

Newport Forest Sunday October 11 2008

2:55 - 5:05/12

**Weather:** prec. 9 mm; RH 69%; BP 100.90 kPa; sn/hz; calm; T 27° C

**Purpose:** overnight stay & stewards walkabout

**Participants:** Pat, Kee -- plus Heather Campbell, Nina Hurdle, Bruce Parker, Frances Shamley, Mary Shamley

Coming in, we were treated to the sight of fall colours, as exemplified by a Sugar Maple at the head of the GF. (P) We noted, shortly after setting up camp, that there were Chipmunks at both feeder trays. Our attention was also attracted by a fine crop of apples on an escaped domestic apple tree in the GF bordering HBF. Behind it was a fully-fruited Climbing Bittersweet vine. (2P) The vicinity of the trailer was littered with the fall population blooms of Box Elder Bugs and Lady-beetles.

In the Nook we spent some time on a brown Jumping Spider that was new to us, but to no avail. A gorgeous green Tree Cricket strolled over the table as we worked on the spider.

We went to the RL before supper but did not venture far along the beach, owing to it being still partially submerged and VERY slippery. We spotted the usual gang of visitors, however: Canada Geese; Virginia Deer; Raccoons; Great Blue Herons, as well as the tracks of a young raccoon or skunk. I noticed the growth of a blue-green alga on the clay along the river's edge. (S) Returning to camp along ET, we took a wee detour along the BCT to see if we could spot turtlehead flowers anywhere. No luck. I collected an interesting white mushroom overgrown with algae by the path, however. (S)

We had supper late in the trailer, with dusk closing in around us and Eastern Screech Owls calling. Pat, whose hearing is somewhat better than mine, picked up the faint song of what may well be our last katydid of the season. I went up to close the gate, being joined by Nina's new kitty as I strode back to the van. When I got back to the trailer, I found a concerned-looking Pat who had a cat of her own to contend with: she had heard three cat-screams from the BCF while I was away. She described them as loud "yowls." (The call of a domestic cat would be totally inaudible at that distance.) At the same time, we found it somewhat ominous that the invariable raccoon presence following sunset had apparently been canceled. The camp remained uninhabited -- except for us.

It wasn't until nearly midnight that a lone, very large and nearly black male

raccoon (very shy and possibly new) was seen and heard eating kibble from the road -- later raiding the bird feeder. About this time we were visited by a screech owl at the very top of the Black Maple in the Nook. It called for about five minutes before falling silent.

By 11:00 pm the air temperature had fallen to 6° C under open skies and a full moon. Stars were hard to see because of a pervasive mist blanketing the area. We slept poorly, thanks to really bad colds that kept us coughing all night. (We later realized it had been stupid to try an overnighiter under these conditions.)

The day dawned grey and cool. We heard a gun go off across the river and the instant honking of a flock of Canada Geese startled into flight. I went down to the creek to check on things, finding the water unusually clear and running at 0.1 m/sec. A Green Frog called occasionally from upstream.

Going up to open the gate for the Stewards, we noticed a vehicle parked off-road by Janik's bush. There was camouflage gear and travel manuals inside: Silver/grey Ford Freestar van, lic. no. AKFX 859 from a Ford dealership in "Dresden, Wallaceburg, Oil Springs." (take your pick)

Our Stewards arrived and, following a brief snack in the Nook, we set off for the TRT, Past excused because of her cold and Heather because of a foot injury. We walked the TRT with little incident, me pointing out occasional features that would be worth noting when the stewards conducted tours of their own later. The Shamleys spotted a Yellow-rumped Warbler high in the RSF. Then Bruce found a nice Resinous Polypore growing at the base of a dead tree. (S) Later I collected a new crust fungus from the dead bark of a downed elm in the BCF.(S) Back at the Nook we met for a summary session, discussing the wish list and other TTLT matters.

### **Birds: (16)**

American Crow (FCF); American Gold Finch (LM); American Robin (RL); Black-capped Chickadee (BCF/LM); Blue Jay (Tr); Canada Goose (TR); Common Flicker (BCF); Downy Woodpecker (BCF/LM); Eastern Screech Owl (Nk); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); Red-tailed Hawk (HBF); Red-winged Blackbird (LM/HBF); Turkey Vulture (UM); White-breasted Nuthatch (GF); White-throated Sparrow (RSF); Yellow-rumped Warbler (RSF)

**New species:**

filamentous b/g alga

*Oscillatoria subbrevis*

TR KD Oc11/08

Note: the brown crust fungus appears to be a Hymenochaete, but with setae that are transparent, each surmounted by a tiny white globule! Will farm this out to mycologist Greg Thorn.