

## April 10 Visit to Newport Forest

Newport Forest Friday April 10 2009 3:20 - 5:35 pm

weather: prec. 12 mm; RH 50 %; BP 98.9 kPa; sn/hz; calm; T 16° C  
purpose: to check trail work  
participants: Kee

In spite of my filling three feeders, I saw very few birds today. Apart from the usual suspects, I spotted two sets of sparrows deep in the woods, but not White-throats or White-crowns and not our usual open-country species. As well, a large hawk flew right over my head too fast to ID, but probably a Harrier. The main beneficiary of the feeding operation was the Red Squirrel who, as it turns out, is extremely aggressive with the birds, chasing a Nuthatch half way around the old maple just to make sure it wouldn't come back anytime soon.

I walked the TRT, tending the trail cams on the way and collecting all the flags as I went. Congratulations to everyone who worked on the trails. It was a nice job and they're now ready for lining. The water recharge in the BCF is as complete as one could wish. The vernal ponds are so full, they have all joined up, making it impossible to tell which is which. The fairy shrimp have been out for a few weeks already and soon the bottoms will be littered with case-makers. Meanwhile the chorus frogs continue to call, but with a presence that is definitely reduced from former years. At one point I heard two Spring Peepers, my first for the year. I noticed several low chimneys of recent construction surrounding the shores. This would be a good time of year to go crayfishing; you tie a small piece of raw beef or liver to the end of some dental floss and lower it slowly into the depths of the chimney. Presently, when you pull on the floss, you may feel some resistance. Withdraw the floss slowly from the chimney and at the end, attached firmly to the meat by a pincer or two, you will see the denizen of the hole. With the aid of my crayfish key, the rest is easy. (The crayfish gets the meat as a reward for its cooperation.) I ran across (but not over) an Isabella Moth caterpillar looking for a place to complete its spiritual possibilities, as well as a Mourning Cloak, almost always the first butterfly of the year.

At the river landing I discovered a new burrow in the bank, about 3' above the present waterline. A slickened "run" descended the bank from the hole and the area had many Muskrat tracks (and only such tracks) in evidence (1" long, sharply pointed toes, double lobe on heel pad). Diagnosis: Muskratititis. I took an algal sample of Vernal Pond E (I think) to examine at home, where I found several Cyphoderia (new) browsing small algae from the surface of an empty filament of Spirogyra (at a guess).

birds:

American Crow (HB); American Goldfinch (LM); Black-capped Chickadee (GF); Canada Goose (TR); Downy Woodpecker (GF); Northern Cardinal (BCF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (EW); Turkey Vulture (EW); White-breasted Nuthatch

new species:

Testate amoeboid Cyphoderia ampulla VP KD Ap10/09

(plucks small algae with its filamentous pseudopods)

### IMAGES:

(click on image to enlarge)



Muskrat burrow & run

(click on image to enlarge)



Muskrat tracks

(click on image to enlarge)



this vernal pond(s) had a mere three Western Chorus Frogs calling...

(click on image to enlarge)



(but thousands of Cyphoderia in there, I'll bet)