

**Newport Forest**    Wednesday February 15 2006    2:05 - 5:40 pm

**Weather:** prec. 0 mm; RH 70%; ovcast; calm; LM 7 C; FCF 6 C

**Purpose:** to practice with the video camera

**Participants:** Kee

Driving the Longwoods Road to Wardsville, I saw first a Kestrel (near Lambeth), then four large hawks, including one non-broadtail, between Delaware and Melbourne. The sky was overcast with an occasional sunny haze. Snow continues to block the farm gate, so I had to walk in carrying the DBs, salt lick, odds & ends. The snow, having slumped in the warmer weather of late, had a multitude of tracks including 3 3/4 - 4" canid tracks. These are as large as the wolf tracks we found three winters ago. There were two animals, traveling side by side.

At the trailer I filled both bird trays with seed, took the salt lick over to the deer feeder and filled the feeder with caramelized corn. I recently purchased a video camera, with the intention of shooting a promotional video for Newport Forest (with Al McGregor). I therefore took the camera with me on a slow walk along the TRT, shooting two slow river pans, one from the bluffs and one from the RSF. On ER coming in, I saw tracks of Virginia Deer, Wild Turkey, Virginia Possum, and Eastern Grey Squirrel. (The possum tracks followed the bluff trail.)

I encountered an incredible number of branches across the trail, indicating a general and relatively massive branch fall, of late. Thorn trees and younger trees that had recently died also had to be cleared. The sight filled me with dread, an omen. Up on the HB, I put out the bag of puppy chow, not scattering it about, but leaving it in the bags (about 2 cups). After sitting on the HB bench, hoping to hear the Pileated Woodpecker (and looking all around), I was startled by a throbbing of large wings directly overhead and a half-cluck, half-whistle (like a flicker). A large woodpecker (or flicker) flew off in the direction of the old Chinkapin Oak. I hoped to film it in the oak, but it never reappeared and ceased calling after about 2 minutes.

In the BCF, the vernal ponds have started to fill and Fleming Creek has a depth of about 4" at the lower rapids.

**Birds:**

Black-capped Chickadee (Tr); Canada Goose (Tr); Dark-eyed Junco (Tr); Downy Woodpecker (Tr); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr); Wild Turkey (HB)