

Newport Forest Thursday December 14 2006 1:45 - 5:15 pm

Weather: prec. 1mm; RH 88%; ovcst; SW 10-20kmh; LM 9C; GF 9C

Purpose: inspection

Participants: Pat & Kee

Edgar told us of a raccoon he had found on his front lawn (presumably roadkill), so we had a look at it, carrying it to the TS, where we laid it on the grass: male, about 2.5 - 2.5 yr, heavy, but not well-fatted, coat varicolored, target small. Not Louise. Pat thought it wasn't Greylock, either (longer face). Later, I wondered whether it might be Sonny. This raised the delicate issue of checking with the Murrays for distinguishing marks on Sonny.

Having retired the rain gauge, we now depend on the snow pail for our precipitation records. Some 32mm in the pail translate into 17mm of rain, owing to the pail's conical sides.

The river and creek are both over their banks once again, thanks to heavy snowsqualls that began just after the last visit here. Warmer temperatures (8-10C) have melted virtually all the snow that fell last week. We sat in the Nook (it was just barely warm enough) and noted that there were very few birds on site, mostly woodpeckers. The Downy population has certainly undergone a boost lately, having (at least) doubled over the last year. We speculated that the large number of dead Bitternut trees riddled with Scolytus beetles, fungus beetles and other insects that took up residence in the dead trees, was the probable booster.

While Pat cut back Multiflora Rose near the trailer, I walked the TRT, adding the odd new liner as I went. I came upon what I thought was a new fungus on the HB, but it turned out to be Silky Parchment. (I see that we have four species of Stereum now.) At the river, I heard a Red-tailed Hawk call out (rather loudly) behind me on HB (top of bluffs). Then a Great Blue Heron flew silently up the river, gronking at the bend and banking into Fleming Creek.

Birds: American Goldfinch (LM); Canada Goose (TR); Downy Woodpecker (Tr); Great Blue Heron (TR); Red-bellied Woodpecker(Tr); Red-tailed Hawk (TR); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr);