

Newport Forest Tuesday August 19 2008 2:40 (T) - 5:15 (W)

Weather: prec. 2 mm; RH 65%; BP 99.89 kPa; clr; clm; T 28° C

Purpose: two-day stay

Participants: Kee

After setting up camp, I rested in the Nook, immediately noticing the LARGE numbers of fledgling Blue Jays in the GF. Also, the Chickadees are much more evident now, their nesting period well over. Although our birding is almost always casual and almost never concerted (we see/hear what we see/hear) we usually get consistent numbers. I have the impression that our numbers have been down for nearly a month now, for no apparent reason. Are some species leaving early? Over this particular stay I could hardly fail to notice that the Common Grackles are massing into large flocks -- about 100 tuesday and about 300 wednesday. This is an annual phenomenon that we usually don't witness until September. What do the birds know that we don't?

I spent half an hour testing the macro setting on my (new) digital camera, unaware that its memory was limited. In the midst of this, an adult, darkly coloured raccoon hastily descended the old maple and scurried off into the woods. A Baltimore Oriole flew right through the Nook. (unusual)

I spent nearly an hour surveying the next strip of vegetation as part of the RZ inventory. Then I left for a walk on the TRT. Out on the beach, I spotted a Silver-spotted Skipper, another unusual sight. A Great Blue took off from the rapids, while 5 female Mallards congregated at the point upstream. Walking the bluff trail and the RSF trail, I found it quite irritating that every ten metres or so I would encounter an orb web -- always *Micrathena* spiders, never anything else! This was irritating because I make a practice of ducking or going around webs. I ran into a troop of Tippler's Bane growing on buried wood at the foot of the HB. Then up to the HB, where I called Pat on the cellphone. (The Bell Network does not access low-lying areas.) Then down into the BCF. The newly groomed trail was a delight to walk throughout. When I returned to camp, the dark raccoon ran down the tree again. It had been eating birdseed.

After a shwarma sandwich for supper, I put a minnow trap in the creek, then went up to Hurdle's. Nina mentioned that she hadn't seen a single swallow for about two weeks! closed the gate and walked through the gathering darkness to the trailer. About 10 pm my first customers showed up. A new mother ("Big Momma") appeared with a single malnourished kit, barely weaned. On the way

down to Wardsville, earlier, I saw several very young kits as roadkill. It appears that the second litter phenomenon, first noticed three years ago, is continuing. (This marks a big change in raccoon behaviour if it turns out to be a permanent trend.) Meanwhile, two other kits (nearly grown) with no mother in evidence, argued over birdseed, snarling and “roaring” at each other.

The overnight low was 7° C. This was just cool enough to discourage midnight wandering, so I sat in the trailer doing “homework.” Although I heard two or three screech owls calling at one time or another, it suddenly struck me that we hadn’t heard a Great Horned Owl in about two years. Is there a problem? In that time Wild Turkeys have become very common, instead of just occasional. Are the two species indirectly interacting? (e.g., WTs competing with GHO prey)

After breakfast in the morning I put on my work boots, only to be stung by a Polistes wasp that had been sleeping in one of them. It must have been a comical sight to see me dancing around the trailer, trying to kick off my shoe and knocking over everything in sight. The pain was almost all gone in about an hour. (Polistes (paper) wasps are my favorites.)

I went down to the creek armed with aquatic net, digital camera, ID materials, jars, ziploc bags, etc. There was only one fish in the minnow trap, a six-inch Pumpkinseed (unusual in a minnow trap). I released it. At the lower rapids, I did some kick-samples, finding two female Rainbow Darters (not new) and a small crayfish that turned out to be new. I wanted to photograph the crayfish, but my camera (apparently) had run “out of memory.”

Birds: (18)

American Crow (EW); American Robin (RSF); Baltimore Oriole (GF); Black-capped Chickadee (Tr); Blue Jay (Tr); Brown-headed Cowbird (GF); Common Grackle (RSF); Eastern Screech Owl (BCF); Gray Catbird (RL); Great Blue Heron (TR); Mallard (TR); Mourning Dove (GF); Northern Cardinal (GF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (GF); Song Sparrow (LM); Tufted Titmouse (Tr); Turkey Vulture (HL); White-breasted Nuthatch (FCF)

New species:

Northern Clearwater Crayfish *Orconectes propinquus* FC KD Au20/08

Phenology:

First katydids calling (one), goldenrod just coming into flower.

Regen Zone Inventory

strip #4: 10m wide, adj strip 3 -- same order
(16 trees: 10 p, 6 v)

| sp. | ht/growth | p/v |
|-----|------------|-----|
| RO | 8'' + 5'' | p |
| WA | 2' + 3'' | v |
| BW | 2' + 3'' | v |
| SM | 4.5' + 1' | p |
| SM | 5' + 2'' | p |
| RO | 8'' + 8'' | p |
| CT | 3' + 3'' | p |
| SiM | 4'(nipped) | p |
| WA | 3' + 0'' | v |
| SiM | 4.5' + 5'' | p |
| KC | 3' + 3'' | p |
| RB | 1.5'+5'' | p |
| RO | 6' + 0'' | p |
| BW | 1' + 6'' | v |
| WA | 5' + 2'' | v |
| BW | 0' + 8'' | v |

strip #5: 10 m wide, adj strip 4 -- same order
(21 trees; 9p, 12v)

| | | |
|---------------------------|------------|---|
| BW | 6' + 6'' | v |
| BW | 3' + 3'' | v |
| lg. gap: no trees planted | | |
| BW | 1.5' + 4'' | v |
| BW | 4' + 5'' | v |
| RO | 8'' + 5'' | p |
| BO* | 6'' + 1'' | p |
| BW | 4' + 4'' | v |
| SiM | 4' + 2'' | p |

| | | |
|-----|--------------|---|
| RO | 6' + 5" | p |
| RO | 6" + 6" | p |
| WA | 3' + 0" | v |
| SiM | 4.5'(nipped) | p |
| RO | 1' + 4" | p |
| BW | 4" + 10" | v |
| RB | 1' + 2" | p |
| WE | 6' + 1' | v |
| WA | 7' + 6" | v |

another gap: no trees planted

| | | |
|----|---------|---|
| BW | 4' + 5" | v |
| HL | 4' + 2' | p |
| BW | 2' + 2' | v |
| BW | 1' + 1" | v |