

**Newport Forest**

Sunday June 19 - Tuesday June 21

3:15 - 4:50 pm

**Weather:** prec. 0 mm; RH 77%; sun/cld; calm; LM 25 C; FCF 20 C

**Purpose:** three-day visit

**Participants:** Pat, Kee

Coming in, we stopped at the tree station so that I could water the trees by the gate. I am amazed that the little serviceberry, barely a foot high, has already blossomed and now bears nearly a dozen fruit. Meanwhile, Pat started the birdlist (henceforth to be filed separately whenever we visit together). Except for the lack of rainfall, the weather was perfect.

After we set up camp, I inspected the young American Basswood and White Ash that have volunteered in the LM about 50 m west (up the track) from the trailer. I was surprised to discover six BH and five WA have also sprung up in the same relatively confined area of about 25 square m.

While Pat filled the Hickory feeder and began her observations, I clipped along the FCT to the log bridge, no doubt picking up several wood ticks in the process. I carved portions of the trail on the way back. It is slowly improving. In the LM, I inspected both cores. Most trees continue to grow, but one Silver Maple seems to be in a bit of trouble, its leaves curling and growing brittle. I gave it extra water. I also mulched two more trees. In the course of this inspection, I noticed a curious thing going on with our aspens. Ants (in one case over 100) had congregated on the uppermost leaf petioles and bases, presumably licking up some exudate (rather like peonies, as Pat remarked).

Back at the trailer, I dug two one-foot holes in the soil just under the dripline of the Shagbark Hickory, a very large tree just beside the trailer. This tree has been under attack from Scolytus beetles for the last two years and will die if they succeed in cutting through all the twigs. I therefore decided to try to save the tree by applying cygon as a drench. I was surprised by the hardness of the soil in this area and, later, by its impenetrability by the drench. The soil just across the track in the LM is not nearly as hard. Although the tree needed over a litre of cygon, I could only apply the 250 ml that I had on hand.

After supper we walked to the Thames River, dodging the heavy mosquito population along Edgar's Road in the BCF. (The consequences of heavy logging are all negative. Whereas some woodlot owners claim that it's important to "open up" heavily treed areas, we see no virtue in it. The young trees will come up

anyway, the destruction of the canopy encourages heavy herbaceous vegetation, leading to a huge increase in mosquito populations that feed on their juices, and inviting heavy invasions of Garlic Mustard, among other things. Trails are MUCH harder to maintain in such areas, as well)

The river was scenic, as always, the slanting rays of the sun giving a golden tint to the foliage. We saw a few Cedar Waxwings and Bank Swallows cruising for insects. We noted that while the Waxwings did much of their hunting at 10' to 25' altitude, the Swallows specialized in lower-flying insects, from the water's surface up to about 15'. As we were leaving, we saw what we thought was a new bird singing from a large elm at the landing. It had a black head and a square black bib on its chest, the other colours being largely lost in the silhouette effect. We hoped for a new species. Could it be a Hooded Warbler? After poring over our bird books back at the trailer, we decided that it was (most likely) an Orchard Oriole, a bird that is definitely on site, but one we observe only rarely.

After sunset we walked to the gate to close up, enjoying the gradual play of sunset colours in the western sky. Back at the trailer, we found the Pennsylvania Fireflies in full swing, hundreds of fairy lamps winking from nearby bushes or tracing eerie messages in the night air. At 10 pm, there was one Raccoon by the trailer (enjoying a piece of french bread). The air temperature had dropped to 10 C. We listened to a Coyote chorus starting up (seemingly) in the Upper Meadow.

At 1:00 am the air temperature had dropped to 9.5 C and the Summer Triangle was wheeling slowly into view overhead. I explained to Pat how lucky we were to enjoy a full moon on the night of the Summer Solstice. Pat had made some "raccoon sandwiches" and these were much enjoyed by Momma coon, while a Screech Owl called for about ten minutes from the east end of the BCF. The firefly display died out gradually as the temperature dropped to an overnight low of 8.5 C.

Next morning, I finished the cygon drench and went to inspect the trees in the North Core, my pantlegs drenched with dew. I saw the tiniest orb web I had ever seen, sparkling with tiny droplets of dew in the morning light. I made a quick sketch, wishing I had brought my camera.

After lunch I made my first trip to the water tank for a load of water (120 l). While watering in the North Core, I noticed a large jumping spider had captured a red-eyed fly and was busy sucking on it while clinging to the

stem of one of my young trees.

Pat pointed out a newly fledged Red-bellied Woodpecker that followed its father everywhere he went - from feeder to forest. The Grosbeaks were also feeding their fledgling at the Hickory tree feeder. After the first watering trip, I paused to gather the following weather data at 2 pm: weather: RH 66%; calm; clear; LM 28 C; FCF 24 C

It took the remainder of the afternoon to finish watering. Pat and I decided to label all the promising young recruits this fall and to make that our major source of trees from now on. After supper we visited Eva and enjoyed a round of tea with her, her son Jim and his wife Elaine. Jim was driving his big oil-drilling truck.

After our return, we walked to the river. Once again I noted that a great many of the plants growing along the bank and gravel bars had red stems. There may not be much significance in this, as many plants have red (or reddish) stems. But we noticed Indian Hemp, two species of willow, Eastern Cottonwood, Silverweed, Purple Loosestrife, Amaranth, Eleocharis. Pat, pursuing more significant prey, discovered a new species of Galium (see below).

After sunset, we did a little star-watching, occasionally distracted by high-flying jets. Pat saw her first, clear meteorite, streaking through the heavens directly overhead. She shone the flashlight on the tray feeder, delighted to see a flying squirrel happily eating the nuts we had left. (Earlier, a chipmunk had raided the tray, leaving with its cheeks bulging.) Finally Momma showed up with two (perhaps more) of her offspring, now more than half grown. We could hear the dog biscuits getting systematically crunched for the next hour. The overnight low was much higher this night: 11 C at 1:30 am.

Next morning after breakfast, I walked the (new) FCT to the log bridge, crossed to the (old) FCT and cleared the trail with a brushhook as far as the bench where we keep the GM test plot. I proceeded with the second protocol cut, taking out any remaining GM and nipping any new flowers in the bud. This took about 20 minutes. With the death of six Bitternut trees around the plot, light conditions have changed considerably to favour the GM even more. (If the cutting works, it will work well.) I amended the protocol by including in the cut all areas covered by the first-year rosettes. It was a pity to cut a GM plant that stood in the middle of native plants, because that often meant taking out several of the latter along with the GM. The dominant native plant was probably White Avenas, with a

scattering of Canada Anemone, Stinging Nettle, etc. Returning, I paused by the (old) bridge site to check my two Tulip trees. Once again, they had enormous leaves. (I must do something to protect them from the ice this winter.)

Pat and I went to the river early in the afternoon, headed for the point bar in the RSF. We stopped at the bench on the bluffs to watch a very large Spiny Softshelled Turtle basking in the sun. Its carapace must have been 1.5' long! Continuing on, we walked into the RSF, leaving the trail to wander over to the point bar through immense stands of Stinging Nettles, the admission charge, it would seem, to the sandbar area. After about 20 minutes of searching, I finally located the two missing trees, an American Hazel and a Witch Hazel - both doing well. The Pawpaw had developed rather large leaves. I watered all four trees from the river. During our stay at the Point Bar, Pat picked up three more birds.

We retraced our steps back to the trailer to find that Steve & Joel had arrived for a visit. We arranged that the two would put the bridge in later this week. We discussed the tick situation. Dry weather favours them. I had found about 7 on my person over the last two days - a new personal best. On the way out, Pat spied an Eastern Bluebird entering one of the boxes along the fence, bringing our final total to 39, an all-time best for us.

**New species:**

Fragrant Bedstraw	<i>Galium triflorum</i>	RL PD
“Peanut Ciliate”	<i>Prorodon teres</i>	FC KD Je02/05
Colpoda	<i>Colpoda</i> sp.	FC KD Je02/05

**Phenology:** first firefly display