

Newport Forest Saturday June 30 2007 2:20 St - 4:10 pm Sn

weather: prec. 0mm; RH 48%; sn/clr; BP 29.50; N 0 - 15 kmh; LM 26 C

purpose: Annual butterfly count - overnight stay

participants: Pat & Kee (plus butterfly counters: Blake Irwin, Mary Irwin, Mike Nelson, Gavin Platt, Ian Platt, Bill Priecksaitis; Marjorie Priecksaitis, Sue Read, Rob Read, Joan Taylor, Ann White)

Perhaps it was a good omen to see a young groundhog scurry away from the side of the road as we ascended the hill into the Newport Forest area. We see about one groundhog a year (varying locations).

Once we had set up camp and filled the feeders, Pat spotted a hairstreak beside the road above the trailer. "Aren't those orange spots?" It was an uncommon butterfly -- a Coral Hairstreak. She moved with unusual energy to make other finds, as if training for the morrow: The Variable Dancer, for example, is a new species for us. (see below)

We took a walk along the FCT (east bank) to the log bridge to get an idea of butterflies in the floodplain woods. We saw only a couple of commas, a Cabbage White and a possible Summer Azure. As we sat on the log bridge before going back, we were startled by a chipmunk that dashed under my legs and up onto the log to scurry across to the other side. We walked back along the well-groomed trail left by Brian et al. from our last maintenance visit. After a rest in the Nook, we then walked to the RL and strolled the Clay Beach, alarming a mother Killdeer, who tried to lead us away from her (probable) nest at the far end of the beach. There were no swallows or waxwings working the river today. Here we found a few Red Admirals and Cabbage Whites, as well as an Eastern Tiger Swallowtail on the way back. Back in the Nook, we saw a female Redbelly with a recently fledged young at the tray feeder. Many young Blue Jays were also flying about, screaming hoarsely. It is fledging time.

After supper, we went to the UM to water the gate trees and check for birds. Pat added several more birds to the day-list, then helped with the tree nursery, while I filled tanks against the morrow. She offered to take over the nursery and put it on a consistent footing. She cleaned up Bed 1, laying down more landscape cloth to suppress the weeds. We visited Nina & Edgar, noting four young cottontails out on the road toward Janik's.

Back at the trailer we lit the lamps and put kibble out on the road. Several adult

raccoons presently came to feed. One of them had a half-grown kit with her. After sunset we found a visitor in the trailer, circling one of the lamps. Fagged out, it clung to a tube of toothpaste while we looked for it in the moth book. Only later, when we had time for a more thorough search, did we ID it as a Forage Looper, sporting a beautiful black arc on its forewings, bordered by a thin, white line on a grayish tan background. Distant rumblings finally materialized into a light rain at 11 pm. It lasted about 15 minutes and then quit - a petered-out storm.

Later, the mother & kit came back alone and I had a good look at their faces. The mask pattern is unusual in being partially solid. This makes ID of the individuals certain enough to name them (assuming the female has only one kit).

Bridget (mother)

Batface (juvenile)

We could hear other kits calling, but we never saw them. Different mother?

That strange bird called again through the night. I tried to get a fix on the source and next day I walked into Eva's Woods from HBF, only to find myself nearly tumbling down a steep, vegetation-choked hill to Fleming Creek. No stick nests, hollow trees; nothing unusual.

In the morning I walked through the RZ/N, remarking once again on a young ash (7' standard) that was loaded with seed. This turned out to be a Red Ash but I honestly couldn't recall whether I had planted it or it had volunteered. Pat went to the Hurdles to visit with Nina and walk around the Hurdle Pond. They saw a Green Heron and counted butterflies. Returning with Nina around noon, Pat reported "dozens" of Bobolinks in the UM. Before our visitors could arrive, I drove back up to the water tank to continue yesterday's filling operation. Needing to know the capacities of my containers, I obtained the following volumes:

kitty-litter jug: 6 l cooler jug: 17 l

blue barrel: 19 l

By 2:15 there were six cars at the gate and I had just finished filling the last jug for a total of 77 l.

While the butterfly people tramped off to the river, I watered trees, barely finishing by the time they returned. The count was not impressive. Gusting winds and occasional clouds had suppressed flight.

butterflies: (some found by butterfly people)

Summer Azure (FCF); Black Swallowtail (WM); Cabbage White (FCF); Clouded Sulphur (UM); Coral Hairstreak (LM/Rd); Eastern Comma (FCF); Eastern Tailed Blue (ET); Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (ET); European Skipper (LM); Great Spangled Fritillary (LM); Little Wood Satyr (LM); Monarch (LM); Northern Crescent (FCF); Red Admiral (RL); Silvery Checkerspot (LM); Tawny Emperor (GF/UM); Wood Nymph (LM)

birds: (40)

American Crow (FCF); American Goldfinch (LM); American Redstart (ET); American Robin (FCF); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (ET); Blue Jay (Tr); Barn Swallow (UM); Bobolink (OM); Blue-winged Warbler (BCF); Common Grackle (HP); Common Yellowthroat (BCF); Brown-headed Cowbird (Tr); Downy Woodpecker (BCF); Eastern Bluebird (Rd); Eastern Kingbird (UM); Eastern Phoebe (HP); Eastern Towhee (BCF); Field Sparrow (UM); Great Crested Flycatcher (BCF/LM); Green Heron (HP); House Sparrow (UM); House Wren (HP); Indigo Bunting (BCF/LM); Killdeer (TR); Mourning Dove (FCF); Northern Cardinal (GF); Northern Flicker (ET); Northern Oriole (BCF); Northern Rough-winged Swallow (TR); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); Red-eyed Vireo (ET); Red-tailed Hawk (EW); Red-winged Blackbird (HP); Song Sparrow (LM); Spotted Sandpiper (TR); Tree Swallow (Rd); Turkey Vulture (HBF); White-breasted Nuthatch (GF); Wood Thrush (BCF); Yellow Warbler (HP)

new species

Coral hairstreak	<i>Satyrium titus</i>	LM/ER PD Je30/07
Variable Dancer	<i>Argia fumipennis</i>	LM PD Je30/07

phenology: first blackcaps fully ripe; Michigan Lilies over