

Newport Forest

Saturday September 17 2005

4:10 - 5:05 pm

Weather: prec. 21 mm; RH 74%; ovcast; calm; LM 21 C; FCF 20 C

Purpose: two-day stay

Participants: Pat, Kee

We arrived late, owing to the annual McIlwraith insect walk held this year at the Caveney property by Lake Erie (MeadowWoods). We stopped at the TS while I dug another 6 sq. ft of Bed 2. (almost done) At the trailer, we set up camp as usual then went down to the river to walk the beach before supper. The clay was very sticky after the recent rain, making a new set of tracks available, mostly Canada Geese, GBHs and Raccoons. We looked in vain for any Spotted Sandpiper tracks. They may have gone on their migration.

Even before sunset, a very grizzled raccoon I decided to call "Greylock"* showed up beside the trailer deck, startling Pat somewhat. I walked to the gate to close up and by the time I got back to the trailer the moon was full, slowly rising behind a veil of mackerel clouds. The woods and meadow took on a soft, ghostly light. I sat out in the nook for a while to see who showed up to eat a few handfuls of puppy chow I had scattered about. One raccoon, very shy, presently appeared and began to eat but when I stirred slightly, it took off, apparently unaware that I was there.

We heard two Great Horned Owls calling from the general vicinity of the FCF. They kept up the chorus for several minutes, Pat opining that they were excited by the full moon (better hunting). Meanwhile, geese over in the Newport acreage by Fleming Line set up a squawking that went on, intermittently, for most of the night. Other night sounds included Katydid, field crickets and tree crickets.

Later, close to midnight I sat in the chair by the deck, having baited the area in front of the trailer. It didn't take long for Greylock to show up and begin eating his way toward me. I noticed that where the DBs were sparse, he foraged nose down, weaving his head from side to side. Where

*Greylock has a very grey and grizzled appearance. His mask is broken, with a broad, grey nose stripe and black behind the ears. The other raccoon seems to hang out with Greylock, but we don't have a working description yet. Both raccoons are probably first-year siblings. [missing text] the morsels were more concentrated, he would set back somewhat on his haunches and use paw-to-mouth. Where most concentrated, he would sit back like a Panda at the dinner table and

sweep his paws to feel for the DBs. The other raccoon showed up for only a few minutes. Greylock huffed and it retreated. Eventually, Greylock got to within three feet of me, but kept looking up to make sure I wasn't moving.

After midnight the sky cleared completely and the moon cast a kind of grey daylight over the meadow. Later still, mist formed and the gallery forest was bathed in shafts of moonlight. Two Screech Owls called from the gallery further up the road and I was privy to a magical scene, complete with sound track. I checked for flying squirrels at the hickory feeder several times, but saw none.

Sunday dawned bright and the place warmed up, quickly. Pat caught a new spider after breakfast, bringing it to me in a can that had been used to transport corn meal. The spider was dusted and had to be blown upon to see it clearly. Knowing that I might well not be able to ID it without capturing and pickling it, I nevertheless noted the red femurs and drew a diagram of the folium on its dorsum - also noting the size. Around noon we heard two Grey Tree Frogs calling from the BCF.

At 12:30 we went over to visit Eva and discuss the fate of HBF. By sheer coincidence, Kurt, Nicole, and young Jarod showed up for a visit. I discovered that Kurt is very knowledgeable about the tree business, being a manager at Sloans Nursery. (He said it would have been better to paint the hickory with Cygon than to root-drench it.) After Kurt et al. left, Eva explained that she retained ownership of "the 40" as she called it, but intended to leave it for Kurt.

Notes: Kurt recommended Zimmer Air Services (Blenheim 676-9550) for mapping the property; Kurt's email: newport@ciaccess.com

Birds: (See Pat's report - filed separately)

New species:

Spotted Orb Weaver *Neoscona domiciliorum* pdKD GF
(This is one of the spp. that makes extremely tough bridge-lines.)

Phenology: Katydid still calling, Gray Tree Frogs still calling.