

Newport Forest

Sunday October 21-22 2007 3:55 -

weather: prec. 5 mm; RH 47 %; BP 98.98 kPa; clr, SSW 5-20 kmh; LM 27 C

purpose: two-day stay

participants: Pat & Kee

Judging from recent regional weather reports, we formed the notion that more rain had fallen than we actually got. Everything looks very dry, to boot. About 80% of trees are now devoid or nearly devoid of leaves. A few remain green, however. In the RZ, all the young oak seedlings remain green. Besides these only a few Silver Maples and a Hop tree sapling remain green.

Pat found what at first appeared to be a dead shrew in the trailer -- very desiccated. It turned out to be a Meadow Vole. I watered the young trees in the RZ that I missed on the last visit.

After supper I walked to the UM to close the gate, dropping in on Nina and Edgar for a brief visit. At about 10:45 I went for a walk around the TRT, noting how bright the moonlight was, bathing the trees in a ghostly radiance. (hackneyed, but appropriate) In the RSF a sudden crashing noise above my head startled me. It was made by two wild turkeys that had been roosting there for the night. (They might not have been alarmed had the leaves on the path not been do dry and noisy.) Back in camp, one raccoon showed up briefly around midnight. Several Screech Owls set up a five-minute chorus after this. The overnight low was 6 C.

Going to bed I fantasized about building a small Indian Lodge in the traditional style up on the HB. It would have six ash hoop-beams, covered in squares of elm bark and bound with root lashings.

Next morning we slept in a bit. After breakfast, Pat spotted a Mourning Cloak and Tiger Swallowtail. Pookie showed up for some kibble. I watered the rest of the trees at the TS, gate, and elsewhere. Inspecting the trees in the RZ near BCF, I discovered one of my best LTAs had been virtually destroyed by a young buck, thrashing it with his antlers. (Every now and then I get the urge to kill a deer.)

It has occurred to us that the very dry weather has undoubtedly cut into the insect population; plant juices have been much scarcer, for one thing.

birds: (20)

American Gold Finch (LM); American Robin (HBF); Black-capped Chickadee

(Tr); Blue Jay (GF); Canada Goose (TR); Common Grackle (GF); Downy woodpecker (Tr); Eastern Screech Owl (FCF); Great Blue Heron (EW); Kildeer (TR); Northern Cardinal (GF); Northern Flicker (BCF); Northern Harrier (BCF); Purple Finch (Tr); Red-bellied Woodpecker (GF); Song Sparrow (LM); Turkey Vulture (EW); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr); White-crowned Sparrow (Tr); Wild Turkey (RSF);

phenology: all leaves off Black Maple at Nook, Mourning Cloak and Tiger Swallowtail still out.