

Newport Forest

Sunday September 10 2006

4:30 - 4:35 pm

Weather: prec. 3 mm; RH 78%; calm; ovcast; LM 21C; FCF 17C

Purpose: two-day stay

Participants: Kee

Within seconds of parking the van I encountered the largest mushroom I have ever seen, growing right on the track next to the trailer. It turned out to be the famous Horse Mushroom (new record) and the cap measured 23 Cm across, the stalk was 4.5 cm thick above the base, and the FB was 25 cm high.

The girls showed up within a few minutes of my arrival, so I dropped everything to get them some food. They were not excessively hungry, but ate well. (chicken, shreddies, DBs, dates, and ritz crackers) While Thelma was working on the chicken, I noted a wasp sitting beside her working on a much smaller piece of chicken. Just as I was thinking how nice it was to witness the “harmony” of nature, Thelma suddenly turned, ate the wasp and its chicken! After a period of rest up in the Nook, the sisters took off for parts unknown.

I went looking for day-flying moths, found a Forage Looper (not new) and noticed that thousands of bees were now busy at the goldenrod throughout the LM. I found several hawthorns that were infected with a bright red leaf spot disease, most likely a fungus. (But I could not get an ID later.) I then went down to the creek to see if the Snapping Turtle had returned to the rapids. While staring at the rocks, it occurred to me that there was no filamentous algae at all on them. Agricultural chemicals?

Sitting in the Nook for a break around 6:30pm, I thought I heard a gun being fired twice upriver. There was the sharp “crack” followed by a crashing “echo.” It took me a while to realize that it wasn’t a rifle, but another tree going down (either two trees or two parts of the same tree). Speaking of trees, there are now little hints of brown and yellow in leaves here and there as the summer draws to a close.

I had a late supper after which I walked up the track to call Pat. On the way back, I was surprised to see about a dozen Cedar Waxwings flying two and fro over the lower meadow, just as they do over the Thames, hunting insects. The girls showed up just before sunset, coming into camp from the direction of Blind Creek. I tried to get them to sleep for a while and this worked until about midnight when they got restless, so I took them for a midnight walk around the TRT.

The moon of Sha’ban spread a diffuse glow over the heavy overcast as we

made our way to the river, then up over the bluffs. This time I stopped frequently to give them time to explore off trail. I called for Sonny a few times in the RSf, with the usual result. Further along, in the Beech Maple forest, I noticed strange little green lights going off and on here and there all over the ground. It took a while to get an accurate fix on one of the lights, finding a beetle larvae a little over a centimetre long. I did it again, just to confirm. (Later, at home I checked out Phengodid beetles as a possible source of the lights (with hope in my heart) but finally had to admit that they were most probably firefly larvae, as these are luminescent as well as the adults. I was delighted, as I looked around me, to see a flying squirrel gliding from a large sycamore to another tree nearby. This was our first indication that SFSs live in the RSF, as well as the GF and the FCF.

Many new fungi stood out in the beam of the flashlight, including a troop of the same Hohenbuhelia-type trumpet-shaped mushrooms that Greg Thorn examined for me recently. Back in the trailer I worked on my specimens accompanied by a rather inexperienced Screech Owl, who couldn't quite get the descending whinny-song right. The trumpet mushroom had smooth-edged gills, for the most part, but many of the gills were also toothed and/or ragged. (Take specimens to Greg.)

We went to bed about 4 am and didn't get up until about 11 am. I made a breakfast of bacon and toast, which the girls shared. They LOVE bacon. Outside the trailer I found a Hickory Tussock Moth caterpillar slowly making its way across the track.

While the girls slept up in a white Mulberry tree near the Nook, I went for a fungus walk in the GF, finding several specimens, including a Zoned Lactarius, a Rooted Polypore and four other mushrooms that I could barely get started on. Even the Zoned Lactarius gave me trouble because it had no "milk." But the taste (extraordinarily hot) gave it away. There were very few birds around during my stay.

New species:

Horse Mushroom	<i>Agaricus arvensis</i>	Tr KD
Leaflike Oyster	<i>Hohenbuhelia petaloides*</i>	RSF KD

*needs confirmation