

Newport Forest

October 4 2001

2:30 - 6:00 pm

Weather: prec. 0 mm, LM 23 C, FCF 15 C, cloudy, little breeze

Purpose: to explore river shore downstream

Participants: Pat, Kee

We arrived late on the property owing to a visit to Eva Newport. We wasted little time once on site, taking the canoe, paddles, etc. down to the RL and putting in. We drifted with the current past the gravel beach and toward the point bar in the middle of the property's river boundary. Here we found that the lower terrace, the one barely a metre above the current water level, to have many extensive sand bars, mostly hidden by dense scrub or herb. vegetation.

I was quite pleased to see a few mature Silver Maple just around the point, a species I had been looking for on the property over the last year. We were both pleased to see a Belted Kingfisher (twice) flying upriver. According to our maps, the hydro lines cross the river pretty much at the eastern boundary of the property. About 80 m beyond that would be the old creek mouth (Blind Creek Outlet). At this location, we found the old creek mouth as a vegetation-choked depression with a narrow gully cut into its centre - where ephemeral stream draining the upper meadows and the Janik property combine to drain into the Thames.

We headed back upstream and with little difficulty succeeded in beaching the canoe on a narrow strip of clay below one of the sand bars mentioned earlier. A short trip inland revealed that we had landed about 50 metres from the RSF trail (by coincidence) opposite a bend marking its northern-most excursion. We found what appeared to be heavy drag-marks, about 3 metres wide and extending nearly five, in which all the vegetation, including some exceptionally large Giant Ragweed, had been bent and broken, collapsed in the direction of the river. It is possible that someone had taken a boat inland a few metres and then dragged it out (sideways?) later. Or was it a place where deer had lain? Or what?

Returning from the trail we also found a fairly fresh-looking burrow, half-moon shaped (owing to a root forming its upper boundary) (P) with a small litter of river clam shells not far away. The entrance was about 11" across its widest part. Thereabouts, next to the river, the most common trees were Black Walnut, American Elm, and Box Elder, with some Hackberry thrown in. In this vicinity Pat found some Cream Violets, remarking that they're rather rare. We found a very attractive and presumably new Tussock Moth caterpillar (P) about 2" long, with two white tufts at the posterior end, all yellow and with a row of small black

saddles down the dorsal midline, each about 3x4 mm. Here also, Pat found some white bracket fungi on a log (S).

As we worked our way back to the canoe, we called out plants as a very informal survey: Wood Nettle, Red Currant, Garlic Mustard, Wingstem, Calico Aster, Wild Cucumber, “Phrymia“ (S), and , as we got onto the sand terrace just a few metres from the shore; Clot Bur, Amaranthus sp. (at a guess), White Willow (or a hybrid with Salix alba), an interesting Nightshade (Solanum sp.) with black berries and small white flowers, Devil’s Pitchfork, Riverbank Grape, Bidens spp., Aspen seedlings, Purple Loosestrife, Giant Ragweed, Bur Cucumber, Velvet Leaf, and a small grass (S) that cloaked much of the bank right next to the water’s edge. We found some mushrooms as well, in the form of clustered Psathyrellas on dead willow roots.

Near the end of this mini-survey, I spotted an unusual grasshopper on a leaf near the water. Of medium size, it had lime-green sides, a brownish back and yellow-brown legs. (I could not ID it later from our references.)

After a short break, we got back in the canoe and, after a hard paddle around the gravel-bar riffles, returned to shore, where we cached the canoe behind the RL clearing and headed back to the trailer. We put out seed on our new “rustic” table for the birds and went down to the creek to do a little bird-watching and check the rapids. On our return, Pat spotted some rubber-cups sprouting beside the trail. (S)

Birds: Belted Kingfisher (R); Red-bellied Woodpecker (R & NCF); Chickadee (NCF/LM); White-breasted Nuthatch (NCF/LM); Canada Geese (8) (LM); American Robin (LM); Blue Jay (RL)

New Species:

Silver Maple	<i>Acer saccharinum</i>	RSF/R
“Snow Bracket”	<i>Gloeoporus dichrons</i>	RSF
Common Brown Cup	<i>Peziza badio-confusa</i>	NCF/bluffs