

Revenge of the Liverworts !

Newport Forest Wednesday September 29 2010 2:55 - 6:15 pm

weather: prec. 24 mm; RH 72%; BP 101.3 kPa; sn/cld; SW 0-15 kmh; T 23) C

purpose: to collect fungi

participants: Kee

As soon as I stepped out of the van I could smell it. Autumn air, the faint must of decaying leaves with damp soil mixed in. Since I had arrived late at the property I wasted no time and got straight into the bee-counting operation. The protocol calls for a two-minute stop at each "station" (a wee yellow surveyor's flag) so, with one station every ten metres on an 80-metre trail, the whole protocol takes 20-25 minutes.

Right after that I stapled down the loose tread on the trailer step and took a short break in the Nook. Leaves were falling everywhere, up to 20/min (within 50 m) and mostly small, dry ones. The rain has been a Godsend, reducing the precipitation shortfall significantly.

I walked the Thames River Trail, noting several anglewings out nectaring, and stopped to admire the Black Ash that we planted some 5 years ago. It has been severely nipped more than once by deer, but each year added another 10-20 cm of new growth. (See image below.) When I got to the river, I patrolled the beach for fresh tracks, then resumed the trail up to the bluffs bench, where I sat long enough to see something. First, a beautiful Bald Eagle wheeled into view over the river, then a pair of Hooded Mergansers (best bird) came paddling into view around the bend upstream.

I proceeded uneventfully through the Riverside forest and up to the Hogsback, where I took a break on the bench there. Along the way I had passed a few freshly sprouted fungi, but on the Hogsback itself, found what appeared to be a new mushroom species for the list. It was small, a ghostly white, and with a deep root that led down to buried wood. (P, S) Once I got down into the Blind Creek Forest, I found two large troops of freshly sprouted puffballs that I thought represented two different species.*

Note: At home the white mushroom turned out to be a young specimen of *Xerula megalospora*, already logged and seen almost annually on the property. Both "species" of puffballs were the same, in spite of their "obvious" differences!

Birds: (8)

American Crow (HB); American Robin (FCF); Black-capped Chickadee (GF); Bald Eagle (TR); Common Grackle (RB); Hooded Merganser (TR); Turkey Vulture (UM); White-breasted Nuthatch (BCF)

New species: (with special thanks to Jane Bowles & Greg Thorn)

'Redheaded Liverwort' *Radula complanata* BCT JB Sp24/10
'Small Helmet Liverwort' *Frullania emboracensis* HB/E JB Sp24/10
'Big Helmet Liverwort' *Frullania oakesiana* HB/E JB Sp24/10
'Tiny Rope Moss' *Leskea gracilescens* GF/FC JB Sp24/10
'Shiny Matt Moss' *Entodon cladorrhizans* BC JB Sp24/10
'Seducer's Moss' *Entodon seductrix* BC JB Sp24/10
'Long-tailed Moss' *Anomodon attenuatus* HB/BC JB Sp24/10
'Little Redeyes' *Scutellinia erinaceus* Loc GT Sp24/10
'Woodside Mushroom' *Ramicola centuncula* Loc GT Sp24/10

Notes: 1. The "common name" field of the records above are filled in as a matter of creative license within a vacuum of such terminology. Names already in use (from any source) will supersede these, when discovered. Indeed, if the finders would like to suggest replacement names, we will be happy to oblige.

Phenology: first significant leaf-fall, no spiny Softshell Turtles this year!

Bee protocol: (ideal weather for this time of year)

HB BB OB SF LF SW LW

24 4 0 4 1 1 2

(38 17 1 3 2 4 5) << previous counts

Note: This is the second last count of the season. A 2009-10 comparison will appear in the next report.

Drought watch: precipitation shortfall 22 % (improving)

IMAGES:



Longwoods Road History Series: Georgian country house built in 1855 Highway Two, the road we take to Wardsville (and Newport Forest), runs from London down to Windsor. In our area it is called the Longwoods Road because back in the days when it was little more than a muddy track, it was surrounded on both sides by a long wood. This extensive forested area was known simply as The Longwood. (singular) The Georgian style features a symmetrical building with uniform windows on both floors, a center hall plan and double doors with a transom light. There would be a fireplace at both ends of the house. More of an eighteenth century style, Georgian houses were still built in the 19th century, but survivors are rare. The only other Georgian house I know in the area is the Backus House, by the shore of Lake Erie.



Black Ash doing well in the old creek bed at Edgar's Elbow, already taller than me.



*You want puffballs? We got puffballs . . . The Pear-shaped puffball (*Lycoperdon perlatum*) is the most common puffball at Newport Forest and in the area generally.*