

Newport Forest

April 3 2004

1:55 - 5:30 pm

Weather: prec. 9 mm; sun/cloud; calm; LM 14 C; FCF 14 C

Purpose: environmental scan plus birdwatching

Participants: Pat , Kee

We stopped at the TS, where I checked the Pawpaw plants, intending to right them under the germination frame. To my dismay, i discovered that a meadow vole had taken up residence in one of the pots and had nipped every tree! Hopefully, they'll still bud.

We walked down to the trailer, noting frequent White-tailed Deer and Wild Turkey tracks in the soft mud. Our first Turkey Vulture of the new season wheeled over the Lower Meadow and two Mallards flew up from the creek below us. Fleming Creek has the river backed into it again and barely any flow is perceptible. It's about 2 m over its normal level.

While Pat pout out birdfeed, I surveyed the cores in the LM. The ash buds are now beginning to swell, so I had to remove the bud protectors before they did damage. The other tree species have not gotten this far in the budding process.

We walked to the river landing, to wander the upper (unflooded) levels, coming upon the "cedars" that Steve had tried to tell me about last week. I didn't realize he meant little cedars, but little cedars they are. We found three young cedars, just getting past the seedling stage (about 1' or more high). Apparently, they had seeded in about two years (or more) ago.

Later, we wandered into the BCF, immediately surrounded by frog choruses. As we walked in we heard mainly Striped (Western) Chorus Frogs. We flushed a Ruffed Grouse (something that happens about twice every season), then sat on the bench to listen to the Wood Frogs, with their crazy quacking call. We climbed laboriously up to the HB and rested on the bench there, too. No Lotor, but Pat spotted a basking garter snake atop some leaves, a young one. I wondered if perhaps it was really a ribbon snake, which looks very similar but is small, with a more narrowly tapered tail.

Instead of continuing along the TRT, we decided to go back the way we came, and so out. The trail is exceptionally slippery in places. A few weeks ago, Steve pointed out a place where a large buck had gone into a three-foot skid.

Birds: (13)

American Crow (BCF); American Robin (HB); Black-capped Chickadee (Tr); Blue Jay (EW); Downy Woodpecker (GF/FC); Mallard (FC); Mourning Dove (EW); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); Ruffed Grouse (BCF); Slate-coloured Junco (Tr); Song Sparrow (LM/HBF); Turkey Vulture (LM); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr)

new species:

White Cedar

Thuja occidentalis

RL