

Newport Forest

December 31 2000

2:15- 3:35 pm

Weather: light snow, sun/haze, OC, no breeze

Purpose: to fill feeders and check trails

Participants: Kee, Jonathan

We parked the van at the top of the hill, as usual, and descended the lower meadow to the trailer, where we got out the stepladder and bird feed. We filled both feeders, plus the top of the old log, then spread DBs on two tramped down areas of snow for -- whomever.

Jonathan and I then walked the 1.5 km Hogsback Trail from the River Landing back around to Edgar's Road. The river is still rather high for this time of year, being still over the gravel bars. Strangely enough, although it was covered over with ice at every point we saw it driving to the property (i.e. at Delaware and at the Wardsville bridge), it was completely open along the entire property, emerging from a covered section just above the landing, then diving under another covered section that began about 50 m downstream from the western boundary!

On the trail, the snow was occasionally high enough, especially at places of accumulation such as bluffs and windbreaks, that it came in over the tops of my boots. In about a foot of snow (on average) it's just about impossible to spot the smaller trail liners, with the result that we wandered off the trail at least once, that being in the east end of the Riverside Forest, where there are few liners, anyway.

Along the Blind Creek trail, I noticed that swamp had not frozen over, being densely grown with a plant that was apparently thriving. I picked a sample for Pat who thought it most closely resembled Swamp Buttercup. Further along the trail, about 200 m from the entrance, four ruffed Grouse exploded out of the brush to our left, two flying straight up the Hogsback, the other two flying in a more easterly direction. Coming out Edgar's Road at last, we stopped to look at a Red-bellied Woodpecker at the Blind Creek feeder, as well as a male Downy on a nearby bush. Driving out of the property, we spotted a Red-tailed Hawk flying over the van.

Species: Red-bellied Woodpecker, Red-tailed Hawk, Downy woodpecker