

Date and time: Monday February 8 2016 2:00 - 5:10 pm

Weather: Pr 20 mm; RH 92%; BP 100.3 kPa; ;calm ; ovcast; T 0° C

Activity: Measuring the Thames River Trail.

It was not the best day to be on site. A light rain fell on the Longwoods Road all the way from London down to Wardsville. As we rolled into town, the rain switched abruptly over to snow. It fell as we drove onto the spongy half-melted terrain of the Upper Meadow. There was so much water on the property, I knew instinctively that if we drove down to the Lower Meadow we would never get out again. So we parked on top of the rise in the Upper Meadow. With me was Will, an occasional maintenance helper. Today's mission was to set up measurements for new trail markers to be installed this spring replacing markers installed in 2002.

We began measuring at the Hole, planting a yellow surveyor's flag marked 000 m. Continuing toward the river, we followed up with flags marked 100 m, then 200 m until we came to the river bluffs where I paused to take this image of the Thames



River in its post-flood state — still high, but not over its banks. It was shortly after we had descended into the Riverside Forest that Will spotted a pile of Wild Turkey feathers, possibly the victim of predation. Further along he spied some bones from a predated deer, all cracked open in the middle. Coyotes extracting marrow?

By the time we had finished flagging the trail, my shoes and gloves were soaked through with cold water. We repaired to the trailer to finish some coffee and relax a bit before leaving. Will cocked his ear to a scrabbling noise nearby: “I hear some kind of animal behind the wall!” “That’s Wendy the Weasel, a sometime trailer resident who has selected our humble abode as a maternity den.”

We locked the trailer and walked back up to the Upper Meadow to the parked van. Even on the height of land we encountered some difficulty. Trying to go forward, a slight incline caused my all-terrain tires to spin. I had to back up in order to get the van pointed slightly downhill. Then forward, with mud flying in all directions, and out to the gate, throwing up walls of water everywhere.

Phenology: Last snowfree day; river in post-flood.

Readers Write:

Dan Bickel, our entomologist reader in Australia writes, “I know you have had a warm winter, but why are there robins around at this time of year? Did they not migrate, or are they early arrivals? I thought you [had] a huge snow storm recently or has it all melted? Crazy times. So in memory of saner times past, all the best in the New Year to you and . . . Newport Forest.

Maria Gitta, a local nature lover, points out that the odd creature in a trail cam image in the last issue has a strong resemblance to the Golem, as in Lord of the Rings. Perhaps that was the inspiration for the weird image.

Nature lover Patty Frank in San Diego sent this link to a website that explains the rescue from extinction of a giant stick insect reported in the last issue. Someone visited the remote island to retrieve “hundreds of eggs.”

<http://zoonooz.sandiegozoo.org/2016/02/02/san-diego-zoo-receives-hundreds-of-eggs-from-critically-endangered-lord-howe-island-stick-insect/>

Next Issue: Try Recycling - We report on a tour of the local recycling facility to see what happens to our weekly blue box contributions.

Catching up:

Readers who would like to read past issues of the *Bulletin* are welcome to visit the archive at <<http://www.csd.uwo.ca/~akd/newport-forest/>> Scroll to the bottom.

IMAGES:



The trail was often flooded with puddles, making walking a little tricky, not so much from getting soakers, but from slipping on the frozen ice surface just below the water — and leaves. Here we see the measuring tape following the bluffs trail, Will is up ahead and barely in view.



A possible *Lopharia* fungus, sprouting on a log in the Riverside Forest, caught our eye as we measured past it. Habitat, habit and season are right for *L. cinerascens*, but it may be some other genus in the family Stereaceae. Although *Lopharia* would be a new genus for us, we hesitate to list it as a new species [even with square brackets], given the plethora of small bracket fungi in this family that are individually rare in the area, even though collectively sure to show up sooner than you would think.

A common application of probability: Suppose that a species has a probability p of showing up in a biosurvey (or ATBI visit), for a given sampling effort. If p is very small, say 0.01, the probability of *not* finding the species is $(1 - p)$ or 0.99. If there are 25 such species, however, the probability of finding *none* of them drops to the 25th power of $(1 - p)$ or 0.78. There is now nearly one chance in four of finding at least one of the rare species. Does that mean that 4 more visits will yield at least one of them?

Not quite. Adding three more visits effectively changes the exponent from 25 to 100, yielding a much lower probability of *not* finding any of the rare specimens, namely 0.37. Subtracting this number from 1 yields the complementary probability of finding at least one rarity, now 0.63. Not certain, but certainly much higher.