

Newport Forest Tuesday May 29 2007 2:50 (T) - 8:45 pm (W)

weather: prec. 3 mm; RH 42 %; calm; clear; LM 29 C

purpose: two-day stay

participants: Pat & Kee

After setting up camp, we relaxed in the Nook, almost immediately hearing the raccoon kits rustling & whining in the tree-box. Fleming Creek is now running clear and at a level typical for the summer.

A tour of the Regen Zone (RZ) revealed that almost all the little oaks I had worried about have leafed out. The TTs are finally doing something (3-5 cm) and the Redbuds are finally doing some serious growing (10-20 cm). Overall, this years growth to date exceeds that of any any previous year (to date).

We walked to the RL, noting the following tracks along the beach: Canada Goose, Great Blue Heron, Raccoon, Spotted Sandpiper, Spiny Softshell Turtle, Virginia Deer, Returning to the Nook, we were entertained by three Eastern Chipmunks gathering bird seed and chasing each other around the old log. Meanwhile a (verbal) fight broke out among some Great Crested Flycatchers in the Black Maple overhead. Making supper, Pat glanced out the trailer door in time to see an Eastern Cottontail hopping by.

At sunset, I went up to close the gate and dropped in to visit with Edgar & Nina. She told me the following story for the second time -- but this time I'm recording it: A pioneer family called Campbell live downriver either on or near the Fleming homestead. They had a small herd of Highland Cattle which they allowed to browse where they would. The Campbells sent their two children (a boy & a girl) upriver to fetch the cattle. When they found the herd (in our Point Bar Forest), the cattle were very nervous, owing to the presence of a large Black Bear. The cattle formed a circle, herding not only the young cattle into the centre of the circle, but the Campbell children as well. They circled and moved downriver as they did so. In the end, it was the cattle that brought the children home and not vice-versa.

After sunset, the mother and four kits descended from the tree box first to eat kibble, then to forage further afield. When they returned much later, another female joined them but was shooed away by the mother who made a noise halfway between a growl and a whinny - descending in tone. If the mother is one of the Stripe Sisters, she would have to be Short Stripe. Later when I went out on

the deck, she growled this way at me, so I retreated into the trailer.

Throughout the night we were haunted by a mysterious bird calling from near, then far, then near again. It was a hoarse, monotone cry somewhat like a woodcock, but not “buzzy.” The moon was nearly full, illuminating the high haze and allowing only the brightest stars to be seen. The overnight low was 10 degrees C. (the dew point)

Around 1 pm next day, Steve Logan came in with his tools to put the bridge up. He did not bring Rick with him, so I had to fill in - much to my later discomfort. We used the “come-along” to drag the heavy steel pipes into position on the trestles, then put down enough decking to keep the pipes in position. We finished around 4:30 pm. Steve leaves for the Yukon this Friday.

I took a walk around the TRT, shooting a video of some wild phlox (which I won't use, owing to their nonnative status) and (up on the HB) some dogwood in bloom. By now my right knee had grown very sore, owing to my having strained it dragging one of the 350 lb steel pipes for the bridge. To make matters worse, the mosquitoes in the BCF were something out of a horror movie. I ended by going into double-time mode to stay ahead of the hordes, consequently seeing nothing and hearing nothing but the whine in my ears, goaded on by constant pricks on neck, ears and hands.

At 8:15 we assessed the situation. Pat had a cold that was only getting worse and I had a very sore knee, not to mention being exhausted from the bridge work. We decided to leave and quickly packed up. It was dusk. We waved goodbye to a new raccoon (with an incredibly black mask) eating kibble on the log.

birds: (36)

American Crow (TR); American Goldfinch (LM); American Robin (FCF); American Woodcock (UM); Bank Swallow (TR); Black-capped Chickadee (Tr); Blue Jay (GF); Brown-headed Cowbird (Tr); Brown Thrasher (BCF); Canada Goose (TR); Common Flicker (BCF); Common Grackle (GF); Common Yellowthroat (BCF/ET); Downy Woodpecker (GF); Eastern Kingbird (UM); Eastern Wood Peewee (LM/HBF); Field Sparrow (LM); Gray Catbird (BCF/LM); Eastern Towhee (BCF); Great Blue Heron (HBF); Great Crested Flycatcher (Tr); Hairy Woodpecker (Tr); Indigo Bunting (RL); Killdeer (TR); Mourning Dove (HL); Northern Cardinal (EW); Northern Oriole (BCF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (GF); Red-winged Blackbird (GF); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (GF); Song Sparrow

(GF); Tree Swallow (UM); Turkey Vulture (UM); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr); Wild Turkey (BCF); Wood Thrush (FCF)

phenology: first Black & Tiger Swallowtails, first Ebony Jewelwings.

Tick Race: Kee 6, Pat 2