

**Newport Forest**

Saturday December 17 2011

2:30 - 5:20 pm

**Weather:** prec 15 mm; RH 74%; BP 102.6 kPa; calm; ovcst; T -2° C

**Purpose:** to collect water samples at Vernal Ponds

**Participants:** Kee

This was to be a brief visit to collect samples from three different ponds along the Blind Creek Trail. Prior to my walk into the Blind Creek Forest I puttered about, changing the SD cards on the trail cams, checking the propane supply and trying out our Audubon bird whistle. The latter instrument had been languishing in a living room drawer for decades until I recently remembered it. It consists of a metal plug with a turnkey handle inserted into a wooden cylinder. Turning the plug inside the cylinder creates a squeaking noise rather like a small bird. I was skeptical about its use. But I had hardly produced one or two chirps when chickadees and nuthatches began to show up. Ho-lee!

Heading for the vernal ponds (aka swamplands) of Blind Creek, I noticed that the trail had been considerably chewed up by heavier-than-normal deer traffic. I collected (benthic) samples from three widely-spaced ponds, thinking that at least one of them might have the mystery ciliate I hope to re-find. Sample locations were marked by the trail distances, based on markers spaced every 100 metres along the trail.

Coming back out I heard wild turkeys gobbling over in Eva's Woods. Then Steve & Karen showed up, having agreed to join me for a Holiday dinner at a local restaurant called "Route 79".

**Birds:** (7)

American Crow (FCF); Black-capped Chickadee (Tr); Canada Goose (LM); Dark-eyed Junco (GF); Mourning Dove (LM); White-breasted Nuthatch (GF); Wild Turkey (EW)

**Phenology:** last snow-free day?

**Trail cams:**

#1: Eastern Cottontail Dc13 (5:15 pm); Wild Turkey (tom) Dc 13 (9:18 am)

**IMAGES:**



FinePix

Sampling site #2 along Blind Creek Trail: Was this where I found that mystery ciliate? Was it a one-off genetic sport? Does a species new to science lurk in these waters? It will take a full week before I know -- or not.



FinePix

**Nature Quiz:** The collection of dark spherical objects shown here represents

1. droppings from a female deer
2. walnuts aggregated by floodwaters
3. aging Pear-shaped Puffballs
4. wild grapes collected by squirrels



WILDVIEW

12-12-2011 16:20:24

Trail Cam #1

Sharp-eyed Canebird (er) caught on camera last week passing by in search of prey.