

## Birding & Invasive Trees

Newport Forest Thursday May 20 2010 2:00 - 8:00 pm

weather: prec. 1 mm; RH 40%; BP 101.9 kPa; calm; sn/hz; 30° C

purpose: birding etc.

participants: Pat. Kee

We were no sooner seated in the Nook for a spell of passive birding (my favorite kind) when we heard the Yellow-billed Cuckoo give its "kwa-ka-ka-ka . . ." call from the Fleming Creek Forest. Later, around 6 pm it started to give its "rain call", a repeated consonantal\* "kooo." Between birds we were entertained by a variety of mammals that came to visit the old Black Maple by the Nook. First a Red Squirrel that has young in a nearby Bitternut snag, then a Chipmunk or two. Much later (around 6:30 pm) a pair of female raccoons showed up for kibble before their brothers came in to spoil their dinner. One of these has kits, we couldn't tell about the other. (All are apparently the offspring of Two-stripe, last year's resident matron who started with seven kits.)

Last week we removed two Russian Olive "trees" by the Hole, leaving several still growing by the trail along the bottom of the Lower Meadow. It seemed a pity, as we stood before one of them, drowning in its perfume and marveling at the butterflies and bees that had come to drink its nectar, that these too would have to go. Among the visitors was a Silver-spotted Skipper, our earliest record for this species.

We walked to the river to pick up some shorebirds, getting very little trouble from mosquitoes on the way. We watched from the bluffs bench, seeing NONE of our old standbys such as the Spotted Sandpiper, Killdeer, Cedar Waxwing, or Great Blue Heron, for that matter. We spotted a possible Hooded Merganser (with young) well upriver at the mouth of the creek, then swallows that hunted so high overhead that we couldn't be sure that they were, in fact, Bank Swallows. Pat did, however, catch an Indigo Bunting just before it flew into a tree. Returning along the bluffs trail, we spotted our second Common Buckthorn on the property. The shrub will be removed on the next visit. (There may be others behind it, upslope, as well.) Inspecting the river bluffs from the Landing revealed the annual spring migration of the hummocks, as we call it. These are blocks of soil knit by sedges & grasses, that slide slowly and unsteadily down the bluffs to the river. The bluff system, being merely the butt-end of the Hogsback, will be a long time eroding and the river may well turn away in the next 50 years, anyway.

I took a surface sample from Vernal Pond B before we departed.

\*readily distinguishing it from the Mourning Dove

Birds (30):

American Crow (BCF); American Goldfinch (Rd); American Robin (FC); Black-capped Chickadee (FC); Blue Jay (GF); Brown-headed Cowbird (Tr); Canada Goose (TR); Common Flicker (GF); Common Grackle (GF); Common Yellowthroat (EW); Downy Woodpecker (BCF); Eastern Kingbird (UM); Eastern Towhee (BCF); Field Sparrow (FC); Gray Catbird (FCF); Great Crested Flycatcher (GF); House Wren (GF); Indigo Bunting (TR); Mallard (TR); Mourning Dove (GF); Northern Cardinal (BCF); Northern Oriole (GF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (GF); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (GF); Song Sparrow (LM); Tree Swallow (Rd); Turkey Vulture (UM); White-breasted Nuthatch (BCF); Yellow-billed Cuckoo (FCF); Yellow Warbler (HBF/LM)

Pat's remark: "If the Wakes had been here, we'd have 40 species."

Leps: (6)

Cabbage White; Eastern Tiger Swallowtail; Meadow Fritillary; Mourning Cloak; Red Admiral; Silver-spotted Skipper

phenology:

Silver-spotted Skipper out, Cream Violets in bloom, Honeysuckle in bloom, mosquito rate = 5-6 bites; tick rate = 1

new species

'Common Pond Cyclops' Eucyclops sp. VPB KD My20/10

Note 1: This tiny crustacean gets its name from Greek mythology, Cyclops being the one-eyed giant that assailed Ulysses on his epic voyage. These critters have only one (central) eye.

Note 2: I could have recorded this genus several times in the past, but every time I encountered it, I assumed I had already done so!

**IMAGES:**

*(click on image to enlarge)*



*Glauca or Red Honeysuckle is open for business and getting lots of attention from bumblebees.*

*(click on image to enlarge)*



*(Newport Forest is a rather viney sort of place, with at least seven different species of woody vine and about as many herbaceous.)*

*Sugar Maple planted 4 years ago in the Blind Creek Forest -- lots of Beeches have been planted and doing well, too.*

*(click on image to enlarge)*



*New matron (?) (left) and her sister (right) dine out early\* a la bois \*raccoon politics*