

Newport Forest Friday-Sunday August 24-26 2007 2:30 F - 5:00 Su

weather: 10 mm; RH 71%; BP 98.9kPa; calm; sn/hz; LM 34 C

purpose: three-day stay

participants: Pat & Kee

We stopped at the TS for Pat to drop off some potted saplings, 4x4s and other material. When we got to the trailer, we set up camp in the usual way. While inspecting some young trees by the canoe, Pat spotted a rather large, healthy-looking garter snake. Since it had been rainier than usual lately, we went up to the Copse to see if we could find any new fungi. On the way, we passed some small rose bushes with unusual leaves and very slender spines*. In the Copse I noted several honeysuckle bushes growing, as well as an Alternating Dogwood. But few fungi.

Back at the camp, I went down to the bridge to walk the 2BT, clipping as I went. It seems impossible to walk more than 20 m along that trail without running into the web of a Micrathena spider. Meanwhile, Pat took the van up to visit Nina. Back at the camp, I spied a white cat with a brown saddle slinking around the trailer. Somebody's barn cat ? (I managed to get it to come to a bowl of kibble in the Nook later on. It was famished.)

After supper the sky began to cloud over and by the time I closed the gate, a heavy rain began, precursor to a storm that lasted nearly an hour and left about 10 mm in the gauge. It made lots of lightning and blew the tarp off the canoe. As soon as the rain stopped the katydids began to sing, then the crickets. After a two-hour lull, the rain started up again at 11:30. (very light) By midnight it petered out and a bunch of screech owls began to call from the vicinity of the FCF -- at least three, judging from overlap & direction. The air was still and warm and stars began to peep through the misty atmosphere overhead.

Two raccoons came out to the road by the trailer to munch on kibble scattered through the grass. Then the brown and white cat came out too, but shyler than the raccoons. (I decided to call the cat "Pookie" for some unknown reason.)

Sitting in the trailer I noticed that often when a breeze came (and sometimes even when it didn't) the trailer would get a two-second shower of rain. I had never thought about this before, but I reasoned that it must be a landslide effect, with droplets rolling off leaves, triggering further droplets on leaves below, developing into a cascade.

Next morning, the weather was cloudy, warm and windy. A flight of some 40 seagulls flew over the LM headed west. I went into Wardsville for supplies and found the inhabitants strolling about and enjoying "Kin Day," in celebration of the town's new water supply. I had to go to Newbury for water. On the way I spotted a large flock of seagulls feeding in one of the McCann vegetable fields, so this may have been where the seagulls had been headed. Back in camp, I put out a bowl of kibble for Pookie who was lurking near the Nook.

Meanwhile, Pat was up at the TS, pulling what weeds she could and setting the new pots in the ground. Because the ground was so dry in some places, she could not pull the weeds at all. After lunch, Pat had to take her therapy nap while I cleaned the trailer floor. After that I collected all the steel and hauled it to the gate for later disposal at the scrapyard in Rodney.

When Pat woke up, we headed down to the river, where we watched the Cedar Waxwings, perhaps as many as a dozen, flying up and down the river, snatching insects out of the air. I saw this happen several times. An insect would flutter up from the water's surface, get about ten feet in the air, then disappear as a blur of bird passed by. Across the river we watched a mother Spottie with young, learning their trade at the water's edge.

Pat headed back to the trailer, while I walked the TRT to inspect it. We will need to field full crew to clear the overgrowth, scrape the sunny parts, and reline whole sections where the liner logs have gone awry. By the time I got back, it was dark. I had dropped my walkie talkie right after ringing Pat. The walkie-talkie struck a log, the batteries spilled out and I worked feverishly groping for the batteries in the dark, knowing that Pat would be growing anxious at my sudden silence.

The night was uneventful, with the same pair of raccoons showing up as last night. I turned in earlier than usual, owing to excessive tiredness. Pat woke up before I did, in any case and, about 9 am, was startled to hear a sort of loud roaring sound, short roars or growls that went on for several minutes. Then a doe burst out of the GF, dashed across HBF and into the BCF. Nothing was chasing it, however. Shortly after my breakfast, I decided to check the rumor that honeybees were disappearing all across North America. I did two walks along the LM watering trail, counting all insects on flowers: bumblebees 92; honeybees 15; other hymenopterans 5; flower flies (5). Not a lot of honeybees, to be sure.

Pat was down at the bridge for a walk. She spotted six different kinds of fungi,

including scarlet cups and oysters. The latter are appearing everywhere in the woods these days.

I walked ET slowly to the river, changing the film memory in Camera #1 and noting that many elms had died in the deeper BCF, as well as along the edge that is visible from the trailer. The open canopy has invited an invasion of wingstem deep into the forest. Here there is much walnut, willow and ash, among the trees still living. During this time, Pat was exploring the creek bluffs near the UM. She reports it to be “very dry,” with very few fungi.

birds: (28)

American Crow (FCF); American Goldfinch (HBF); American Robin (LM/BCF); Bald Eagle (LM); Belted Kingfisher (FC); Black-capped Chickadee (Tr); Black-and-White Warbler (ET); Blue Jay (GF); Canada Goose (TR); Cedar Waxwing (TR); Common Grackle (GF); Downy Woodpecker (Tr); Eastern Screech Owl (FCF); Eastern Wood Peewee (LM); Gray Catbird (BCF); Great Blue Heron (LM); Great Crested Flycatcher (EW); Mourning Dove (GF); Northern Cardinal; (Tr); Northern (Common?) Flicker (LM); Northern Oriole (LM/BCF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); Red-tailed Hawk (Rd/FCF); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (GF); Ruby-throated Hummingbird (LM); Spotted Sandpiper (TR); Turkey Vulture (UM); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr);

new species:

Pasture Rose (to be confirmed)	<i>Rosa carolina</i>	ER/GF KD Au27/07
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Common Groundsel	<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	RL PD Au27/07
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phenology: dandelion seeds flying; jewelwings gone