

Two Day Stay

Newport Forest Sunday May 23 2010 2:50/5:25 pm

weather: prec. 11 mm; RH 59%; BP 102.5 kPa; calm; sn/hz; T 28° C

purpose: two-day stay

participants: Pat. Kee

I inspected the Regen Zone upon arrival, noting that some of the younger trees hard hit by the recent frost had yet to break bud. They may not leaf out at all this year, but remain dormant until next spring. Or they may be dead. Of course, the great majority of trees are leafing out nicely, in any case. I am always happy, as I was on this occasion, to find one of our native land snails during this tour. The Checkerboard Snail (*Anguispira alternata*) has banded whorls that collectively build a black and white checkerboard effect.

There were lots of birds calling on site and we picked up about 20 spp by ear during the first hour. We walked up to the Cope, where Pat found a new plant for the species record: Clustered Snakeroot (Carrot Family). Returning to camp along the side of the creek bluffs, I found to my surprise quite a few Bitternut saplings and young trees, ranging in dbh from 1" to 4", all of them apparently healthy. I also noticed that many of the young trees in this section of the Gallery Forest had also been hit by the frost, with similar results.

The chipmunks raided the feeders, as usual, then a Red squirrel infant showed up at the feeding tree, confirming last week's inference that the female Red Squirrel had babies. Then a Grey Gray squirrel showed up, i.e., an Eastern Gray Squirrel with grey fur, rather than black fur, a rare sight at Newport Forest. Once again the senior (i.e., dominant) daughter of the raccoon matron Two-stripe showed up, even earlier than she did last week. When the junior daughter showed up a few minutes later, her sister growled and chased her away from the Nook. (No honour among raccoons.)

We walked to the river after supper, assailed for the first time by enough mosquitoes to be bothersome. A Northern Oriole sang at the river and we saw a Bald Eagle fly across the water. On the way back, Pat heard some Spring Peepers calling from the upper vernal ponds, but I missed them.

All afternoon we had been hearing rock music coming from the south, too loud to be from Cleveland. At first we thought it must be from Ruth Ann Newport's place, but later, when I went up to close the gate, I ran into Edgar Hurdle, who thought the sound was coming from the Beauregard farm one line to the south (the Gibb Line). According to Edgar, they had a son named "Jughead" that might be apt to do that sort of thing. But next day we learned that there had been a teen drinking party (with screaming and yelling until about 2:30 am) at the Purcell property (basically a bush lot, near the corner of Gibb Line and the Furnival Road. Eva Newport slept very poorly that night. (human ecology)

Upon my return from the gate, Pat showed me a gigantic spider sitting on the trailer floor. The front-to-back leg spread would have been a good two inches. I took the spider outside to photograph it, but my camera got the wrong focus (That's right, blame the camera.) and I could not say anything about the species, except that it appeared to be a large Wolf Spider. (*Lycosidae* with over 100 spp.)

We argued about the Spring Peepers. I couldn't hear them, but Pat could. I walked to the Hole, the better to listen. Yup. There WAS a call rather like the Spring Peeper, albeit a little brief. Was it a Spring Peeper? Probably.

After midnight, the party continued at full blast, possibly inhibiting the owls. I could hear some toads trilling, however. Just before turning in for the night, I heard a single raccoon kit burbling outside the trailer. Pat heard it too. Would that belong to the new matron? Let's give her a name: Wanda (recycled from a rather aggressive female that we once partially rehabbed back in the Forest City years ago). Wanda's brothers are both called "Waldo," and neither showed up for dinner after dark. This may well be due to the very protective behaviour of mother raccoons that is not unlike that of mother bears. Anything that gets too close to the kits gets attacked without mercy. We have heard/seen invading males chased up trees and out limbs, where they whine like babies, begging for mercy, while the female barks and snarls her displeasure.

Next morning we sat in the Nook having coffee and enjoying a light rain of spiderlings that seemed to be falling (jumping?) out of the Black Maple overhead. We decided to work on the trails a bit, so we took a load of chip mulch to the Blind Creek Trail, where Pat pulled a ton of Garlic Mustard and I chipped another 20 feet of trail before continuing on over the Hogsback and down into the Riverside Forest. Here the trail is getting grown over rather rapidly and we'll have to visit with a crew soon. The swallows were out over the river again and again too high to make out clearly.

Pat's rationale for the Garlic Mustard makes sense: you pull whole plants, roots and all, and stow them in garbage bags

for later disposal. We spent the rest of the day getting ready to leave and doing small jobs such as changing the trail cam card and cleaning camp.

We hope that Stewards who read these reports do not come to regard Newport Forest as (somehow) our private preserve. Far from it! Some of you already have gate keys, but those who don't merely have to borrow the Hurdle's key. Come in, grab a hoe, and scrape overgrown trails to improve cardiovascular health -- or go birding to relieve boredom. Bring a picnic lunch if you like.

birds: (34)

American Crow (EW); American Goldfinch (LM); American Robin (FC); Bald Eagle (TR); Black-capped Chickadee (GF); Blue Jay (LM); Brown-headed Cowbird (Tr); Canada Goose (TR); Common Flicker (GF/E); Common Grackle (FCF); Common Yellowthroat (LM); Downy Woodpecker (Tr); Eastern Bluebird (Rd); Eastern Towhee (BCF); Field Sparrow (LM); Gray Catbird (FC); Great Blue Heron (LM); Great Crested Flycatcher (BCF); Hairy Woodpecker (Tr); Mallard (TR); Mourning Dove (GF); Northern Cardinal (BCF); Northern Oriole (TR); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); Red-eyed Vireo (HBF/LM); Red-tailed Hawk (HBF); Red-winged Blackbird (HP); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (GF); Song Sparrow (FC); Tree Swallow (Rd); Turkey Vulture (HBF); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr); Wild Turkey (HL); Yellow Warbler (GF)

new species:

Red Spindle Gall Mite *Vasates aceriscrumena* GF pd/KD My23/10
Maple Bladder Gall Mite *Vasates quadripedes* RZ KD My23/10
'Green Immigrant Weevil' *Polydrusus [sericeus]** GF KD My24/10
Clustered Snakeroot *Sanicula gregaria* CPs PD My23/10

*has lookalike *P. impressifrons* with sinuate elytral margin

phenology: Cercopids (spit insects) out; first grasshopper; mosquitoes becoming bothersome (20 bites)

tick race: Kee 2, Pat 1

IMAGES:

The Wood Tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*) on my pant leg. The pattern on the cephalothorax (the "shield") is often intricate and, as the name implies, rather variable. I presume you could identify individual ticks using this pattern, paving the way to keeping them as pets.

We have a good dozen images of a Blue Jay that has taken to perching on our metre-post in front of the trail-cam.

(click on image to enlarge)



click for a clear image of this tiny green snout beetle:

(click on image to enlarge)



*The Wood Tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*) on my pant leg. The pattern on the cephalothorax (the "shield") is often intricate and, as the name implies, rather variable. I presume you could identify individual ticks*

(click on image to enlarge)



The male has a decorated abdomen, too, but the female's abdomen is always a solid black, this one being a male. (Drag to desktop for better view.)

*using this pattern, paving the way to
keeping them as pets.*