

Newport Forest

Friday February 25 2011

2:55 - 4:25 pm

Weather: prec. 9 mm; RH 86%; BP 101.2 kPa; cld/sn; N \leq 45 kmh; T -2° C

Purpose: winter visit

Participants: Kee

I squeezed through the snowbound gate to get into the property and walked down to the trailer in the Lower Meadow, noting as I went that not a single deer track crossed mine. High winds from the north had blown all day, making new drifts of fresh snow and obscuring all tracks. Nevertheless, snow depths had now decreased to about 4-8". Had there been a thaw?

I brought winter rations with me in the garboggan, marveling once more at the comparative ease with which the garbage bag slid over the fresh snow. I found another 9 mm of precipitation in the snow pail. Our probable total for the first two months of the year will not fulfill my hope of 150 mm, but will come in at about 115. Probably no banner year ahead, but a pretty good snowpack to melt into the roots of trees, both old and young.

I went down Edgar's Trail to make a food drop at the Elbow and to change the card on the trail cam. (83 images!) I put extra food under the trailer in case the possum was still around. Walking down to the creek, I found fresh possum tracks crossing the trail. Frankly I marvel that a possum can survive winter at all, with naked tail, ears and (worst of all) feet: They are hairless and pink. The tracks betrayed the slow and deliberate gait of the possum, almost reptilian. Paws are folded under the leg on the forward swing, making a drag mark with each step.

There had been a flood in the creek, with a high-water mark indicated by hanging ice a good 12' above the normal creek level. That meant a corresponding flood in the river, as it backed up into the creek.

There were no birds around at all. At one point I heard a crow in the distance and, at another, a Canada Goose. I put out winter bird rations in the two tray feeders.

IMAGES:



Fallen willow decked with fresh snow. Might be some good denning sites under there!



Hanging ice tells story of a flood. The thickness (2") tells us about the duration and the hanging ice in the foreground tree tells us the height (12') of the crest. Cakes along far shore and beyond have all settled as flood subsided.



Within a night of our last visit to the site, this Eastern Cottontail hopped across the Hole, caught in the flash. On two consecutive nights, this guy (?) succeeded in triggering the camera some 50 times. He may have been making for the deer feeder about 40' ahead, recently filled with what the feed store called "Kritter Kibble". [ignore time stamp: this is not August 21 2005 !]