

Newport Forest

November 25 2001

2:15 - 5:15 pm

Weather: prec. 12 mm, LM 12 C, FCF 11 C, overcast, W wind/gusty

Purpose: maintenance and birdwatching

Participants: Pat, Kee, and Nic

We had heard that people were seeing rough-legged Hawks in the vicinity and, coming in, that's exactly what we saw (with its distinctive white tail-patch) flying over the West Meadow to the ravine gallery to perch. Pat left the van at the gate, to walk down the road, birdwatching, while Nic and I parked near the nursery. By the time we had completed digging the second nursery bed, Pat had wandered down the meadow to join us.

We all drove down to the trailer, where we filled the feeders and Nic checked the bridge. The creek is up about a foot. Nic and I then walked back up to the gravel pile to work. Nic spotted an old oriole's nest hanging from one of the Bur Oaks, as well as a paper wasp nest minus the paper. As we neared the gravel pile, I spotted a Wild Turkey strutting out from behind it, then another, then another. Before we knew it a flock of about a dozen birds was hurrying away to the west. We saw a Tom, about six hens and several young adults (or very large chicks). One of the hens was mostly white, a sort of albino, we thought. Before the turkeys had trotted 20 metres, they all broke into flight and flew into the East Ravine. Pat, who was coming up the hill at the time, missed the sight of them on the ground, but saw the flight. We presumed the turkeys were replenishing their gizzards from the gravel.

Pat went back down to the Lm to birdwatch, while Nic and I completed graveling another metre or so of road. Then, while Pat went down to the river, Nic and I walked into the BCT, spotting some new mushrooms (S) on the wood chip pile on the way. We walked over the HB, then down to the river, where we spotted two Great Blues, one fishing on our side, the other flying downstream along the other side a few minutes later - presumably not the same bird. We followed behind Pat, who had already returned to the trailer. Since it was nearly dusk by this time, some of the Wild Turkeys had apparently flown into the woods to roost for the night. Our passage startled four of them into flight. They are very noisy when taking off and cannot be mistaken for anything else! Near the LM, we saw a Raccoon up in a tree just across the Blind Creek bed.