

Newport Forest

Thursday June 29 2006

2:20 - 6:35 pm

Weather: prec. 21mm; RH 71%; sn/cld; N 0-15kmh; LM 23C; FCF 21C

Purpose: prepare for Annual Butterfly Count

Participants: Kee

I stopped at the water tank to drop off the cooler & jugs, when I saw a Green Heron fly into the Hurdle's pond. I scattered a garbage bag full of BE seeds (collected at 42 Askin by Pat) onto the upper bluffs and proceeded down to the trailer, where I found that 21mm of rain had fallen since last Sunday. (no watering for a week) I repaired the tray feeder and filled it, inspected the trees (one of the BCs has developed a leaf spot disease and the leaves are turning a pale yellow), then took a break in the Nook to listen for birds. I then walked the two-bridge trail and found a plant I didn't know by the pipe bridge. I took it with me back to the Nook and, after going through a wildflower guide, identified it as Fringed Loosestrife. (nice yellow flowers)

I spent an hour wandering the LM and HBF looking for butterflies, as practice for this coming Sunday. I found an unusually well-marked checkerspot and consulted the large butterfly guide to find it was a Baltimore Checkerspot, perhaps the most vividly and distinctively marked of all the Checkerspots. I went down to the river, hurrying along mosquito alley (ER), and succeeded in startling a family of Bufflehead ducks. The twelve young fled to the far shore in utter panic to hide under the overhanging veg, while the mother did an elaborate broken wing act, heading upriver and making distress calls to lead me away from the young. The white cheek patch was the telling field mark.

Birds: (16)

Blue Jay (Tr); Bufflehead (TR); Common Grackle (GF); Common Yellowthroat (BCF/LM); Eastern Towhee (FCF); Field Sparrow (LM); Gray Catbird (GF); Green Heron (Rd); House Sparrow (Rd); Mourning Dove (BCF); Northern Oriole (LM); Red-bellied Woodpecker (GF); Red-winged Blackbird (UM); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (FCF); Song Sparrow (LM); Wood Thrush (FCF)

Leps: Baltimore Checkerspot (HBF); Cabbage White (LM); Common Wood Nymph (LM); Meadow Fritillary (LM); Monarch (LM); Northern Crescent (HBF); Pearl Crescent (HBF); Red Admiral (Tr)
(too bad butterflies don't have calls or songs)

Phenology: Blackcaps ripening (10%)