

Newport Forest

August 30 2003

2:15 - 4:10 pm (Au31)

**Weather:** prec. 2 mm; clear, N < 10 km/h; LM 25 C; FCF 20 C

**Purpose:** overnight stay

**Participants:** Pat, Kee, Nic

The troublesome matter of the missing stakes was resolved shortly after we arrived, when Nic and I went to the RSF with maps of Plots #7 and #8 to locate the missing stakes accurately. We did not find the original hole for stake #7, but relocated it according to map measurements, which are accurate to the nearest 10 cm. Stake #8, which we located by using the map, turned out to be still standing. Both stakes were sprayed with fluorescent orange and relabeled. Done!

We proceeded to the HB for a break, but my restless self suggested that we start lining the game trail. We put in about 30 m of liner logs before returning to the trailer. While on the HB, Nic found what I thought were Angel Wings growing on a log by the new trail, but they turned out to be Oyster Mushrooms.

We broke for lunch in the nook. Nic spotted a Katydid which, to my surprise, we had not yet logged (I think).

After supper and just before sunset, Nic's Dad came to pick him up. After they left, I walked up to the gate to close for the night, a ritual I rather enjoy. I decided that I could hear at least four different orthopterans calling, including about a dozen katydids rasping from various locations. The sound was quite different from what Pat and I heard two years ago about this time when, on a rather warm and humid night, we could hear literally hundreds calling - deafening. The difference between the two occasions was only partly due to temperature. The katydid population is almost certainly much reduced this year from 2001.

The water in Fleming Creek is now low enough to break it up into a chain of pools separated by riffles. After nightfall, I went down to the bridge to shine a flashlight into the water. It may sound elementary, but it took just this operation to establish the presence of large minnows in the pool under the bridge. Judging from bread fragments scattered on the water, the pool was also circulating slowly in a clockwise direction, driven by the entrance of the current from the upstream riffle beside the north bank of the creek.

Just before midnight, Pat decided to go for a walk with the flashlight to see if she could spot any flying squirrels. She finally came upon a mouse-like creature

feeding on the seeds of the Hickory tree feeder. She called me out to look at the animal. It's eyes glowed red in the beam of the flashlight. At first I thought it was just a White-footed Mouse, but then I realized that it was about two times as large as a WFM. So Pat finally got to see her long-awaited Southern Flying Squirrel.

A Screech Owl called a few times from EW and, during the remainder of the night, raccoons came and went, sometimes growling in disputes over food. At dawn, I went out to relieve myself and found three young raccoons still hanging around the hickory feeder. I threw out three handfuls of DBs, then watched them from the trailer as they fed on the morsels, sniffing them out in the grass. After about ten minutes of feeding, they made for the big log. I left the trailer to see where they might go, an ideal opportunity to learn the direction of their "home."

I stood near the top of the FC trail, scanning the underbrush in all directions. Then a movement down at the creek caught my eye. The "Three Stooges," as I called them, were drinking at the downstream riffle. They dabbled a bit, then disappeared into foliage overhanging the bank. They reappeared moments later walking along an old log that lay just below a stretch of rather steep bank, then disappeared into foliage again. I walked down to the bridge and across to see if I could catch another glimpse of them, but they were gone. I thought perhaps they lived in the direction of Tower Hill, simply because the trees there are much older than the ones in the FCF. While down by the bridge I heard the very loud call of a WT tom further downstream.

After breakfast, Pat and I took some coffee out in the nook. Nearby I spotted a very strangely coloured wasp flying about. It was nearly an inch long, with a brick-red head, body and thorax. The eyes were rather small for a hymenopteran, its antennae were threadlike, and its legs were yellowish-red. It flew from one flower to another of Wild Carrot, never alighting, as though looking for something other than flowers. I did not discover what insect this might be until I got home and did some digging.

Being a bit tired, I took a nap, while Pat went down to the river to see what she could see, including a Great blue Heron and a few other birds, including a gang of chickadees.

I went up to the TS, repaired the light banners, and loaded the tanks and jugs with water. I watered the trees in both cores after one more trip for water. Again, the drought has begun to reassert itself, causing many of the young trees to suffer drying stress and UV damage. (Must I put a light shield over every \$%\*#\$ tree?)

We closed out the afternoon with a walk of the FCT, with several rests and many points of interest along the way. Pat was delighted with the new Sassafras under the tower on Tower Hill, urging me to leave it alone to see how well it took.

phenology: Many bird species, such as the Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Eastern Towhee, have departed for the south. Goldenrod now fully in bloom. Nutfall of Bitternut and Walnut now nearly complete.

**Birds: (15)**

American Crow (HBF); American Robin (Fleming Creek); Black-capped Chickadee (GF); Blue Jay (Tr); Catbird (RSF); Eastern Wood Peewee (Tr); Great Blue Heron (LM); Great Crested Flycatcher (?) (LM/BCF); Mourning Dove (FC); Northern Cardinal (Tr); Screech Owl (EW); Spotted Sandpiper (RL); Turkey vulture (LM); White-breasted Nuthatch (FCF); Wild Turkey (EW)

**Insects:** Butterflies: Cabbage White (GF); Clouded Sulphur (GF); Great Spangled Fritillary (LM); Monarch (FC/Br); Meadow Fritillary (RL); Northern eyed Brown (Tr); Red-spotted Purple (GF); Wood Nymph (Tr); Dragonflies: Green Darner (LM); White Tail (LM)

**New species:**

Katydid	<i>Pterophylla camellifolia</i>	Tr nmKD
Differential	<i>Differential Grasshopper</i>	TS KD
Short-tailed Ichneumon	<i>Ophion</i> sp.	KD Tr
Spined Micrathena	<i>Micrathena gracilis</i>	FCT 1400m KD