

Date & Time: Saturday April 27 2013 2:30 - 9:00 pm

Weather: Pr 17 mm; RH 32%; BP 102.8 kPa; clear; calm; T 22° C

Activity: Hikers walk the trail & Kee cleans the trailer

Keen to see the Trout Lilies in bloom, I went immediately to where I knew they would be nearby. The two species, one yellow, the other white, grow in large, disjoint patches that jointly cloak the creek bluffs with their cheerful blooms.



Both species have nodding blooms but are easy to tell apart by their colour. They also have a different bloom geometry; the Yellow Trout Lily (*Erythronium americanum*) has alternate petals recurved, but the White species (*E. albidum*) doesn't.

Today's main mission was to give the trailer its spring cleaning. I will spare the reader the details, except for two nature notes: Under the bench cushions in the "dining area" I found the mass grave of several hundred Lady Beetles. Then, just before finishing wiping the counters, I felt the urge to visit the tiny bathroom. Since the door was blocked by a giant water bottle, I went "out back", as they say, for my function. I had barely started when about six Chickadees flew into adjacent bushes, apparently to watch. (Weird) "Do you mind!"

The trailer mostly done, I set out for Blind Creek. Was that a Towhee calling? I heard "Drink your -", a call they sometimes make instead of "Drink your tea." Too early for the Towhees? On my way to the Elbow, I noticed a brilliant blue

butterfly by my feet. Spring Azure or an early Eastern Tailed Blue? No tail. Further along, I paused by one of the vernal ponds when I was jolted out of my reverie by a loud, DRINK YOUR in the bush right beside me. An Eastern Towhee flashed out, tail coverts and all, to settle the issue. We think of the Towhee as the Newport Forest "totem bird". It was the first bird we heard during our initial visit to the property exactly 13 years ago to the month.

Other observations were gathered from a few short walks: An Eastern Chipmunk dashed across the Nook. Perhaps it was nervous, as the weasel appears to have moved out of the trailer in favour of an outside burrow. Over in the Fleming Creek Forest I spotted a (black phase) Eastern Gray Squirrel jumping from tree to tree. Beside the road under the power lines, a juvenile Brown Snake sought refuge in the roadside grass. Sitting in the Nook, I watched a largish flock of Blue Jays hopping excitedly from branch to branch in the old Black Maple and making a variety of calls. And there's no mistaking it. More than once I watched how one Blue Jay would feed another. Dating? mating?

In the distance I heard someone passing the property in a motorboat. Could that be Darren? It didn't stop. Just before sunset two Raccoons came down from the maple to raid the feeder tray and glean from the ground. One of them, definitely not a kit, seemed rather undersized. Are Raccoons sometimes subject to dwarfism? I waited in the gathering twilight in case any owls were calling, then drove out to the gate. I half-expected to flush a Woodcock or two, but it may still be too early.

Birds: (20 - today's list plus that of Marg Hulls -- below)

American Crow (EW); American Robin (BCF); Black-capped Chickadee (GF); Blue Jay (GF); Brown-headed Cowbird (GF/Tr); Canada Goose (TR); Common Flicker (GF/N); Common Grackle* (UM); Eastern Bluebird* (Rd); Eastern Towhee (VPB); Field Sparrow (LM); House Sparrow* (Rd); Northern Cardinal (UM); Pileated Woodpecker (FCF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (GF/S); Rock Dove* (UM); Tree Swallow* (Rd); Turkey Vulture* (UM); White-breasted Nuthatch (GF/Tr); Wild Turkey (EW)

New Species:

Winter Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* BCF/HB AW Ap25/13

(Ann White spotted this diminutive bird near the Hogsback on Work Day)

Phenology: First Spring Azure; leafing out begins in *Cornus*, *Crategus*, and *Rosa* Eastern Bluebird, Eastern Towhee, Tree Swallow back.

Spring Wildflower Walk: The Annual TTLT Spring Wildflower Walk will be held again this year 1 pm Sunday. With any luck the Virginia Bluebells will be at least partially in bloom by then. Google Earth 22130 Fleming Line or email us for directions.

Readers Write:

Marg Hulls reports on a visit with the West Elgin Hiking Group this morning (excerpted): “Again we had a gorgeous day for our outing ...I noticed a house sparrow, tree swallows and bluebirds each occupying boxes by the road. [as expected] ...The most beautiful sight was the yellow adder's tongue on the side hill going down to Fleming creek. I've never seen such a display. They were prolific and all out standing upright in the sunshine as we looked down at the creek and trail. We saw many of the white variety in the woods as well. We also found Dutchman's Breeches, Bloodroot, one Cutleaf Toothwort with the petals open and Spring beauties. The Virginia Bluebells are many [but not yet in bloom]...On the sidehill I noticed what I presume was a Spring Azure butterfly....[She adds a bird report.]

Joe Moosbrugger reports on the advance of spring at Crane Hollow, an ATBI site in Ohio.(April 16): “Spring was slow, we had a fun filled snowy adventure ... I led a hike the first weekend of April and we found only three wildflowers in bloom, *Anemone acutiloba*, *Claytonia virginica* and *Erigenia bulbosa**. We still had some ice at the base of our waterfalls. Things have really picked up and now we have trillium, violets, twin leaf, blood root, blue cohosh, the Dicentras, and trout lilies in bloom to name a few.” *Sharp-lobed Hepatica, Spring Beauty, Harbinger of Spring], respectively.

Crane Hollow current counts total 8,439 species: (More to come on this site)

Fungi & Lichens: 1,147	Plants (vasc. & non vasc.): 1,069
Invertebrates: 6,207	Mammals: 34 Birds: 128
Herpetofauna: 37	Fish: 12

(Great Smokies ATBI list now totals 18,038 spp.)

IMAGES:

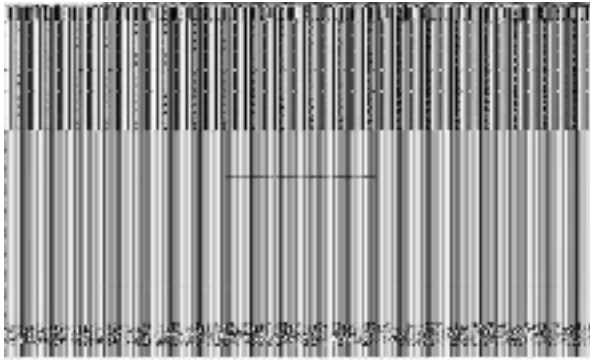


WILDVIEW

04-25-2013 20:53:58



This pair of White-tail Deer might be siblings. Image taken on Thursday, after sunset. Measuring post needs to be re-calibrated and re-set.



Death of a trail cam: This is what happens when a trail cam is set up to monitor a creek crossing, only to be submerged in a flood. We apologize to Tim Carroll who donated the camera.

Upper left: normal image of rapids

Upper right: calm surface of backed up flood water, now just inches below the camera, reflects camera flash, branch and twig

Lower left: "Gurgle"

Lower right: "Glug!"