

Date and Time: Thursday December 13 2012 2:10 - 5:40 pm

Weather: Pr 9 mm; RH 60%; BP 102.8 kPa; clear; S 5-10 kmh; T 6° C

Activity: walk to river and creek, continue maintenance (Kee)

On the Beattie Line, just a minute away from Newport Forest I spotted this dead Raccoon in the middle of the road. I got out and moved the animal to one side. It may have been struck by a vehicle but was scavenged (probably) by a Coyote that ate all the muscle from its left rear leg, from hip joint to paw. This was a male in poor physical condition, even before it met its end. Was it one of “ours”?



Once on site, I walked down to the creek to change the sd card, then out to the river where I sat for about 15 minutes on the bluffs bench. I was about to leave when I spotted a dark animal prowling within the dead vegetation down near the base of the bluffs. Was it a beaver? A Coyote? I stood up and turned on my camera, waiting for it to move again. Suddenly a gigantic bird with a 20 foot wingspan (well, maybe less) exploded from the spot to soar away over the river,

then upstream and around the bend. It had a very striking white band across the tail, marking it as an immature Bald Eagle. (Immature Golden Eagles also have a white band, but you don't normally see them hunting along rivers.) a Wild Turkey made its "pok-pok-pok" call from the Hogsback as I headed back along Edgar's Trail. Back in camp, I noticed quite a few Black-capped Chickadees flitting here and there, perhaps about 10. An old friend that we hadn't seen in four months showed up today -- the Downy Woodpecker. Has their local abundance been declining?

The rest of today's visit was devoted to maintenance, taking apart two old rustic folding chairs that had many slats of wood on seat and back. The slats will be recycled into two more treadways for the trail down to the creek. Just before I retired to the trailer for a sunset snack I heard an Eastern Gray Squirrel scolding from the Gallery Forest by the trailer. I put out some kibble to see if we could get a winter Raccoon census going. No takers before my departure half an hour later.

Birds: (9)

Bald Eagle (TR); Black-capped Chickadee (Tr); Blue Jay (GF); Common Flicker (BCF); Dark-eyed Junco (GF); Downy Woodpecker (GF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (GF); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr); Wild Turkey (HB)

New Species:

Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	Ho PD Nv23/12
'Rectangle Diatom'	<i>Neidium</i> sp.	FC KD Dc07/12
Carpenter's Rule	<i>Bacillaria paxillifer</i>	FC KD Dc07/12

Notes: The second diatom is one of very few that have common names. It forms aggregates that resemble the old-fashioned folding ruler once used by carpenters.

ATBI Milestone: We have just reached the count of 1900 species at Newport Forest. By this time next year we should have reached the 2000 mark, barely half way. (Don't forget the arthropods!)

Phenology: River up about 0.2 m, precipitation to date at a record low!

New Book: *Peterson Field Guide to Moths of Northeastern North America* 2012. Beadle & Leckie, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Boston: 1500 species coverage!

IMAGES:



Young Bald Eagle flashes a half-white tail. The white band across both upper and lower surfaces of the tail is one of the best field marks for an immature Bald Eagle, here seen swooping away from the shore where it may have been dining on fish -- fresh or otherwise.

You may have to get close to the screen to see the tail clearly. Enlarging the image further would only result in what optical specialists call “empty magnification”. The image would break up into visible pixels.



WILDVIEW

11-23-2012 02:58:54



An Image From Trail Cam # 1 Three Weeks Ago

At first I thought it was just a skinny Raccoon with faint rings on its tail. Raccoons are so common on this particular trail cam that I let it go at that, although Pat kept saying, “Are you sure that isn’t a fox?”

Reviewing the image recently, I did a second take. It *was* a fox -- a young Red Fox! The ears are longer and more pointed than those of a Raccoon. The bushy tail is wide at the base, tapering to a white tip. (Faint rings are not uncommon on the tails of Red Foxes.) Also we’re familiar with the eyeshine that is typical of Raccoons. This animal has at least twice the glow-area, veritable headlights! We noted also the rather gracile build of the creature, not to mention the white underparts of a young Red Fox.

We wouldn’t make a fuss about this image if it weren’t our very first “sighting” of this species on the property. We found what appeared to be tracks of a Red Fox in the Blind Creek Forest on February 17 2002.