

Newport Forest

Sunday April 10 & 11 2005

2:50 - 5:00 pm

Weather: prec. 0 mm; calm; clear; LM 23 C; FCF 22 C

Purpose: overnight stay

Participants: Pat, Kee

We were late arriving at the property following an extended visit to Eva & the great grandchildren. In the space of less than about 20 seconds, we saw A Red-tailed Hawk, a Raccoon sleeping on a tree branch (legs dangling), and a Turkey Vulture along the last bit of the Furnival Road.

Thanks to a complete absence of rain recently, Fleming Creek is back in its channel and the rapids have reemerged. Pat could hear the occasional churring of the baby raccoons up in the nursery box at the Nook and we both look forward to being Godparents (rather than foster parents) this year.

The Spring Peepers are now letting their voices be heard in the general chorus. While Pat went to the river to look for birds, I washed the trailer floor. She returned to finish filling the feeders and I started to plant the latest set of eight trees: 3 KCs; 1 HB; 1 CT (from 42 Askin) and 2 AH; 1 CW (from the TS). I planted all but the two AHs (American Hazel) in the LM, then took the two AHs into the RSF over by the sandbar, planting them close to the PP and WH already there. Meanwhile Pat discovered to her amazement that the canoe made a perfect bird-watching blind. When she stood by the rack and leaned over the canoe, she apparently disappeared as far as the birds were concerned. At one point, a Cooper's Hawk surprised everyone by swooping in for a kill at the feeder Pat was watching. It missed.

On the way to the RSF, I went through the R1, surprising a Wild Turkey hen and being greeted by an Eastern Towhee. The towhees are back "drinking their tea" once again in Newport Forest. And the Thames is once again below its banks, although the gravel bars have not yet emerged. Once I returned from the planting, we had a late supper in the trailer, followed by coffee as the sun set.

During the evening and subsequent night, I went out to get temperature readings, wanting to know what the cutoff temperature would be for the amphibian chorus to fall silent. By 1:15 am the temperature had fallen to 2.5 C, but both the Western Chorus Frogs and Spring Peepers continued to call, albeit somewhat intermittently. About this time, I spotted (what I thought was) the mother Raccoon out prowling around the nook. In the morning I discovered that almost

all the DBs had been eaten. By 7:00 am, the air temperature had already reached 5 C. At 10:00 the Carruthers water truck arrived and Jim Longdough, the driver, got so involved in a conversation about the water business, he forgot to check the meter and gave me 2000 gallons instead of just 1000. He charged me for 1000 only (\$90).

Later that morning, I went down to the river to pick up a wheelbarrow of drift for mulch. Pat & I mulched as many trees as we could in the LM before running out. While bird-watching at the RL that morning, Pat was “proposed to” by a male towhee. She kept answering his call until he approached her along the ground (just a few feet away) to get a better look at his new “mate,” deciding in the end that she would not fit in a nest. She reminded me that we had an unrecorded new species in the form of a gall on a rose bush near the trailer.

Down at Fleming Creek, I applied a splint to the broken TT and photographed the newly laid sediment on the far bank of Fleming Creek (2P). (I really must install those sediment meters!) AT 2:00 pm, I recorded the weather conditions: E < 10 kmh; clear; LM 18 C; FCF 17 C.

Steve and Joel dropped by to go over the plans for the new deck. While Pat slept, I went to the ATM in Wardsville to get money for materials.

Birds: (27)

American Crow (GF); American Robin (ET); Black-capped Chickadee (Tr); Blue Jay (EW); Brown-headed Cowbird (Tr); Canada Goose (TR); Common Grackle (BCF); Coopers Hawk (Tr); Dark-eyed Junco (Tr); Downy Woodpecker (Tr); Eastern Blue bird (UM); Eastern Towhee (RL); Great Horned Owl (FC/S); Hairy Woodpecker (Tr); House Wren (ET); Killdeer (HP); Mallard (TR); Mourning Dove (GF); Northern Cardinal (Tr); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); Red-winged Blackbird (LM); Song Sparrow (HBF); Tree Swallow (UM); Tufted Titmouse (Tr); Turkey Vulture (LM); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr); Wild Turkey (RL)

Phenology: Spring Peepers starting their chorus; Eastern Towhees back.