

Mysteries of Newport Forest

Newport Forest Wednesday June 10 2009 2:20 - 5:50 pm

weather: prec. 25 mm; RH 66%; BP 99.0 kPa; ovcast; calm; T 24° C
purpose: trail & RZ maintenance
participants: Kee, Will

Almost as soon as we arrived, I realized that we had forgotten to bring bird seed (not that we should be feeding them during the warm seasons) so I had to improvise with ground up kibble. (not popular, except for the woodpeckers) We took our tools out to the river, but forgot to bring the saw, so we couldn't make pegs. However, we found and placed enough logs to line the trail from the RL up to the rim of the bluffs. Next time we can simply peg them in.

The mosquitoes turned out to be only a minor nuisance this time around. I asked Will to take the brush hook around the TRT to do some preliminary clearing. At the base of the HB, he spotted two rather small raccoon kits out for an arboreal excursion. The path is so overgrown in the BCF/HB, that Will wandered off trail & got lost for half an hour. But this was lucky, because he found a recently emerged sphinx moth that was torpid enough for him to carry by hand back to camp, where I could photograph it.

Coming out of the BCF, I changed batteries in Cam #1 and cards in both cameras. Cam #1 has a colony of tiny brown ants living behind the cover. (There is terrible confusion every time I change the cards.) While waiting for Will to get back to camp, I was visited in the Nook by Two-stripe, who gladly accepted a handful of kibble. Just before Two-stripe showed up, a barn cat (dark, longhair) shot out from behind the log and downslope to the creek. A Gray Tree Frog began to call from the lower GF near the creek. By now the sky had cleared right out and the temperature shot up a few more degrees. I noticed that one of the Black Cherries in the RZ looks somewhat chlorotic and has developed a leaf-spot fungus.

At this point another sound caught my attention: a rapid, 5-6- syllable ka-ka- . . ka, kyah. And later three descending coos. I would say that I was listening to the Yellow-billed Cuckoo again, but am not sure enough to add it to today's list (already short through lack of birdseed).

Will returned from the woods with a Sphinx moth cupped in his hand. I took a picture, thinking it was almost certain not to be a new species, as we have nine sphinx moths on the list already. Wrong. This particular species of sphinx moth is said to be "widely distributed, but uncommon." Alright, ten sphinx moths. Will spotted a tabby-striped cat dashing up the farm track. I thought it was probably Nina's new cat -- not necessarily good news for our chipmunk population.

We next set to work in the Regeneration Zone (RZ) near the edge of the BCF, cutting three (heaping) wheelbarrow loads of thorn trees and adding them to the ever-growing pile beside the parking zone. While there, I noticed that the Hop Tree has started to bloom, with its unique sweet scent. Closing camp, we took a large garbage bag full of mulch for the trees by the gate. While mulching the trees, I could have sworn a Giant Swallowtail flew right over my head, but by the time I focused, it could have been a Tiger Swallowtail. It was one or the other. We saw no Bobolinks in the UM on the way out, but I spotted one on the fence along the Beattie Line.

leps:

Clouded Sulphur (UM); Monarch (LM); One-eyed Sphinx Moth (BCF); Red-spotted Purple (LM)

birds: (13)

American Robin (HBF); Blue Jay (GF); Brown-headed Cowbird (LM); Common Grackle (LM); Eastern Towhee (BCF); Field Sparrow (LM); Great Crested Flycatcher (BCF); Northern Cardinal (BCF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (GF); Red-winged Blackbird (RL); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (HBF); Song Sparrow (HBF); Tree Swallow (UM/Rd)

phenology: Hop Tree starting to bloom

new species:

Dark Renia Renia sobrialis RL nz/KD Sp25/05
One-eyed Sphinx Smerinthus cerisyi BCF wc/KD Je10/09

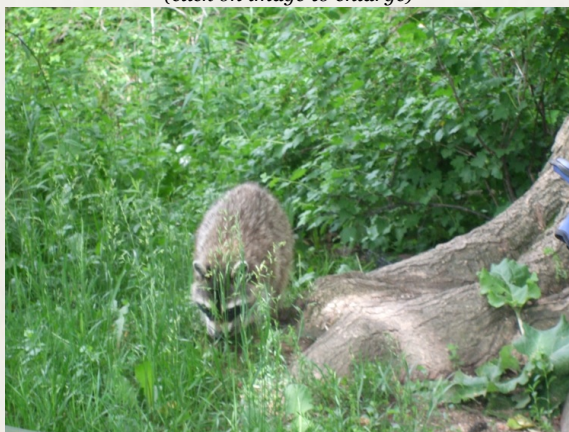
IMAGES:

(click on image to enlarge)



One-eyed Sphinx Moth (just emerged and still a bit wrinkled)

(click on image to enlarge)



Two-stripe grabs a lunch minus her kit