

Newport Forest

Sunday November 6 2011

1:35 - 5:05 pm

Weather: prec. 0mm; RH 58%; BP 102.6 kPa; sn/hz; SW 10-20 kmh; T 20° C

Purpose: winterizing camp (Phase1)

Participants: Pat, Kee

As far as “winterizing” went, we did far less than we intended to today, seduced as always by forest & stream. I tried to carry the canoe up from the creek bluffs, but was surprised by the weight. Normally, this 40-lb ultralite hoists easily to one’s shoulders for ease of portage. But the bulkheads had filled with creek water and I nearly had a hernia struggling upslope with something like 80-90 lbs.

We were going to seal the trailer windows, but we cleaned the trailer a little, anyway. Then Pat went birding, spying a flock of about a dozen Cedar Waxwings flying over Harvey’s Bean Field. She also spotted what might be our last Anglewing butterfly, as well as our last Suplhur. Meanwhile, I refurbished both trail cams, but could only replace one, as no batteries were available for the second.

We walked to the river, Pat going first, while I could catch up later. Nearing the river, she spotted a large Bald Eagle flying from a Blind Creek treetop and accompanied by another Eagle already in flight overhead. When I caught up at the Landing, we noticed that Mussel Beach was still a no-go zone, still under water.

“I can’t believe how many walnuts there are this year,” said Pat as we trundled along the Blind Creek Trail on our way to visit the Honey Tree. “I’ll bet you could fill three dump trucks from these woods alone,” I suggested. The hulls are all rotting nicely, turning black and falling away from the inner shells. Pat wondered how much the squirrels would benefit.

“How much farther?” She kept asking. “Just another hundred metres or so.” “You keep saying that!” Pat’s low energy levels were starting to tell, so I marched briskly on ahead to find the tree and give her some idea of how far she had yet to go. The tree was farther than I remembered it being, but there were the combs. Waiting for Pat to show up, I rolled several logs in the vicinity, hoping to come across a newt or salamander. “No newts is bad newts,” I muttered to myself.

Pat was suitably impressed by the combs. We sat for a rest on some nearby logs, where Pat noticed a slime mold fruiting on another log nearby. She brushed the little orange growths and a tiny yellow cloud emerged. I am far from being up to

speed on slimes, but I took a specimen. Examining it later under the 10 X dissecting microscope, I could see the tiny spore capsules (sporangia?) about half a mm in diameter and already starting to crack open, each revealing its network of filaments called a capilitium, responsible for generating the spores. The capsules were orangey brown, with slightly roughened surfaces and the capilitia were much the same colour. I thought they might belong to the genus *Metatrichia* according to my meagre sources.

Back to standard time, we found the sun setting “early” so we made what haste we could back to camp for a final cleanup. Stopping by for a quick visit to the Hurdles (who live just across the road from the man gate), I spotted a Great Blue Heron flying out of their pond as the sun slowly descended behind the Hogsback.

Birds: (11)

American Crow (UM); American Robin (GF/FC); Bald Eagle (BCF/TR); Black-capped Chickadee (Tr); Blue Jay (BCF); Cedar Waxwing (HBF); Dark-eyed Junco (GF); Great Blue Heron (HP); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); Red-tailed Hawk (EW); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr)

Phenology: Milkweed seeds flying; of the larger trees, only Red Oak and American Beech have any leaves left and these will mostly “winter over” in their brown state; last Angewing and Sulphur butterflies?

Note on ATBI progress:

The current total species count stands at **1759**

Plantae	472
Animalia	878
Protista	169
Fungi & Lichens	224
Eubacteria	16

Newport Forest Website: Visit the website to read a general description of Newport Forest and to view past Bulletins (scroll to bottom for archive.)

<http://www.akd@csd.uwo.ca/~akd/>

IMAGES:



FinePix

Revisiting the (new) honey tree: Naked combs hang from this willow at the far end of the Blind Creek Forest. Dark area on second comb (behind) consists entirely of bees! (sunning themselves?) We intend to monitor these combs over the winter.



FinePix

Fall Fruits Theme: The Bladdernut is a very common (small) tree at Newport Forest. The bark is heavily speckled and streaked with white and each “bladder” seen in this picture consists of three chambers, each with a single, smooth brown seed dangling inside. The seeds may be “eaten like pistachios”, according to one source or may be crushed to obtain a “fine cooking oil”, according to another.



FinePix

I'm kicking myself for not examining the seeds in this raccoon scat, gathered from the ground nearby and placed on a log to photograph. I assumed they were grapes, but it occurs to me now that they look more like Carrion-flower berries. It seems typical of such deposits that the berries (of whatever type) seem never to be chewed up, but simply consumed whole and barely digested, from the look of them.