

Newport Forest

June 10 2001

2:00 - 9:30 pm

Weather: mixed sun/cloud, warm 24C, humid, no breeze

Purpose: to explore more of the East Ravine, search for more plant species and to stay for brief animal watch.

Participants: Pat, Kee

As we entered the property, we saw a deer dash across the Upper Meadow to the East Ravine. We parked behind the trailer, where I unloaded the next bridge component, the east trestle. I checked the fit of the cradle on the trestle. While Pat prepared the trailer, I went down to Fleming Creek to fill a jug with water. Then I went up the bluff, watering the trees as I went. Both the Tulip Tree and the Kentucky Coffeetree, among the others, are doing well.

Pat and I then drove to the Upper Meadow to save steps and once again, we saw deer, this time two of them, running to the east this time, over to the FC bluffs (and presumably down them). I watered the few planted trees still alive on this part of the bluffs. Pat noticed a fungus on a decaying log and I collected it (but was unable to identify it later, thinking it most resembled the genus *Bondarzewia*).

Crossing the UM toward the East Ravine, I spotted a Tiger Moth. Pat captured it with the net. From the description she gave and from my own visual memory, it is definitely a Tiger Moth (P) of the genus *Apantesis*, but what species? *A. virgo*? We definitely need a real guide to the moths of the area. A little further on, we encountered another moth (P) with a grey fore-wing and an orange hind wing. Probably a Geometrid. Pat also caught a very small Skipper about 1.5 cm long with an orange-ish abdomen and the fore-wings a darker orange.

In the meadow we spotted some interesting areas where the water is retained longer and the ground has a swampy character. Here were large colonies of sedges (S), some new, and some rushes (S). Pat also collected a new chickweed-like plant (S). In another depression guarded by Teazles, Pat also picked up a new rush (S).

Next to the East Ravine, just north of the "homestead" are two White Elms standing alone in the meadow. Here Pat caught a colourful butterfly: the under surface of the wings had two white eyes and a transverse whitish stripe. The upper surface was orange with black and white spots with a cream border. This description serves only to narrow the range to a probable Nymphalid, possibly one of the Lady butterflies or a Buckeye. Only Pat can tell when she compares her memory with the images in our main butterfly guide (hint). Here we ran into that

very flat Blue-eyed Grass, *Sisyrinchium angustifolium*, which Pat found earlier in the LM.

At the very edge of the East Ravine at the point of our entry, we found a charming little copse composed entirely of Hawthorns, but already invaded by at least a dozen healthy-looking White Ash saplings. Beyond the copse, a grassy area gave way to a decline into the ravine proper. Here we found Hawkweed and Yellow Clover and here we flushed a Woodcock! Moments later, as Pat followed the lip of the ravine, she flushed a fawn which scrambled rapidly to its feet and took off toward the meadow. (Perhaps, thought Pat, the two deer we saw earlier were trying to lead us away from the fawn.) Then it was my turn again, flushing another Woodcock.

We worked our way north, toward the power lines noting that the ravine edge was galleried by a scrub forest, principally Hawthorn but almost all of it invaded by young trees such as White Ash and (at least) one Chinquapin Oak. We made our way back across the meadow to where we had parked the van, then left for a visit to Eva Newport.

On our return, we drove right down to the trailer and Pat went to bed for a snooze while I went up to examine the trees growing along the hydro right of way toward the west. Inside a meadowed cul-de-sac, I felt surrounded and strange. Thunder began rolling to the west, the air was heavy and humid, and I kept hearing a gobbling noise coming from the ravine. It sounded like about a dozen Wild Turkeys, just the other side of the ravine forest edge. To my right was the southern edge of the BCF. I ventured in but found little not seen before except that many of the plants (not large ones) had winged stems. It began to rain lightly and I headed back to the trailer where I made a gourmet meal (Chef Boyardee Beef-a-roni) and we ate hearty.

Pat, who had wanted to visit the river all along, got her wish after supper. But now the grass was wet and thigh-high. Mosquitoes descended upon us in plague proportions and I began to complain about them for the first time since we began to work here. Pat put up with them far more cheerfully, it must be remarked. We heard a Towhee calling "Drink-your-tea." At the RL we saw a Spotted Sandpiper and a Robin and heard a Red-breasted Grosbeak sing, not to mention some very strange music from the Hogsback! (?)

Walking along the grassy margin of the river, just above the blue clay promenade, Pat found some new grasses (S) and I found a new rush (S) for her, as well. We

also noticed a grass-like plant that had spread by stolons that had infiltrated the mudcracks in the clay. Along an individual mudcrack, we could see individual after individual of a colonial grass sprouting out of the crack. Conditions continuing somewhat miserable, we made our way back to the trailer, where we awaited nightfall. We had distributed some Dbh around the back of the trailer. A light rain continued to fall and it seemed that the coons, skunks and possums would rather stay home. In more or less complete darkness, we closed up the trailer and departed.

Species seen/heard:

American Robin (RL); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (RL); Rufus sided Towhee (BCF); Spotted Sandpiper (RL); Wild Turkey (ER); Woodcock (ER)

Deer (UM, ER)