

Newport Forest

February 20 2001

2:00 - 4:45 pm

Weather: overcast, cool 3C, breeze from west

Purpose: to scan along river, check for birds and photograph deer carcass

Participants: Pat, Kee

As we came in this time, Pooch (aka: "Snooper") stayed where she was and gave no trouble. We drove down to the trailer without difficulty, filled the feeders and noted that the suet feeder (with suet intact) had not been molested this time.

On Edgar's Road I took a photo of the snow-sloped Hogsback through the bare trees. At the landing, I showed Pat the ripple marks in the fine sand deposited by the recent flood, also photographing them. Instead of taking the River Bluffs trail, we went upstream along the bank, following a game. Growing on some fallen trees was a group of bracket fungi that looked familiar -- a kind of maze polypore with grey/white tops. At the same time, Pat found what appeared to be a June Beetle crawling around (!)

We came to the mouth of Fleming's Creek and noticed that a large Willow had fallen across the mouth, collecting debris and forming a bridge of sorts. The topography at this point began to fall away toward the creek down a steep slope and we elected to stay on the upper terrace which took us, ultimately, around the edge of Harvey's bean field. Just inside the tree line, we found Garlic Mustard in profusion, as well as an unknown species that resembled a Wild Lettuce. (Darren Jacobs has sent us e-photos of both species taken at Moraviantown.)

We heard a strange bird call from the woods to the east, a course, steady whistle followed by a finer, piping call at the same frequency, not repeated for minutes at a time. Checking under a potential owl roost, Pat found a huge, fresh pellet, as well as several darker (and presumably older) ones. The large one was later dissected and turned out to contain mouse bones, as well as the hip bones of a possible squirrel.

At the trailer we found the usual gang of birds (see below) as well as a lifer for Pat -- the Tufted Titmouse. Inside the trailer I donned the chest waders and went down to the creek, under the watchful eye of Pat. The water was actually shallower than it looked, being wadable with rubber boots, as it turned out. The old bridge has been swung by this latest flood into a position beside the west bank and parallel to it (making an ideal boat landing). The deer was still there, barely visible with its camouflage of fine creek silt. It is still whole and intact, only the

eyes now gone due to decay. I took several pictures of the corpse, which has now begun to smell faintly but definitely “high.”

We closed up camp and visited with Nina and Edgar, asking them about any wells on the property. Nina: someone had drilled a gas well (just inside the gate and to the left) sometime in 1944. Edgar: most of the wells drilled in the vicinity were between 400 and 500 feet deep. This one had produced no gas, but water, instead. It tasted like “epsom salts.” To test it, she led a cow to a bucket of it, but the cow refused to drink, even though thirsty. Nina also told us the story of a Blue Jay which flew off with a young mouse that Snooper had caught. Good “Ask the Cardinal” question?

Birds

American Crow (heard), Chickadee (6+), Red-bellied Woodpecker (1), White-breasted Nuthatch (4+), and a Tufted Titmouse (1) (see below).

New species

“Thin-maze Oak Polypore” [*Daedalea quercina*] Thames Shore East

I have another specimen of this species from A’Nowaghi. Both specimens coincide with *D. quercina* in all characters except for the thickness and spacing of the pore walls, which are uniformly at or just below the minimum spacing for *D. quercina* and definitely thinner.

June Beetle *Phyllophaga* sp. Thames Shore East

This would have to be an adult which has survived from last summer. It moved very sluggishly, even at room temperature.

White-footed Mouse *Peromyscus leucopus* Harvey’s Bean Field

The teeth, size and shape of palatal foramina distinguish this specimen from the Deer Mouse, Woodland Jumping Mouse and other candidates.

Tufted Titmouse *Parus bicolor* Fleming’s Creek Flats