

Newport Forest Tuesday July 17 2007

3:30 T - 3:30 W

weather: prec. 9mm; RH 97%; BP 29.32"; ovcast/rn; calm; LM 22C

purpose: overnight stay

participants: Pat & Kee

There's nothing like a good omen at the beginning of a visit, in this case a tom turkey that strutted ahead of the van, ushering us to the trailer, where it took wing. Pat had predicted that the new trail cam would have been dismantled by raccoons, but it appeared intact.

Walking along Edgar's Road by the trailer, I noticed a Butternut tree that I had planted years ago, now resprouting from the base. I flagged it for watering. I inspected the trees in the RZ, noting that none were showing any drying stress. As I was doing this, the noise of a great wind came up as over 500 Common Grackles flew into the GF. A light rain began, so we retreated into the trailer for a while. We visited the Hole, where Pat inspected the feeding area and I mounted the second trail cam to a smaller tree just inside the Hole. After supper I baited the Nook and road with kibble, then went up to close the gate. The first raccoons did not show up until about 10pm, nearly an hour after my return. (Normally they appear right after sunset-- or even before.) I checked both cameras by walking past each in turn while Pat watched from the trailer. Pat saw both flashes ("like lightning") light up the woods. I then dismounted the first camera gate.

ra to bring it home to transfer the images to a computer. (It turned out to be working perfectly, but on this occasion took pictures only of people.) We heard what sounded like the mysterious "night bird" again, but this time calling from the direction of the river. The call was a little different, being higher pitched and rising slightly before falling. Was it the young of the other bird?

Three adult raccoons eventually showed up, all females, it would seem, including Bridget & Batface. Much later in the early dawn, Pat saw two large males roaming around. We found a moth in the trailer and I took notes of the marks for later ID.

The overnight low was 16C and stars alternated with haze and cloud. For about 5 minutes three or four Screech Owls called back & forth between EW and the BCF. At about 5:30 am, we were awakened by the sound of a raccoon wandering all over the roof of the trailer. Pat determined that it finally got off by using the animal house on top of the cage behind the trailer. Not long after this, Pat saw

the two male raccoons. they eventually made off across the LM. Presumably they came from the BCF (or beyond) originally. Around 10 am it rained heavily for several minutes, bringing our total from 3 to 9 mm.

After a (very) late breakfast, Pat noticed a huge black cloud rolling in and we feared the worst. However it produced only a few spits of rain before rolling on. While I sat in the Nook having a coffee, Pat spotted a young rabbit feeding on spilled seed under the hickory feeding tray. We think it may live in the burrow under one of the Tulip Trees. Later she saw a young grey (black) squirrel doing the same thing. It rained very lightly several times in the early afternoon. At one point we were amazed to see a vast flight of roughly 2000 Common Grackles fly over the property.

We decided to visit the river before the weather turned even rainier. I arrived first, surprising two small Softshell Turtles, a female Mallard and a very irritable Great Blue Heron that had been fishing at the rapids. It made several loud “gronking” noises as it flew off. Once out on the beach, Pat expressed her determination to see an American Snout butterfly. Sure enough, one turned up by the ephemeral pool!

As we left the property, a rather heavy rain began.

birds: (28)

American Goldfinch (LM); American Robin (ER/LM); Blue Jay (Tr); Bobolink (UM); Brown-headed Cowbird (Tr); Canada Goose (TR); Common Flicker (GF); Common Grackle (GF); Common Yellowthroat (BCF/LM); Downy Woodpecker (LM); Eastern Kingbird (LM); Eastern Screech Owl (BCF); Eastern Towhee (FCF); Field Sparrow (LM); Great Blue Heron (TR); Great Crested Flycatcher (GF); Gray Catbird (BCF/LM); Indigo Bunting (Tr); Killdeer (TR); Mallard (TR); Mourning Dove (HL); Northern Cardinal (BCF/HL); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (LM); Song Sparrow (LM); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr); Wild Turkey (ER/LM); Wood Thrush (BCF)

Note: From now on, we will be using a new three-letter bird code to indicate the birds seen while at Newport.

new species:

Butternut

Juglans cinerea

LM KD J117/07

phenology: bladders fully developed on Bladdernut trees, fledged young of: Blue Jays, Kildeer, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Common Grackles in evidence.