

Newport Forest

Monday October 10 2005

1:30 - 5:15 pm

Weather: prec. 0 mm; RH 84%; calm; ovcst; LM 12 C; FCF 13 C

Purpose: two-day stay

Participants: Pat, Kee

On the way in we stopped to pick a small bucket of BL seeds from Van Bommel's little grove of Black Locusts along the Furnival. We stopped at Nina's to gather a full pail of walnuts, as well. We stopped at the TS to offload trees (total potted & ready for planting = 26 stems) and to water all the station trees.

While Pat fixed up the trailer, I drove out to the WM, entered through the slip gate, and planted the BL and BW seeds all along the ploughed strip in an even but random manner. (approx. 250 BWs & about 1000 BLs) I noticed that about 20 WEs have volunteered from the ploughed strip, one of them already 2m in height. While I was busy seeding, Pat went to clean out the FS box in the BCF, only to find a mother mouse (White-footed?) with two nearly grown young in it.

I inspected the SC and NC, finding several things worth noting: the LTA that died back rather abruptly in August has been cut near the base of the stem. It was lying on its side, the leaves now black & shriveled. A family of Meadow Voles has made a nest under my prize TT, the burrow going down among the roots. (I decided to do nothing about it, in case nothing was necessary.) Most of the planted trees are now in the process of turning and/or shedding. Down by FC, the two TTs are doing fine and several of the (volunteer) ashes have overcome the ice damage from last winter and now exceed 6' in height. I intend to drive some ice-deflecting stakes upstream of the TTs soon after the next rain.

Shortly after arriving we saw a large hawk swooping over the LM under the power lines. Later it perched on the lines for a while, evidently a Northern Harrier.

We put out puppy chow and after dark we saw a large grey raccoon eating peanuts off the table in the Nook. Later, we saw Greylock in front of the trailer eating puppy chow. The sky continued overcast after dark. Around 10:30 we heard a Screech Owl call several times from EW and a few minutes later a GHO called from the FCF. Suddenly the fire siren sounded from Wardsville to the north and within about 20 minutes a red glow appeared on the northern horizon. (Later inquiries revealed this to be a house fire on the northern outskirts of Wardsville.)

At 3 am I went out to check weather conditions, surprised to find the sky completely clear, except along the western horizon. I tried to find the Summer Triangle, but inferred it must have been behind the clouds to the west. Orion sparkled to the east over the FCF and the Big Dipper hugged the horizon to the NE. Cassiopeia nearly overhead. Air temp was 7 C, no dew forming!

At 8 am, we saw the Northern Harrier hunting over the LM under the HL. Pat spied some 30 American Robins massing in one of the dead Elms on the other side of the LM. While Pat took a walk to the RL, I went down to the creek, delighted to find what I thought was a King Bolete under one of the trees along the trail. (Later found it to be a maximally-sized *P. radicans*) Pat recounted an adventure at the river. Several hunters appeared floating downstream in two canoes lashed together. They waved to Pat but remained otherwise quiet. As they neared the rapids, they shot at three Canada Geese that took off, missing them. (Hurrah)

Back at the trailer, we slowly became aware of a huge number of Common Grackles assembling in the dead BH up the GF from the trailer. When I went to investigate, they took off with a deafening WHOOSHing sound, forming a large flock of about 400 birds. The flock split into two, both eventually passing overhead and heading out over the FCF.

In the early afternoon I went up to the TS to plant about 200 RO, 80 WO, and about 100 ABW seeds in Bed Two under six cages. When I returned, we decided to take a seed-collecting walk in the RSF. Just north of the trail, where it enters the RSF, there is an open area of more mature forest with several very large Sycamores, Slippery Elms, and Hackberrys. I noticed one of my planted trees here. It looked like a Spicebush, but the leaves were not aromatic. (I checked planting records later, but could not locate the description of the RSF planting.) In this section also, there is an immense pit at least 15 m across and about 2.5 m deep. (no mound) On one side of this pit there is a burrow big enough for a fox or badger (just dreaming).

Deeper in the RSF, on the lower shoulder of the HB, we decided to walk east into a part of the woods that we rarely visit. I found a large white wood-digesting mushroom on an old log (S). I also collected a white crust on a twig (Prob. *Irpex lacteus*) and some (probable) turkey-tails. (2S)

Birds: (23) (note: the woodpeckers, though present, appeared to have reduced populations)

American Crow (EW); American Goldfinch (HBF); American Robin (FC); Black-capped Chickadee (GF); Blue Jay (Tr); Canada Goose (TR); Common Flicker (GF); Dark-eyed Junco (HP); Downy Woodpecker (ET); Field Sparrow (LM); Gold-crowned Kinglet (ET); Great Horned Owl (FCF); House Wren (RSF); Mourning Dove (LM); Northern Cardinal (GF); Northern Harrier (HL); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); Screech Owl (EW); Song Sparrow (LM/HBF); Turkey Vulture (TR); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr); White-throated Sparrow (Tr); Yellow-rumped Warbler (RC)

New species:

Elm Oyster

Hypsizygus tessulatus

KD HB/RSF

I have found two new galls on the leaves of White Oak. One is about 1 cm across and solid, with an irregular brown surface, growing on the vein (upper side) of the leaf. The other is more interesting. The galls are small (2 mm) brown buttons attached by a short neck to the lower epidermis of the leaf. Inside is a jelly-like white larva. (possibly dead)

Phenology: two or three Katydid could be heard calling throughout the night. Robins and Grackles preparing to migrate. Goldenrod going to seed.