

Newport Forest

December 21 2004

2:45 - 4:55 pm

**Weather:** prec. 15 mm; cld/sun; calm; LM 3 C; FCF 2 C

**Purpose:** bird-watching & animal tracking - plus a snow experiment

**Participants:** Pat, Kee

Pat birded and filled feeders while I made some snow experiments. I extracted a 10 x 10 x 5 cm block of snow from the meadow and heated it in a saucepan. Thus 500 cc of snow became 71 cc of water, for a melt ratio of about 0.142 or 1.4 cm of water for every 10 cm of snow. This is probably an upper bound, the ratio for loose, freshly fallen (cold) snow being undoubtedly lower.

There were plenty of tracks in evidence today, so many in fact, that I have given them the treatment normally reserved for birds. (See below.) I took the TRT, noting as I walked Edgar's trail that a buck had crossed the trail at one point, while two yearlings (or a doe & yearling) followed the trail to the river. I also saw Red Fox tracks crossing ET into the BCF. The Thames remains high enough to cover the gravel bars. In the Point Bar portion of the RSF I found something I had seen before but had not recorded - a very large, oval pit, about 15 m long, 10 m wide and a good 2 m deep. If this was created by a falling tree, it must have been a monster!

Up on the HB, I saw that the BNH with all the Resinous Polypores on it last spring had recently fallen over. Coming out along the BCT, I was pleased to have the company of a Coyote (in space, if not time), who followed the trail all the way out, double-registering its tracks all the way. It obviously appreciated the trail, just as so many deer did; many times a deer would follow the trail for 100 or so metres, then wander off.

**Birds:** (12)

American Goldfinch (UM); American Tree Sparrow (HP); Black-capped Chickadee (Tr); Blue Jay (HP); Canada Goose (LM); Dark-eyed Junco (Tr); Downy Woodpecker (Tr); Hairy Woodpecker (Tr); Northern Cardinal (HBF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); Red-breasted Nuthatch (Tr); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr)

**Animal tracks:**

Coyote (BCT); Eastern Cottontail (HB); Grey Squirrel (RSF); Red Fox [?] (ET/BCF); Virginia Deer (RSF); White-footed Mouse (RSF)