

Newport Forest

January 10 2002

2:00 - 5:00 pm

Weather: prec. 6 mm; LM 12C; FCF 6C; sunny/hazy, light SW winds

Purpose: to record animal tracks

Participants: Pat, Kee, Nic

Recent warmish weather has melted the (already thin) snow cover so that about 10% remains in the open areas and about 70% in forested areas. The tracks we found were all rather old or so badly warmth-eroded that they were mostly unreadable.

We went down to the River Landing, where I found one set of rather large canid tracks following the shoreline and heading upstream. I made a tracing of one reasonably good print on transparent plastic and (later on at home) found it to have the same inter-pad distance as the (alleged) wolf-track that I made a cast of on the RL last spring. Same one? Another set of decipherable tracks belonged to a Raccoon foraging along the shoreline. I also found catlike tracks measuring about 4 cm wide, a bit large for a house cat. Again, however, the toenails may not have printed or been lost.

Returning to the trailer, we had coffee out by the wood table, watching birds come to the feeder Nic had filled. (See bird list below) An (early) Winter Stonefly alighted on my trouser leg!

After coffee we walked up to the Hogsback, finding the eastbound tracks of a large buck and the westbound tracks of a possible Skunk. On the HB we found Lotor not at home. There was a well-worn trail leading from the base of his tree to a Chinkapin Oak on the south side of the HB. We also noticed some oaks (? I forgot to record the species) with numerous galls growing in the upper branches, rather resembling the fruit on a Sycamore, but about twice the diameter on average. (S) These proved to be large, knobby, dark brown "knots" not unlike Black Knot of Prunus. We returned to the lower reaches of the BCT by separate routes, Pat descending the slope directly and finding, in consequence large quantities of Wild Turkey droppings, this being a favorite roosting site, it would seem.

Nic gave us a beetle which had fallen out of a polypore he had taken home several weeks ago. (S) He also collected a bracket fungus he thought might be new. (S)

Birds:

American Crow	64	UM (overflight)
Black-capped Chickadee	8	
Blue Jay	2:	RL (far shore)
Downy Woodpecker	4:	HB-1; FCF-3
Mourning Dove	1:	RL
Red-bellied woodpecker	1:	FCF
Slate-coloured Junco	2:	ET
White-breasted Nuthatch	8:	FCF; ET

New species:

(fam. Tenebrionidae)

Forked Fungus Beetle¹ *Bolitotherus cornutus* BCF

(fam. Polyporaceae)

Cracked-cap Polypore² (?) *Phellinus [rimosus]* BCF

Notes:

1. This was evidently a female of the species, as the male has very prominent horns that extend up and forward over the pronotum. The “horns” on this specimen were about one-third of the length of the male. The distinctive lateral ornamented shield on the pronotum, the extensive bumpy/warty ornamentation is identical, as are other field-marks of the species. This is the only species for this genus in NA, the remainder being found in the US southwest. It is fairly common and lives in dead wood or old fungi.

2. Although almost certainly a member of the genus *Phellinus*, this specimen differed from the Cracked-cap Polypore by having a somewhat thinner margin and lacking the cracks that develop in older (and larger) specimens. Also, *Phellinus rimosus* is found most commonly on locusts and other members of the Leguminosae. The specimen in hand is younger than those in our references, has concentric furrowing in the upper surface and a bright tawny fertile surface with minute (6-7/mm) round pores.