

Newport Forest

August 27-28 2001

1:35 - 3:30 (next day)

**Weather:** precip: 4 mm, LM 35C, FCF 25C, light SW breeze, occas. cloud

**Purpose:** to search for fungi in FCF, do an animal watch, explore E Ravine

**Participants:** Pat, Kee

We were greeted, coming in, by a beautiful Red-tailed Hawk circling over the LM and showing a brighter-than average red tail with every turn. We set up the trailer, then headed out for our fungus-collecting expedition.

At the bridge over Fleming Creek we noted that the Wild Cucumber had grown all around and even through the bridge. Giant Ragweeds adorned both sides of the creek. Here also, Pat found Honewort near the bridge. We heard a Grey Treefrog sing occasionally and Pat spotted a Hairy Woodpecker, one that we would also see and hear occasionally throughout our stay. Also, we noticed that the walnut and hickory nuts have begun to fall in numbers.

We made our way slowly along the trail, finding more fungi than I had bargained for. We noted other things, as we went. The Running Strawberry is now in fruit. Near the 300 metre post, Pat found some White Baneberry.

The Collection (See Fungi Report for this date)

Jar One: Small orange mushrooms on an old branch (P)  
(0-100m) Small purple-brwon mushrooms on an old log  
Tall, thin mushroom with coloured centre on soil  
White mushroom on dead wood

Jar Two: Red and white mushroom on dead branch  
(100-800m) Small buff cap on dead wood  
Amber "butter" on dead wood  
Small, fragile white mushroom on twig  
Tiny white mushrooms on twigs  
Tiny-tiny red mushrooms on dead wood  
Purple-brown mushroom on wood  
White crust on a dead branch  
White oysterlike mushroom with white nipples on log

Jar Three: Yellow-edged polypore on dead tree  
Beige and white polypore on log

Beige coral on log  
Clitocybula ocula on log in Harvey's Woods (P) (no S)  
Carbon Balls on log (no sample needed)  
Bright orange mushroom on log  
Beige cushion on log (Tower Hill)  
Black-footed Polypore (no sample)  
Orange, radially lined fungi on log  
Brown Cushion on log (Eva's Woods nr creek)

Returning to the trailer, Pat tried to have a nap in the 30+C temperature, while I went down to the creek. I spent a long time staring at the trees all around me, looking for something unusual. I noticed, among other things, a Sycamore, now nearing maturity and growing right on the bank of the creek just inside Eva's property. Then I stared at the rapids downstream from the bridge for a while. Presently it came to me that there was something wrong with them. By this time of year, after even one or two weeks of clear water, most small rapids would have sprouted extensive growths of algae over the stones. But now, even after two months of clear water, there was none! Has someone dumped herbicide in the creek?

We dined on chili, had a leisurely coffee, then headed to the river. At the RL we heard several Catbirds and a Blue Jay calling and saw Cedar Waxwings, a Spotted Sandpiper and a Great Crested Flycatcher.

We made it back to the trailer just before sunset, then headed up the road to close the gate for the evening. Here we met Nina and Edgar. Already, the same frog or insect we heard during our last stay was at it again, all around Edgar's and Nina's house. She had no idea what it was.

Returning down the track to the trailer, I noticed an extensive sprouting of Resinous Polypore (no S) on a dead Hickory near the trailer. It was now getting fairly dark, so we put out the DB bait and a small battery-powered lamp to illuminate our visitors a little better than last time.

At 9:15 we had our first visitor, a very wary Raccoon who made his way most tentatively to the first pile of DBs. We could hear the biscuits crunching for the next several minutes. When we began whispering too loud, however, it had had enough and took off. Another Raccoon, smaller, showed up later at the other end of the trailer to eat some DBs scattered under the bird feeder. We both realized that we had forgotten to bring one item that makes dining out a great pleasure for

Raccoons - a tub of clean water.

In the trailer, I tried, by the light of a coal oil lamp, to identify fungi using my three main reference books. I only got as far as one mushroom, one I had collected last year, in any event: *Mycena leiana*, the ubiquitous, little orange log-mushroom. But this is not the ideal way to proceed, so I quit trying to ID the fungi, hoping they might last long enough to get them home and into a fridge.

Pat, meanwhile, was maintaining the animal watch and called me back to look at a pale shape moving slowly around the periphery of the baited area. The spotlight caught it unmistakably: A Possum! Perhaps not yet fully grown.

Next morning while I slept, Pat walked the LM and a bit of Edgar's Road, as well. She saw a Ruby-throated Hummingbird (new), a House Wren, a Cardinal, two Red-tailed Hawks over Harvey's Beanfield, Savannah Sparrows, several American Crows, a Baltimore Oriole in the Walnut Tree, and a Goldfinch in the LM. Butterflies also seemed to be abundant: a Great Spangled Fritillary, some American Ladies, and several Monarchs.

I rose, had breakfast, and joined the hunt for new species. Pat pointed out some Fairy Ring mushrooms growing south of the trailer and I took two photographs of the Resinous Polypore, an excellent subject for a slide. Pat, meanwhile, spotted a probable Painted Lady in the LM. We both saw that many Monarchs were flitting about and were reminded of a strange sight on the way to close the gate on the previous evening: About halfway to the top of the track, in one of the Black Maples (I think) a cluster of about 7 or 8 Monarchs settled down for the night, all within a few inches of each other. Nearby a lone Monarch flitted about erratically, as though looking for his companions - but with no luck. Then one of the butterflies left the knot, flew directly to the lost butterfly and circled it. When the other butterfly started to chase it, the first Monarch returned to the knot, the new one following it. Thus was the stranger brought home, it would seem! Pat pointed out a nice, large green Katydid. (P)

On the way out, we watered the saplings along the bluff gallery forest and stopped to photograph the LM from the first large rise. We will take a similar photo next year from the same spot at the same date, to keep track of the successional features of the LM over time. We parked the van near the top of the bluff and wandered over to the head of the East Ravine, a little-explored feature of Newport Forest.

The floor of the ravine was a flat swale, more or less, but very lumpy owing to

the many old hummocks of grasses and rushes. Pat collected several plants here, as she had been doing throughout our stay. We followed the ravine down to an abrupt 90-degree bend, where it became considerably smaller and completely choked up with bushes.

So we came out, then explored the nearby site of a former house and grounds. We found no trace of the house but one old hand-made brick with a hole in it. I knocked one ripe pear from the tree nearby. The fruit are amazingly large for a relict tree. A Catalpa nearby has blasted leaves and is in poor shape, probably a temporary result of the drought.

We returned to the van and drove to the road to lock up. Here we found Edgar and Nina again. Nina gave me an insect (still alive) in a plastic bag. (I identified it later only to family - a Northern Caddisfly) But Nina did much more than that: She also showed us a Walkingstick Insect clinging to her back door! (P)

I mentioned to Edgar that I was thinking of putting up a tree station and that I planned to get a few 4x4s this October. He showed me a whole supply in his garage behind the repair shop and offered them to me. They ranged in length from 10'6" to 11'10".

Note on evening mystery calls: In balance, I now lean toward Katy-dids as the source of our mystery sounds. I have discovered that Cricket Frogs, even if they were in the area, *do not climb trees* !

### **Mammals**

Racoon, Possum

### **Herpetofauna**

Grey Tree-frog

### **Birds**

American Crow, Baltimore Oriole, Blue Jay, Cardinal, Catbird, Cedar Waxwing, Goldfinch, Great Crested Flycatcher, Hairy Woodpecker, House Wren, Red-tailed Hawk, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Savannah Sparrow, Spotted Sandpiper,

### **Butterflies**

American Lady, Great Spangled Fritillary, Monarch, Painted Lady (?)

### **New Species**

Hairy Woodpecker	<i>Picoides villosus</i>	PD FC/br
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	<i>Archilochus colubris</i>	PD LM/ER
Virginia Possum	<i>Didelphus virginiana</i>	PD FCF
Walkingstick Insect	<i>Diaperomera femorata</i>	nh/KD HP
Northern Caddisfly	(fam.) Limnephilidae	nh/KD HP
Resinous Polypore	<i>Ischnoderma resinosum</i>	KD FCF/LM
Fairy-ring Mushroom	<i>Marasmius oreades</i>	KD
LM/FCF		
“Owls Eyes”	<i>Clitocybula ocula</i>	KD HW
Honewort	<i>Cryptotaenia canadensis</i>	PD brdg
White Baneberry	<i>Actaea pachypoda</i>	PD FCT