

Newport Forest Friday March 10 2006

2:15 - 6:50 pm

Weather: 39 mm; RH 76%; ovcast; NW \leq 10 kmh; LM 7 C; FCF 7 C

Participants: Pat & Kee

Purpose: birding & trail maintenance

A large rain system from the WSW brought not only welcome precipitation, but some returning bird species. On the way to Newport, Pat spotted a pair of Mallards in a flooded farmer's field, a Coopers Hawk (or Sharpie) in a tree near its stick nest, and three American Robins on a lawn. We brought three bird boxes with us, including two brand new bluebird boxes. We attached the boxes to fenceposts along the road and we now have six boxes for our "bluebird trail," as such an arrangement is called. The property was too wet to drive as far as the trailer, so I parked at the tree station and walked down to the trailer to fetch the "Toonerville trolley" (wheelbarrow) to bring all our materiel down to the trailer. When we arrived, the first thing I noticed were many Winter Stoneflies wandering around. We filled the feeders, noting a Chipmunk at the base of the SH feeder tree. Pat saw it making for the trailer - home?

Fleming Creek was up to the top of the second terrace, well over the bridge. We walked to the river, I stopping to make a few seconds of video of some Turkey Tail on a log, Pat to clip some roses. I noted that the river had also risen to within a foot of the top of the second terrace. Leaving Pat on the bluffs, I went on into the RSF, deciding to check on the Pawpaws, Hazels, and Witch Hazel near the Sand Bar. The water had crept up to the base of the WHs and had already half-submerged the PP. The WH was probably under water entirely. I noted as I walked through the rest of the RSF, that there had been a heavy fall of hickory nuts from the dying trees. (future replacements?) On my return I spent some time checking the trees in the LM before supper in the trailer. It depressed me. An aspen had decayed right through its lower stem and a deer had nipped every single bud of my best Yellow-wood. (no BPs!)

Birds: (16) American Crow (LM); American Robin (BCF); Black-capped Chickadee (Tr); Blue Jay (BCF); Canada Goose (TR); Common Grackle (LM); Eastern Nighthawk (LM); Downy Woodpecker (Tr); Hairy Woodpecker (Tr); Hooded Merganser* (HP); Kildeer (UM); Northern Cardinal (ER); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); Red-tailed Hawk (TR/FC); Tundra Swan (HP); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr)

Note: As we were leaving we heard a bird buzzing and Pat saw it "fly like a bat." This was a probable American Woodcock.