

# Crayfishing a Failure

Newport Forest Monday June 15 2009 2:05 - 8:35 pm

weather: precip. 7 mm; RH 61%; BP 99.5 kPa; sn/cld; calm; T 28° C  
purpose: crayfishing  
participants: Pat, Kee

After settling into the Nook to plan our day, we noticed Two Stripe watching us from the nursery box -- followed by her kit (which has the same facial markings), little realizing the revelations that lay ahead. Later Two-stripe would come down to share the birdseed with the birds and a lone chipmunk.

I scouted along Edgar's Trail (ET) for chimneys, finding only one west of the trail at the Elbow, the others all being in or along the dry bed of Blind Creek by the trail. The mosquitoes were bothersome and I did not relish the thought of the upcoming fishing expedition. I marked the chimneys with flags, changed the card in Trail Cam #1 and came back to camp.

We prepared several bait-lines made of dental floss and strips of raw liver, then headed back into the woods, armed with baits & baggies. We slid a bait down each of four chimneys and, not getting any immediate "bites," repaired to the river for a sit-down in a shady new nook we found with a big log to sit on. The beach is still under water, but just beginning to emerge. I spotted a female Widow Skimmer perched on a reed at the RL.

Back on the bed of Blind Creek (now pretty much dried up for the summer) we found two of the baits had been entirely consumed, one partially and the fourth not at all. No crayfish came up with the lines, but at least they're down there. Next time, we'll just have to stay and watch our lines (like good fishers should).

On the way back, I spotted a beautiful Amber Snail (referring to virtually any local species of *Oxyloma* or *Succinea* -- *Succineidae*) on a leaf by the Elbow in ET, so took a picture (see below). Seeing any of our few native snails always cheers me up -- The European Striped Snail hasn't "won" yet! Pat collected a possible new sedge nearby. She also pointed out a *Rosa canina* (Dog Rose) now in bloom by the track in the LM.

Next we drove up to the UM, parked at the water tank, and walked over to the East Ravine (ER), where we hoped to find more chimneys. Perhaps the reason we found none is that the stream there is purely ephemeral and dries up by mid-spring -- not burrowing crayfish habitat (?) It IS the habitat of the Least Flycatcher, however. Coming out, Pat found an *Asparagus* plant in the middle of the UM -- we are obliged to add it to the species list.

Inspecting the RZ, I discovered that virtually all of the small oaks I've planted over the last three years have not only survived, but have put on several inches, thanks to the excellent growing conditions this spring. The Black Cherries may be in a spot of trouble, possibly nutrient-related, (not Black Knot of *Prunus*) so I may try a special fertilizer on them. Everything else is going gangbusters, including Jane's *Sassafras*, of which we are especially proud. It "likes" its spot on the edge of the GF, now with over a foot of new growth.

Sitting in the Nook, we were astonished when Two Stripe emerged from the nursery box with not just one, but four little kits. (see photo below) This was a surprise because we thought she had just one. While she and the kits raided the bird feeder (an ancient & honorable practice) two more raccoons showed up to raid the other feeder. (This was the pair we called "The Interlopers" during our recent overnight stay.) The Nook, meanwhile, was literally crawling with rather large (2.2 cm) winged ants that looked like Carpenter Ant Queens -- off to seek their fortunes in decaying logs.

There were not many butterflies out today. We spotted a Tiger swallowtail prowling in the vicinity of the trailer, as well as a few others we didn't bother to ID.

birds; (25)

American Goldfinch (LM); American Robin (GF); Blue Jay (Tr); Brown-headed Cowbird (GF); Brown Thrasher (Rd); Common Grackle (GF); Common Yellowthroat (BCF/LM); Eastern Kingbird (UM); Eastern Towhee (BCF); Field Sparrow (LM); Gray Catbird (BCF); Great Crested Flycatcher (RL); House Wren (Hl); Mourning Dove (Tr); Northern Cardinal (Tr); Northern Oriole (FC); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); Red-tailed Hawk (TR); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (Tr); Song Sparrow (GF); Tree Swallow (UM); Turkey Vulture (TR); White-breasted Nuthatch (BCF); Wood Thrush (FCF); Yellow Warbler (FC)

new species:

Large Maple Spanworm *Prochoerodes transversata* RL nz/KD Sp25/05  
'Two-banded Crane Fly' *Limonia cinctipes* RL nz/KD Sp25/05

Escaped *Asparagus officinalis* UM PD Je15/09

## IMAGES:

[\(click on image to enlarge\)](#)

[\(click on image to enlarge\)](#)



*Two Stripe with 1/4 of brood looks out of nursery box*



*Amber snail in BCF veg (dark eyes on tentacles just peeping out front) body approx. 1.5 cm long*