

Newport Forest Saturday January 28 2006 2:45 - 5:30 pm

Weather: prec 27 mm; RH 65%; SW \leq kmh; cld/sn; LM 10 C; FCF 10 C

Purpose: birdwatching & trail maintenance

Participants: Pat & Kee

Arriving at the trailer, we spotted a young Red-tailed Hawk perched on a tree on the other side of HBF. It flew away. We filled all the tray and suet feeders to ensure a good supply of birds, little imagining what we were about to see. I was out checking the LM trees, when Pat called out that she saw a Pileated Woodpecker. I spotted it on the edge of HBF just before it flew toward me to perch in the lone walnut. I called out that it was "here," but the noise startled it and it flew off into the BCF.

We decided to walk the TRT. I took the bowsaw with me, while Pat sat on the bluffs bench to see what she could see. Deer had evidently been using the trail, including the doe with her yearlings. We also found lots of fresh WT scat along the trail. Pat later walked straight up the HB from the east end of the RSF, finding herself in impassible thorn scrub as she attempted to descend into the BC side. She gave up this project and followed the HB to the west.

As I was leaving the New Trail area, I heard a crashing noise and saw a beautiful large buck bound away toward the HB. Along the HB portion of the TRT, I found the ice-honeycombs were still there. I crossed an extremely busy-looking raccoon trail that led with single-minded determination to the river. It stood out even against the snow-less ground, so much mud was deposited on the leaves by dirty little feet.

On the HB I put out another bag of puppy chow for the young raccoon family. A (black) Grey Squirrel climbed a nearby tree as Pat came into view along the HB trail. Pat reported seeing several bushes already coming into leaf at the east end of the HB (another sign)! (Eva reported dandelions blooming on her lawn today!)

Birds: (10) American Crow (EW); American Goldfinch (HP); Black-capped Chickadee (Tr); Blue Jay (HP); Downy Woodpecker (Tr); Pileated Woodpecker (LM/E); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); Red-tailed Hawk (HBF/EW); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr); Wild Turkey (RSF/E)

New species:

Pileated Woodpecker

Hylatomus pileatus

PD LM/E