

Newport Forest

February 02 2003

1:35 - 5:00 pm

**Weather:** mixed sun/cloud; calm; LM 5 C; FCF 4 C

**Purpose:** deer census

**Participants:** Pat, Kee, Nic, Darren and Steve

This was essentially a drive across the property, with Darren, Kee and Steve driving, Nic at the point - a low bluff overlooking the river about halfway across Janik's property to the SW. I walked in through the middle of the BCF and shortly before finding the trail I was thrilled to see three deer racing down the side of the Hogsback. "Three deer. We have three deer here in Blind Creek," I announced over the walkie talkie. Steve came back laconically. "Yeah. Must be the ones I started up here on the Hogsback. I found their beds in the thorn scrub." Trudging through the Blind Creek Forest, I found it hard going in heavy snow that kept breaking underfoot. Then came more news from Darren on the WT: "Yeah, here's three deer heading to you, Nic." I thought it must be the same three but about five minutes later I came upon their tracks. They had split up, with two going down the gully and the third breaking out to go back. They could not have gotten to the point in that time, at least not as a threesome.

Darren spent most of his time wandering through Janik's pine plantation, but finally broke out not far from Nic. Steve had faithfully followed the river and shortly after the three had all met up and discussed the situation, they decided to walk out. The snow cover combined with frequent deadfalls had sapped my energy to the point where, if I pressed on to make the rendezvous, I would never have the strength to walk out again. So by the time the three began their walk out, I was already half way back to the trailer. When I got there, I lay down and had a good rest until I heard them coming up to the trailer down the track. Based on all the evidence we had, both sightings and tracks, Darren estimated the number of deer on the property that day at between 7 and 10 head.

**Birds:** (9)

American Crow (2 LM); American Kestrel (1 HL); Blue Jay (1 FCF); Black-capped Chickadee (2 Walnut fdr); Downy woodpecker (2 Tr); Northern Cardinal (2m Walnut fdr) Red-tailed Hawk (1 FCF); Ruffed Grouse (7 HB); White-breasted Nuthatch (3 Tr);