

**Newport Forest**

February 16 2001

2:30 - 5:00 pm

**Weather:** Cloudy, 1C, light breeze from W

**Purpose:** to check trails and Fleming's Creek

**Participants:** Kee, Nic

Coming in, Pooch tried to follow us, so I had to wrestle her into Edgar's garage for the nonce. We parked by the trailer and, while Nic filled the feeders, I took out the propane bottles and stowed them in the van for later refilling. Then I went to the Creek bluff to inspect water levels. The creek is over its lower banks and half way up the upper banks, the depth in spots being about 2 metres. I decided not to attempt a crossing to-day. The dead buck would still be well under water. Maybe next time.

I took some photos of an unusual phenomenon. The ice had formed over the creek flats when the water was about 2 metres higher than it was to-day. As the water subsided, the ice gently lowered until, when the water had completely drained away, the ice lay undulating over bushes and stumps, as if someone had dropped a blanket. About 1 cm thick, some of it had remained attached to small trees and saplings at the original water level, leaving a forest of small white disks suspended in the air as high as I could reach.

We decided to walk the Hogsback circuit and, as we passed the second feeder, filled it, too. Nic, who seems especially good at spotting things, saw some small rodents running along the edge of Harvey's bean field. They dove under the snow crust and into their burrows. Blind Creek had covered Edgar's Road in about 10 cm of water. Further along, closer to the Thames, Nic saw a medium size black animal flash across the path ahead of us. He thought it was most likely a housecat. At the Landing, we found the table and chairs missing. I opined that the flood currents from the river had carried them into the BCF and this turned out to be the case. The table and one of the chairs were found lying in drift piles about 100 metres into the forest. We found the other chair coming out of the BCF much later about 200 metres into the forest. While searching for these items, we found much interesting flotsam and jetsam: a child's plastic golf club, several plastic bottles, and an intact soccer ball.

At this point, I gave Nic a walkie-talkie and instructed him to walk the Hogsback circuit from the Blind Creek side, while I walked from the River side. We communicated frequently and I was impressed by the clarity of the communication, even through the Hogsback itself! We met up in the Hogsback

Forest, stopped for a break on the bench there, then continued our separate ways. Nic had seen three black Squirrels on the Blind Creek side of the Hogsback. I had seen none. He also pointed out several bushes that had been nearly debarked by rabbits, as well as frequent rabbit droppings.

We returned to the trailer for a break, then packed up and drove out. Driving along the Beattie Line not far from Eva's gate, we spotted a very large bird the size of a Wild Turkey perched in a tree about 200 metres away. As we drove closer to it, the bird took off. It was not a turkey, but flew like an Eagle. It was all brown but quite immense. If it was not an immature Bald Eagle, then it was definitely a Golden Eagle.

**birds seen or heard:**

heard: American Crows, Chickadees, Red-tail hawks (heard and seen - 2)

seen at feeder: several Chickadees, one White-breasted Nuthatch, One Red-bellied Woodpecker, one Downy Woodpecker