

**Newport Forest**

January 19 2003

2:25 - 5:10 pm

**Weather:** overcast; light blwng snow; SW 15-40 kmh; LM -9° C; FCF -9° C

**Purpose:** animal feed plus tracking

**Participants:** Kee, Nic

We filled the deer feeders, bird feeders and suet feeders. We also, in the course of the afternoon, put out a few caches of dog biscuits. Fleming Creek has refrozen, with only a meter-long strip of reach at either rapids. The Thames has frozen over, except for an open reach that begins just downstream from the RL (P).

We decided to split up to increase coverage, Nic taking the FCT, me taking the HBT. Nic saw nothing notable in his circuit, except a Nuthatch pecking at rings of bare soil around the bases of trees in Harvey's Woods. He also spotted some small tracks in a 2/2 pattern, apparently those of a white-footed mouse out foraging. In one of its gaits, the WFM puts its fore paws ahead of and in line with its hind paws to create an elongated track

I saw tracks of both Red Fox (BCF) and Coyote (RSF) on the trail over the HB, as well as some mysterious tracks made by either a large, fast-moving deer or a cougar in a hurry. The prints were highly irregular, with lots of snow and litter kicked up. There are neither hoof nor paw prints, merely relatively shallow, irregular depressions (P). Prints would occur in sets of four, about 6-8 feet in length, separated by rather large leaps of 10 to 15 feet, in one case right over a leaning maple tree! I called Nic on the WT and he came over to take pictures with his new digital camera. (P-next page) It was hard to tell which way the animal was going, but we guessed it was heading east, angling gradually up the HB toward the Hawthorn scrub section.

Coming out, we saw a Cottontail crouching under the multiflora roses along Edgar's Trail through the BCF.

**Birds:** (4)

Cardinals (4 m, 5 f @ Hickory feeder); Blue Jay (1 Walnut feeder, 1 hickory feeder); Slate-coloured Junco (8 on ET deer feeder); White-breasted nuthatch (Hickory feeder)