

Newport Forest Sunday March 11 2007

1:30 - 5:35 pm

weather: prec. 2mm; RH n/a; clr; clm; LM 8C; GF 6C

purpose: to clear thorn trees

participants: Kee + crew: Dylan Dewdney , Brian Cornish, Jimmy Dean

We began in the west meadow, expanding the cut begun by Steve & Rick last week. I stacked, trying to pick up the cut trees gingerly, but always stabbing myself with the thorns. In the end, even with gloves, our fingers burned with hundreds of miniature stab wounds. We are attempting to cut all the thorn trees in the West Meadow to create suitable habitat for Bobolinks & Meadowlarks. If the ground becomes dry enough before the birds arrive, we will burn the meadow. (with some concern how the voles would fare)

After two hours of cutting and stacking thorn trees (most in 2' - 5' range), we drove down to the trailer, noting that the van slewed considerably, almost planing on the water. The snow has melted but the ground has thawed down only about 2". (This creates a kind of implicit shallow lake.) I unloaded everybody, turned the van around, and made it to high ground, where I parked.

After a quick lunch, we set out to cut thorn trees in the LM just above the regen zone (not in it). Although they were supposed to cut only trees/bushes with thorns on them, I found them cutting Ninebark bushes near the end. It turns out there's a miniature thorn on Ninebark. So much for incisive instructions. On this round of labour, I sat out much, preferring to wander in the vicinity of the trailer, birding as I went. At one point two Chipmunks chased each other merrily over and around a brush pile just beyond the Nook.

birds: (11)

American Crow (TR); Black-capped Chickadee (Tr); Blue Jay (GF); Canada Goose (TR); Dark-eyed Junco (Tr); Downy Woodpecker (GF); Hairy Woodpecker (GF); Northern Cardinal (BCF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (GF); Tundra Swan (UM); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr)

phenology: Creek running free (up 80 cm) except for ice-jam at the Hairpin. Property now about 1% snow-covered. (tracking is over for now)