

Newport Forest

Monday November 29 2010

2:45 - 5:20 pm

Weather: prec. 39 mm; RH 70%; BP 102.4; cld/sn; calm; T 8° C

Purpose: to winterize camp

Participants: Kee

My arrival and departure today were marked symmetrically by the overflight of a large bird. Coming in, I was startled when a young Red-tailed Hawk flew right in front of my van windshield. And just before I left, a Great Blue Heron flew over the Lower Meadow while I watched in wonderment. Shouldn't it have gone south by now? (In recent decades there has been an increase in winter sightings of this bird, but not by us.)

Between these sightings, I saw few birds. I was further disappointed to see that the trail camera had been stolen. My guess is that hunters (who knew they were trespassing) realized that the camera had taken their picture and so decided to get rid of the evidence. They obviously had little technical knowledge; instead of unstrapping the camera, all they had to do was pop it open and remove the SD card. I would have appreciated that much, anyway.

Not one to whine about a missing camera, I walked the Thames River Trail, passing the river and over the bluffs, where I succeeded in "pishing in" about 5 or 6 Chickadees, one of whom settled on a branch barely a metre from my head. My success at this art has increased greatly in recent months, thanks to some revisions in my dental work. I can now make a variety of high-pitched whistles and squeaking noises that were previously beyond me.

At 3:05 pm I heard a single rifle shot off to the west, about a kilometre away.

I was pleased, coming down from the Hogsback, to see that the Blind Creek Forest has reverted to its swampy condition, thanks to the great rain we just had. (39 mm) The precipitation shortfall, as a result, has fallen to 18.4%

Birds: (6)

American Crow (FCF); Black-capped Chickadee (RB); Common Flicker (TR); Great Blue Heron (LM); Red-tailed Hawk (HL); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr)

IMAGES:

Blind Creek is back! Or is it? After a good rain, the Blind Creek bed and other low-lying areas fill with water and the area becomes swampland once again.



History Theme: A powwow at the Moraviantown First Nation in the summer of 2005. Everyone is in their finery as they perform the Grand Entrance Dance. Most of the outfits are elaborate versions of southwest tribal costume, now very popular with eastern and northern tribes whose ancestors never saw the like.



The Moraviantown Reserve was established by the Moravian Fathers in 1790 after a long series of setbacks and abandoned towns, stretching from the Hudson valley across to the “frontier” at Detroit.

Just across the river from the Moraviantown Reserve, the Great Warrior Tecumseh fought his last battle with the whites at Fairfield in 1813. This monument marks the battle site and memorializes Tecumseh, born a Shawnee in the Ohio Valley.



General Willam Henry Harrison, later to become US President, led a force of American troops up the Thames River (on the Longwood Road) in pursuit of General Proctor, his British Regulars, and a force of several hundred native warriors. Something of a coward, Proctor kept putting off the fight to retreat further up the road. Tecumseh repeatedly urged Proctor to stop and make a fight of it. “Will my White Father run like a woman?” Tecumseh was killed by a musket ball to his abdomen.

Tecumseh was allegedly shot by a Kentucky rifleman, not the army regular shown here.



Image Credit: Canadian National Archives

There are conflicting reports of what happened to Tecumseh's body. My theory is that his comrades took it across the river and upstream to keep it out of the hands of the Americans. Naturally, when they came to Newport Forest, they buried it. This works for me. . .