

Newport Forest

Wednesday October 26

2:35 - 6:15 pm

**Weather:** prec. 7 mm; RH 87%; BP 101.3 kPa; N 5 kmh; ovcst; T 8° C

**Purpose:** maintenance and fungi collecting

**Participants:** Kee, Brian

The weather on site was cold and damp. Brian set to work on repairing the trailer roof, while I checked the Nook area, only to discover a flock of about 20 White-throated Sparrows apparently waiting for me to fill the feeder tray. How did they know I would do that? They must have been here during my visit with Pat last Sunday. We just didn't see them.

I took the Thames River Trail in search of fungi. As I expected, there were quite a few different species fruiting and I succeeded in snagging a new species, even as I gave the nod to some old friends. Sometimes I visualize the mycelial network, whether in ground or rotting wood, that puts forth these mushrooms and brackets. If you could magically remove all the wood from an old log, leaving only the various mycelial networks, a log-shaped ghost of tiny white threads would appear.

Passing Edgar's Elbow on my way to the river, I made a stop to examine a large white bracket fungus on a fallen willow. In the act of drawing close, I noticed a sweet fragrance, almost floral. What flower was blooming at this late date? None. The scent was coming from the bracket itself, quite strong. Then I remembered: this was *Oligoporus Caesius*, or 'Sweet Bracket', as I call it informally. (It has no official common name.) I also found a new-for-us species of *Collybia* sprouting along the same log in a troop of scattered clusters. (See IMAGES below.) I then made a side-trip along the bed of Blind Creek, finding numerous Turkeytails of every colour on almost every log. There were also healthy growths of a milky white crust fungus called *Irpex lacteus*. I made my way back to the main trail, stepping over numerous Bitternut logs from the great Scolytus infestation of '06. Before leaving the Elbow, I spotted an algal growth on some bark and took some.

Speaking of sweet smells, a little later I Passed the now-fallen "honey tree" in which Steve discovered a wild bee hive last July. I purloined a large piece of comb from its hollow. Not a drop of honey in the comb, merely a remnant fragrance. No bees showed up.

From the river bluffs I could see that the Thames was still high enough to cover Mussel Beach. Meanwhile, Fleming Creek has dropped to near-normal levels and is running again. In the Riverside Forest I took another side-trip, this time to the

Sand Bar. The vegetation had died back enough that I could once again make out the rolling, dune-like topography of the place.

As I clambered up the Hogsback, the sun broke out of the clouds and the air warmed perceptibly. A large buck had used the same trail a day or two earlier, judging from the oversize hoof-prints in the mud. After a wee sit-down on the Hogsback, I descended into Blind Creek Forest by the “back door”, one might say. A happy consequence of having the trail lined by logs is that one walks a virtual gallery of wood-digesting fungi as one proceeds. I accidentally kicked a colony of puffballs on one of these logs, enveloping myself in a brown spore cloud.

Back to the trailer, picking up a log with one of the healthiest lichen growths I’d ever seen, a new species of *Physcia*. We cleaned up debris from the repairs, then headed home.

### **Birds: (6)**

American Crow (BCF/W); American Robin (BCF); Black-capped Chickadee (GF); Blue Jay (GF); White-breasted Nuthatch (BCF); White-throated Sparrow (GF);

### **New Species:**

Pretzel Slime	<i>Hemitrichia serpula</i>	Autumn 2010
Powdery Rosette Lichen	<i>Physcia americana</i>	ET/elbow KD Oc27/11
‘Velvet Collybia’	<i>Collybia velutipes</i>	ET/elbow KD Oc27/11

**ID aftermath:** The alga on bark at Edgar’s Elbow turned out to be a subaerial form of *Mougeotia*. This habitat is poorly documented for *Mougeotia*. The slime is an earlier find that I missed recording.

### **Precipitation report:**

Total precipitation so far for 2011 is 1027 mm. Previous record: 1227 mm in ‘08.

### **Phenology:**

Goldenrod flower heads grey; end of composite season generally

### **IMAGES:**



Source: Cornell Ornith. Lab.

Soon our White-throats will depart for their winter grounds in the southern United States. There they will advertise the north by singing “Oh, Canada, Canada, Canada!”



FinePix

A Troop of *Collybia* mushrooms sprout on this old willow log.



FinePix

As I walked the Blind Creek Trail, I failed to spot this cluster of puffballs on a rotting trail-liner at my feet. A brownish cloud enveloping my legs was the only hint that I had accidentally scuffed these Pear-shaped Puffballs (*Lycoperdon pyriforme*). When ready to release its spores, each ball forms a pore at its top, as seen here. Spores emerge at the slightest disturbance.