

Newport Forest

January 20 2002

2:30 - 5:00 pm

Weather: 3 cm snow cover; LM 3 C; FCF 0 C, Var. SW wind, overcast

Purpose: to survey animal tracks

Participants: Pat, Kee, Nic

Coming in on the main drive, we saw tracks of a large canid, with foot and tail drags. There were no deer tracks by the feeder on the creek bluffs. A lone crow busied itself mobbing two hawks, Pat thinks Redtails.

The ice is going out on Fleming Creek; long leads have opened along the middle course, extending almost from one rapid to the next. We filled the feeders, Pat being determined to move around as little as possible. She watched the Hickory feeder from the trailer window. Not far from the trailer, I found the large canid tracks again. They measured 3.5" across, far too large for any domestic dog -- or Coyote, for that matter.

Nic and I placed the new (and last) deer feeder about 10 m off the trail in the BCF, near the 300 m mark. We then repaired to Fleming Creek where I devised an extremely stupid way of crossing the bridge, which now consists of just two pipes. I used two boards, resting my knees on one, my hands on the other, to inch my way across. One of the boards was barely wider than the pipes, however. Nic used the pipes like a gymnast, monkeying his way across.

We walked the Fleming Creek trail for the first time in nearly two months. At about the 400 m mark, not far from Harvey's Woods, Nic was thinking that it looked like ideal cover for deer when he found himself staring right at one, kneeling on the snow. It got up instantly and dashed off, Nic yelling, "Hey, a deer, a deer!" I was looking in the wrong direction, unfortunately, and only got a glimpse of it. Nic said he thought it was a buck. He was very pleased, having wanted all along to see an adult deer. The rest of the walk was uneventful. When we got back to the bridge, I tried the same technique, but fell onto the icy shore.

Birds: 1 American Crow; 2 Redtails Hawks; 4 Black-capped Chickadees; 2 Red-bellied Woodpeckers; 8 White-breasted Nuthatches; 2 Downy Woodpeckers.