

A Thursday Visit

Newport Forest Thursday February 4 2010 2:40 - 6:10 pm

weather: prec. 17 mm; RH 76 %; BP 100/2 kPa; calm; hz/sn; T +1° C
purpose: check property + tracking
participants: Kee

The snow cover is approximately half gone from the property, with south-facing slopes entirely bare. Average snow depth in the vicinity of the trailer is now about 4 cm. The river had high water for a good 24 hours during the last cold snap, forming inch-thick ice that later, when the water subsided, broke up, leaving hanging ice along the bank, looking today like so much shattered crockery.

After setting out the feeds, I took an old sheep's head (from an unfinished exotic meal project) and set it out in front of the trail cam as bait. I then walked the TRT (Thames River Trail), noting an extension of the frozen area another 100 m or so downstream from the bend. Passing through the RSF (Riverside Forest), I happened to spot Delbert Sittler's old "hermit shack" across the river and took a picture for the record. There was little life about. I heard a Pileated at work in the BCF after spotting some large excavations on the side of a dead (and still-standing) Bitternut. I was dismayed to see that the (second-) last of the giant willows has now fallen over, with the BCF looking increasingly like a war zone and the canopy now over 50% open, whereas it was 90 % closed when we first came on the property in 2000. The loss of so many trees is reflected in our healthy woodpecker populations (see bird list below).

Tracks along the TRT included Raccoon, Wild Turkey, Eastern Cottontail, Coyote, feral cat, Eastern Gray Squirrel, and Virginia Deer. (Near the trailer I spotted tracks of a (probable) jumping mouse.) At one point in the BCF I found a puzzling series of parallel score marks in the snow by the trail. These turned out to be marks made by male Wild Turkeys carrying out displays for the benefit of females. This is early for turkey displays but gives yet another indication of our mild winter and (possible) early spring.

At home I looked at the trail cam images, noting several deer, a squirrel, a raccoon and lots of turkeys.

birds: (9)

Black-capped Chickadee (Tr); Dark-eyed Junco (HP); Downy Woodpecker (Tr); Hairy Woodpecker (GF); Mourning Dove (GF); Pileated Woodpecker (BCF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr); Wild Turkey (BCF)

new species:

truncate paramecium Paramecium trichium TR KD Nv29/09
twisted pseudocolpid Tillinia [canalifera] LM KD Nv29/09

Note: hay infusions still going strong, with Paramecium spp & Colpidium still dominating the Thames River jars and several new flagellates (which are not in my manuals) in the Lower Meadow (soil) jars. Tillinia is a new one for me, as well as for the Newport log.

IMAGES:

(click on image to enlarge)

(click on image to enlarge)



When male Wild Turkeys display, they fan their tails and drag their wingtips -- as here.

(click on image to enlarge)



*tracks of (probable) Meadow Jumping Mouse (heading toward camera) *Zapus hudsonicus* has been spotted several times on the property, so we know it's there.*



Stealth Cam 01/31/2010 10:45:27 ● 12F

Two male Wild Turkeys pass trail cam

(click on image to enlarge)



Stealth Cam 01/25/2010 11:34:06 ◐ 30F

the trail cam is sensitive enough to pick up smaller birds, like these two male Cardinals. Note absence of snow cover in late January.