

Newport Forest

June 20 2006

2:35 - 4:50 pm

**Weather:** prec. 14mm\*; RH 57%; clear; N 0-15kmh; LM 24C; FCF 22C

**Purpose:** two-day stay

**Participants:** Pat and Kee

\*fell monday evening and again on wednesday afternoon

We brought the sisters with us, a responsibility that in some respects eroded the relaxation we like to take on site. Our first discovery on arriving and setting up camp, was a dead Robber Fly still clinging to a discarded towel in the Nook.

(S) Our second discovery came a day later when, after a rain, Pat found a Gordian Worm clinging to the top of a clump of tall grass in the LM and writhing mysteriously.

After recording the weather, I checked the trees in the SC. All are growing now, with TTs doing 3-4", Aspens 4-6", Maples up to 8". Even the Redbuds (an experiment) seem to be thriving. Back at the trailer, Pat reported an Eastern Cottontail juvenile gleaning birdseed at the Nook. While relaxing in the Nook a little later, I heard a squealing noise from the tray feeder in the Black Maple above me. Two Chipmunks were fighting in the tray, scattering birdseed in all directions. Then one of them fell all the way to the ground with a tiny thump, apparently unhurt. It ran off.

We walked to the river to find the clay beach fully exposed and a scattering of mussels to be inspected. Tracks & scat showed the usual visitors: Canada Geese, Raccoons, Virginia Deer, and plovers. While Pat searched for items of interest, I speculated on the gravel bars and how they had formed. These are elongated mounds of gravel and heavier stones formed (I thought) by river currents. But every bar sported a heavy growth of young Eastern Cottonwoods and Sandbar Willows. Obviously their roots helped to stabilize the bars, but might they not have been instrumental in their formation?

After supper, I walked to the UM to close the gate, noting a strange bird that would make a few steady peeping notes followed by a descending buzz. I saw the bird making the sound fly about against the twilight sky. About the size of a RWB, it would occasionally perform a fluttering dive. Later, Pat thought it might be an Eastern Kingbird. (not on list) When I got back to the trailer, Pat complained of being harassed by Greylock, a large male raccoon who seemed rather bold. He would wait outside the trailer door. I showed one of the kits to him. She growled in a most inhospitable manner. We speculated about Greylock. Could he be the girls' father? Could he be Junior?

By midnight the temperature reached its overnight low of 9C. At this

temperature, the fireflies did not fly, but perched in bushes. There was no moon and faint clouds hid the stars, then revealed them again. We woke up and went to sleep several times during a grey and uncertain morning. Just after I had finished putting out 8 more drip cans for the KCs and a few doubtful smaller trees, we got a five-minute rain. Then at 12:30, we got a good, steady rain of 10 mm.

By 2 pm we were out and about again. The find of the day came from Pat, who found a pale coloured Gordian Worm (Nematomorpha) waving feebly from the top of some tall grass by the edge of the LM. These are an odd phylum of creatures that parasitize insects like orthoptera and mantids in the larval stage. I took the sisters down to the creek for a rather unsuccessful visit to the rapids. Then I took them across the bridge and forced them to follow me all the way up to the trailer, tiring them thoroughly for the journey home.

**Birds:** (32)

American Crow (RSF); American Goldfinch (Tr); American Robin (BCF); Black-capped Chickadee (BCF); Blue Jay (LM); Brown-headed Cowbird (Tr); Canada Goose (HBF); Common Grackle (BCF); Common Yellowthroat (BCF/LM); Downy Woodpecker (Tr); Eastern Towhee (GF); (Eastern?) Wood Peewee (FCF); Field Sparrow (UM); Gray Catbird (FC); Great Blue Heron (TR); Great Crested Flycatcher (BCF); Hairy Woodpecker (Tr); House Sparrow (UM/Rd); House Wren (GF); Killdeer (TR); Mourning Dove (BCF); Northern Cardinal (BCF); Northern Oriole (GF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); Red-winged Blackbird (UM); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (GF); Song Sparrow (LM); Tree Swallow (UM/Rd); Tufted Titmouse (Tr); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr); Wild Turkey (FCF); Wood Thrush (FCF)

**Leps:** (9) Cabbage White; Eastern Comma; European Skipper; Little Wood Satyr; Monarch; Red-spotted Purple; Ringlet; Summer Azure; Virginia Ctenuchid

**New species:**

Robber Fly	<i>Laphria divisor</i>	Tr/KD
“Pale Gordian Worm”*	Cl. Gordioidea	LM/pd/KD

\*specimen found near top of 3' sapling, 7-8 cm long, pale brownish gray and < 1mm in dia. - actively writhing.

**Phenology:** Tall Meadow Rue in full bloom