecoptera

Bugs of the Aspen Parkland Part 3

Scientific Common

Aeshna interrupta Variable Darner Odonata

Ophigonphus severus Pale Snaketail

Leucorrhinia hudsonica Hudsonian Whiteface Libellula quadrimaculata Four Spotted Skimmer

Sympetrum internum Cherryfaced Meadowhawk

Sympetrum danae Black Meadowhawk

Family Isotomuridae Snow Flea (Siphonaptura)

Acilius Spp. Acilius Diving Beetle (Coleoptera)

Colymbetes sculptilis Mid Sized Diving Beetle

Dytiscus spp. Giant Diving Beetle

Gyrinus spp. Whirligig Beetle

Hudrochara obtusa Obtuse Water Scavenger (Beetle)
Lithobius spp. Garden Centipede (Myriapoda)

Order Julida Garden Millipede

Phalangiun opiloi Harvestman (Aranea)
Pardosa spp. This Legged Wolf Spider

Phidippus borealis Boreal Jumping Spider

Aranaeus spp. Orb Weaver

Tetragnatha spp. Long Jawed Orb Weaver

Dolomedes triton Six Spotted Fishing Spider

Misumena vatia Goldenrod Crab Spider

Misumena vatia Goldenrod Crab Spider

Dolomedes triton Six Spotted Fishing Spider

Butterflies of the Aspen Parkland

Scientific Name

Amblyscirtes vialis

Hesperia comma assiniboia

Hesperia nevada

Hesperia uncas

Oarisma garita

Polites draco

Polites mystic

Polites peckius

Polites themistocles

Thymelicus lineola

Carterocephalus palaemon

Epargyreus clarus

Erynis afranius

Erynnis icelus

Erynnis persius

Pyrgus centaureae

Pyrgus communis

Thorybes pylades

parnassius smintheus

Papilio machaon dodi

Papilio zelicaon

Papilio pteroursus canadensis

Pieris oleracea

Common Name

Roadside Skipper

Common branded skipper

Nevada skipper

Uncas Skipper

Garita skipper

Draco skipper

Long Dash Skipper

Peck's skipper

Tawny edged skipper

European skipper

arctic skipper

Silverspotted skipper

Afranius duskywing

Dreamy duskywing

Persius duskywing

Grizzled skipper

Chackered skipper

Northern cloudywing

Smintheus parnassian

Old world swallotail

Anise swallotail

Canadian tiger swallotail

Mustard white



Scientific Name

Common Name

Pieris rapae Cabbage butterfly

Poutia occidentalis Western white

Pontia protodice Checkered white

Euchloe ausonides Large marble

Euchloe creusa Northern marble

Euchloe olympia Olympia marble

Colias christina Christina sulphur

Colias eurytheme alfalfa butterfly

Colias gigantea Giant sulphur

Colius interior Pink edged sulphur

Colias philodice Clouded sulphur

Zerene cesonia Dogface

Lycaena Epidemia darcas Dorcas copper

Lycaena Epidemia helloides Purplish copper

Lycaena Epidemia mariposa Mariposa copper

Lycaena gaeides dione Great gray copper

Lycaena Hyllolycaena hyllus Bronze copper

Lycaena Lycaena phlaeas Little copper

Harkenclenus titus Coral hairstreak

Incisalia Deciduphagus augistinus Brown elfin

Incisalia Deciduphagus polia Hoary elfin

Incisalia Incisalia eryphon White pine elfin

Incisalia Incisalia niphon Eastern pine elfin

Mitoura spinetorum Thicket hairstreak



Butterflies of the Aspen Parkland

Part 3

Scientific Name

Common Name

Satyrium liparops

Celastrina ladon lucia

Everes amyntula

Glaucopsyche lygdamus

Lycaeides idas

Lycaeides melissa

Plebejus Agriades risticus

Plebejus Icaricia acmon

Plebejus Icaricia icarioides

Plebejus Plebejus saepiolus

Plebejs Vacciniina optilete

Aglais milberti

Nymphalis antiopa

Nymphalis californica

Nymphalis vanalbum

Polygonia faunus

Polugonia gracilis

Polygonia interrogationis

Polygonia progne

Polugonia satyrus

Polugonia zephyrus

Vanessa annabella

Vanessa atalanta

Vanessa cardui

Striped hairstreak

Spring azure

Western tailed blue

Silvery blue

Northern bue

Melissa blue

Rustic blue

Acron blue

Icarioides blue

Greenish blue

Cranberry blue

Milbert's tortoise shell

Mourning cloak

California tortoise shell

Compton's tortoise shell

Green comma

Hoary comma

Question mark

Gray comma

Satyr anglewing

Zephyr

Westcoast lady

Red admiral

Painted lady

Butterflies of the Aspen Parkland Part 4

Scientific Name

Common Name

vanessa virginiensis American painted lady

Boloria astorte Astarte fritillary
Boloria bellona Meadow fritillary
Boloria chariclea Purple fritillary
Boloria eunomia Bog fritillary
Boloria freija Freija fritillary

Boloria frigga Frigga fritillary

Boloria selene Silver boardered fritillary

Euptoieta claudia Variegated fritillary
Speyeria aphrodite manitoba Aphrodite fritillary
Speyeria atlantis hollandi Altantas fritillary

Speyeria electa lais Northwestern fritillary

Speyeria callippe Callippe fritillary

Speyeria cybele Great spangled fritillary

Speyeria edwardsii Edward's fritillary
Speyeria hydaspe Hydaspe fritillary
Speyeria mormonia Mormon fritillary
Speyeria zerene Zerene fritillary

Choridryus acastus Acastus checkerspot
Choridryus gorgone Gorgone checkerspot

Choridryus palla Northern checkerspot

Butterflies of the Aspen Parkland

Scientific Name

Common Name

Euphydryus anicia

Euphydryus gilletti

Phycoides batesii

Phycoides cocyta

Phycoides pulchella

Phycoides tharos

Limenitis Basilarchia archippus

Limenitis Basilarchia arthemis

Satyrodes eurydice

Cercyonis oetus

Cercyonis peyla

Coenonympha incarnata

Erebia disa

Erebia discodalis

Erebia episodea

Oeneis alberta

Oeneis chryxus

Oeneis jutta

Oeneis macounii

Oeneis uhleri

Danaus plexippus

Anicia checkerspot

Gillett's checkerspot

Tawny crescent

Northern pearl crescent

Feild crescent

Pearl crescent

Viceroy

White admiral

Eyed brown

Dark wood nymph

Common wood nymph

Incarnate ringlet

Disa alpine

Red disked alpine

Common alpine

Alberta arctic

Chryxus arctic

Jutta arctic

Mavoun's arctic

Uhler's arctic

Monarch

Damselflies of Alberta

Scientific Name Common Name

Lestes dryas Emerald Spreadwing

Lestes disjunctus Common Spreadwing

Lestes unguiculatus Lyre-tipped Spreadwing

Lestes congener Spotted Spreadwing

Coenagrion angulatum Prairie Bluet

Coenagrion resolutum Taiga Bluet

Coenagrion interrogatum Subarctic Bluet

Enallagma boreale Boreal Bluet

Enallagma cyathigerum Northern Bluet

Enallagma hageni Hagens Bluet

Enallagma ebrium Marsh Bluet

Enallagma clausum Alkali Bluet

Enallagma caranculatum Tule Bluet

Ischnura damula Plains Forktail

Amphiagrion abbreviatum Western Red Damsel

Nahelennia irese Sedge Sprite

Tiger Beetles (tb) of the Aspen Parkland

Scientific Common

Cicindela nebraskana Black Bellied tb

Cicindela longilabris Long Lipped tb

Cicindela repanda Bronzed tb

Cicindela duodecimguttata Twelve-spot tb

Cicindela hirticollis Beach tb

Cicindela limata Sandy tb

Cicindela limbalis Claybank tb

Cicindela purpurea Cowpath tb

Cicindela lengi Blowout tb

Cicindela tranquebarica Oblique tb