

**Date and time:** Tuesday December 19 2017 2:25 - 4:15 pm

**Weather:** Pr 13 mm; RH 74%; BP 100.9 kPa; overcast; S 5-15 kmh; T 5° C

**Contents:** Checking the snow cover and tracking.

Our 1100th visit to Newport Forest found me and our hired worker Brian Cornish stymied at the gate. It was blocked by too much snow to make clearing worthwhile. Moreover, the ground had gotten soggy after two days of above-zero temperatures.



We ended by walking in, an exercise I had not been looking forward to. On the way I told Brian to look for Coyote scat. “Coyote what?” I explained in delicate terms. “Oh. You mean Coyote sh—?” A few minutes later, Brian called out from ahead of me. “I think I just found some spat”. “That’s ‘scat’.” “Whatever.”

They were certainly from a Coyote, full of self-licking, the right size and shape, with twisted ends. I took some pictures.

We arrived at the trailer soon enough, retreated inside for a coffee, then went out to take weather stats, fill the bird feeder — a useless exercise these days — and check water levels in Fleming Creek.

While Brian went to the river, I went more slowly along the main trail, examining tracks in the snow. With roughly half the ground snow-covered, there were bare

patches scattered throughout the landscape, even in the woods/. One could follow some promising tracks only to have them disappear into bare ground. As for the tracks themselves, the warming trend of the last few days had eroded them, leaving blurred outlines and vague prints. However, many were clear enough to know “who” made them. The track images I acquired today are hardly worth showing, given their condition, but I can at least list the animals discovered through their tracks and other signs:

Coyote; Raccoon; Eastern Cottontail; Eastern Grey Squirrel; Virginia Deer; Wild Turkey; [White-footed] Mouse.

We left after changing the sd cards on the trail cams. As we drove back home, we watched the sun set behind us on the shortest day of the year — which (somehow) goes with this last issue of 2017, Number 1100.



**Phenology:** Approximately 50% snow cover.

**Image Galler**



Probable White-footed Mouse tracks. Not a Meadow Vole or a Jumping Mouse or a Deer Mouse, in any case. Animal is running, but not bounding.



A game trail forks, each branch leading, presumably, to a favourite area for foraging or hunting. Snow or no snow, Newport Forest is covered by a regular network of such trails.

**Trail cam images at the trailer:**



A doe passes the trailer at 7:35 am on December 6.



A mother Raccoon, followed by young, emerges from the Regen Zone at 10:49 pm Dec 4 — on a game trail.