

Newport Forest

October 26-27 2002

2:30 (Sat) - 2:30 pm (Sun)

Weather: prec: 11 mm; overcast, calm; LM 9C; FCF 10C

Purpose: overnight stay

Participants: Pat, Kee

On arrival we filled the bird feeders and replaced some of the older property notices (for trespassers and others). I checked the trees in the island forest nucleus. The HI and SY, last of the trees to remain green, are now turning. The CTs are black!

After lunch in the trailer, we walked the FCT, calling for Junior while we watched for new plants and animals. Pat took a photograph of the Giant Puffballs that Nic found. I had brought a shovel with me so we could transplant the young Sassafras on Tower Hill to a more salubrious location - right below the old deer blind where the soil is sandy and the location is protected.

While I snoozed, Pat made dinner. After dinner I walked up to close the gate, stopping off at the hurdles for a wee visit. There was little to do in the trailer, so we went to sleep. No owls called. The temperature went down to 2 C.

After breakfast the next morning, I made a quick census of the trees in the gallery forest that lines the LM next to the Fleming Creek bluffs. I noted that it was an oak-hickory forest, so to speak. Three kinds of oaks and two kinds of hickory. Plus two Black Maples and one Sugar. I went down to Fleming Creek and noted for the first time that a young Cottonwood had taken root in the mud flats. I don't expect it to survive the winter ice, but who knows?

Meanwhile, Pat went to the River Landing, noting what she thought were Vesper sparrows in some bushes by the entrance to Edgar's Trail. These turned out to be Slate-coloured Juncos in their fall plumage, females or immatures, that have a brownish sparrow-like colouring at this time of year. She had been hoping to see a Brown Creeper again near the mouth of Fc, so we went there. Nothing. We extended our expedition to the Riverside Trail, Pat taking the old logging road, me taking the regular trail. It was a good thing she did. She found a young Sassafras, our second such discovery on the property. I decided to leave it where it was. Perhaps, though, we should note it and give it water during any exceptionally dry weather. [later: this turned out to be a young oak seedling] Walking the RST, I noted something I had never seen before. There is an incredibly sharp line of demarcation between what might be called the "Box Elder forest" and the "Black Maple forest." North of a straight line just a few metres wide there are no Black

Maples, while south of it, there are no Box Elders!

We joined forces on the HB, noting that Lotor (or whoever) was home, so we left DBs. Down in the Blind Creek forest, we began a serious search for the Blue Ash parent trees. We may just have located one of them. It's an ash behind the rest bench, about half way up the slope. The bark was right and the leaves were right, but I wanted the square stems to confirm the ID. Throwing sticks (with my back) was infeasible. Maybe during the next visit with Nic. We also found what I thought was a Maple-leaved Viburnum beside the trail, but this has to be checked, too.

Back at the trailer, I heard (and Pat saw) a Blue Jay imitating a Red-tail Hawk. Perfect! How many times have I recorded a RT when none had called?

Birds: (11)

American Crow (RL); American Robin (Walnut Feeder); Blue Jay (Tr); Black-chapped Chickadee (Walnut Feeder); Downy woodpecker (Tr); Gold-crowned Kinglet (RSF); Northern Cardinal (Tr); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); Ruby-crowned kinglet (RSF); Slate-colored Juncos (ET/LM); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr)