

**Newport Forest** Saturday September 23 2007 1:00 sat - 1:55 pm sun

**weather:** prec. 11 mm; RH 65 %; BP 100.3 kPa; clr; W 0-10 kmh; LM 25 C

**purpose:** two-day stay plus a visit from birders

**participants:** Kee, Dr Barry Gambrill; Paul McKenzie

I met Barry and Paul at 1:00, took them down to the Nook to “water up” and soon we were deep in the BCF, with Paul (apparently a real expert) reeling off names as fast as I could write them down. It was the fall migration for warblers, among other kinds of birds, and every bush and tree was atwitter with them. Paul found us three new species on this outing! He was very impressed with this part of the property, as opposed to the rest of the walk, which produced birds that I could have gotten as well.

After the two left, I put in three small mammal pitfall traps, setting them along possible shrew trails (alongside logs, etc.). One in the meadow, two inside forest edge bordering the LM.

As night fell I went to the UM to close the gate and, just before I got there, witnessed a remarkable natural (ball lightning?) phenomenon. A bright green ball of light suddenly appeared over the cornfield just east of the Hurdle’s and descended (perhaps) 30-40 feet, where it abruptly slowed, then winked out.

Back at the trailer I heard three Eastern Screech Owls calling, two from the FCF, one from the BCF. At 9pm the air temperature fell to 8 C, with no animals having visited. (This is rather unusual) I checked the pitfall traps, finding only a few ground beetles. By 11 pm the sky had cleared and the air temperature dropped to 6 C. Still no animals! Pookie, out adopted feral cat, was also not in evidence. I began to wonder if a large predator was about, systematically cleaning up the “small game.” Finally, close to midnight, a young adult raccoon came in for a bite, but did not stay long.

I spent half an hour IDing a mushroom we had found on dead wood in the RSF during our afternoon jaunt: *Psathyrella hydrophila*, not new but confirming an earlier tentative ID.

Just before dawn, the same gang of Screech Owls began to call, but this time warbles only. The dawn chorus lasted from about 7:15 to 8:15 am.

I checked the traps one more time. Still no small mammals, so I deactivated the traps by the simple expedient of putting a large stick in each (enabling any small

animal to climb out).

Around 11:30, four ATVs came roaring onto the property, all set for miles of mayhem. I had to explain that this was a closed conservation area and that I expected not to see them or their machines again. (God, those engines are LOUD!) As I was packing up, I spotted the caterpillar of a Hickory Tussock Moth making its way across the trailer deck, looking for a place to pupate, I suppose.

**birds: (31)**

American Crow (RSF); American Goldfinch (TR); American Robin (RBlfs); Blackpoll Warbler (BCF/E); Black-throated Blue Warbler (BCF/E); Black-throated Green Warbler (BCF/E); Blue-headed (aka Solitary) Vireo (BCF/E); Blue Jay (RSF); Canada Goose (TR); Cedar Waxwing (BCF); Common Yellowthroat (BCF); Downy Woodpecker (BCF); Eastern Screech Owl (FCF); Eastern Towhee (BCF); Gray Catbird (RBlfs); Hairy Woodpecker (RSF); Mourning Dove (Tr); Nashville Warbler (BCF/E); Northern Cardinal (BCF); Northern Harrier (LM); Orange-crowned Warbler (BCF/E); Purple Finch (BCF); Red-bellied woodpecker (RSF); Red-eyed Vireo (BCF); Ruby-crowned Kinglet (BCF/E); Song sparrow (HBF); Turkey Vulture (LM); White-breasted Nuthatch (RSF); White-throated Sparrow (GF); Wild Turkey (FCF); Yellow-rumped Warbler (GF)

**new species:**

Orange-crowned Warbler	<i>Vermivora celata</i>	BCF PM Sp23/07
Blackpoll Warbler	<i>Dendroica striata</i>	BCF PM Sp23/07
Black-throated Blue Warbler	<i>Dendroica caerulescens</i>	BCF PM Sp23/07

**phenology:**

one Katydid still calling