

Newport Forest Sunday-monday August 3 2008

3:50- 5:30 pm

**weather:** prec. 24 mm\*; RH 55%; BP 99.41 kPa; calm; clr; LM 29° C

**purpose:** two-day stay

**participants:** Pat & Kee

Shortly after setting up camp, we went down to the creek to see what could be seen. I went over to check the coverboards near the lower rapids, noting the near passage of a Great Blue Heron a mere 20' away as it flew up the creek to its fishing spot. I called out something to Pat which she interpreted to mean that she should come over to the rapids. Half way there, in the midst of a thick stand of giant ragweed, she asked what I wanted. I said I hadn't called her. Then she looked down: Right at her feet was a Green Dragon, a rare local plant that we had given up hoping for on the property.

Flushed with success, we set up two folding chairs to watch intently a small flock of rather small birds hawking insects from the larger rocks of the upper rapids. We thought "flycatchers," but at that distance it's hard to distinguish the five Empidonax flycatchers from one another, even through binoculars. It wasn't until later, when Pat had a chance to consult with Winnie Wake, that we learned that they were, with a fair degree of certainty, young Eastern Phoebes. (probably from the five eggs seen in the phoebe nest on Nina's nearby porch last spring)

Back at the trailer I spent half an hour laboriously cutting out covers for the three pitfall traps with tin snips. (moles and shrews are poor jumpers) I then checked the two remaining cover boards, finding no newts or salamanders, just sow bugs, beetles and ground spiders.

After supper, we put bait in the minnow trap and Pat took it down to the creek, where she set the trap in a likely spot for the overnight consideration by denizens of the pool between riffles. I went to the road to close the gate and, on my way back, noticed the thin crescent of the new moon setting just above the trees. I took a 4-5 iman video of this enchanting sight. We heard a "gronking" noise from the creek below, then up over the gallery forest flew the Great Blue Heron we had seen earlier. This was followed, a few minutes later, by a second GBH that flew across by the hydro lines.

\*at least 10 mm of this fell before Aug 1, so I have assigned that much to the precipitation chart for July.

We baited the area by the trailer and, before long, we could begin our raccoon census. First to show up was a mother with two\*\* subadult cubs. One cub fed with the mother, the other raided the seed tray on the hickory tree. Then an adult male showed up to finish what was left. After an hiatus of about two hours, a young female cub with no parent in attendance showed up at the Nook to glean birdseed from the ground below the maple feeder tray. She was thin, with the scruffy fur that marks undernourishment in furred mammals. I threw her some kibble, but she ran off. Either an orphan, a reject, or simply lost from her family. At about 12:30 am, three (nearly) full grown burly male cubs showed up with no mother. They were at the stage where they had begun to roam free of the mother, but still stuck together. We did not see the starving adult that has been hanging around the camp for the last month or so. It may well stay out of sight at night, when the mothers show up with their cubs. (No prisoners!)

<b>adults</b>	<b>cubs</b>	<b>condition</b>
1 female		well nourished
	2 (not sexed)	well nourished
1 male		undernourished
	1 female	undernourished
	3 males	well nourished

I tried mothing in the Nook by attaching a white towel to the maple tree in the Nook and shining a powerful searchlight on it. Not one moth appeared! (air temp 15° C) This was appropriate because I had forgotten my moth book anyway. For the first time this year, we heard Screech Owls calling -- from three locations.

The frog populations continue to do well, given the stellar rainfall situation. The meadows are full of young Northern Leopards out hunting and this evening, for the first time ever, we heard a regular chorus of Green Frogs calling up and down the creek.

Next morning, Pat went up to see Nina and the two took a drive over to Skunk's Misery. We went down to the creek to retrieve the minnow trap, finding a lone crayfish inside. I placed the crayfish in an inspection bottle and took notes of its marks and features. I forgot, however, to note rostral carina (ridges on dorsum of head) and so could not make a successful ID later. However, from the size and other features, along with distribution maps and notes in the Hamr monograph, I

\*\* It is normal for litters to be reduced over time, owing to cub mortality.

decided that it was most likely *Cambarus robustus*. (But another collection is needed before I can even square-bracket the critter.)

Pat combed the area of the creek bluffs along the TBT, where Jack-in-the-Pulpits are frequent, but did not succeed in finding another Green Dragon. But she found a Hellborine in flower.

In the afternoon I completed the inventory of strip three in the LM regeneration zone. (See below)

**birds: (27)**

American Crow (BCF); American Goldfinch (LM); American Robin (LM); Belted Kingfisher (FC); Black-capped Chickadee (GF); Blue Jay (Tr); Cedar Waxwing (GF/HBF); Common Flicker (GF/HBF); Common Grackle (GF); Common Yellowthroat (FCF); Eastern Phoebe (FC); Eastern Wood Peewee (GF/FC); Field Sparrow (LM); Gray Catbird (BCF/LM); Great Blue Heron (FC); House Wren (Rd); Mourning Dove (GF); Northern Cardinal (FCF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (GF/W); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (Tr); Ruby-throated Hummingbird (Rd); Screech Owl (BCF); Song Sparrow (LM); Turkey Vulture (BCF); White-breasted Nuthatch (FC); Wild Turkey GF); Wood Thrush (FCF/FC)

**new species:**

Green dragon                      *Arisaema dracontium*                      FC/GF PD Au03/08

**phenology:**

young male raccoon cubs leaving mothers

**Regen Zone Inventory: Strip #3: 10-20 m NW of track**

species	height+growth	planted (p) or volunteer (v)
WA	3' + 5"	v
BW	2' + 2"	v
ECW	10' + 1'	p
SiM	2' + 6"	p
BO (?)	2' + 8"	p
WE	5' + 1.5'	p
BW	2' + 2"	v
SM	1.5' + 6"	p
WA	3' + 4"	v
RB	1.5' + 0"	p (?)
RO	1' + 1'	p
TT	2' + 1.5'	p
OB	1.5 + 1"	p
[watering trail here]		
OB	1.5 + 1"	p
HB	2' + 2"	p
BW	3' + 3"	v
BW	8' + 4"	v
BW	4' + 4"	v
WO	nipped badly	p
CO (?)	1' + 8"	p
SM	1.5' + 8"	p
WE	3' + 6"	v
WO	2.5' + 4"	p
ECW	6' + 1.5'	p
KC	2' + 0"	p
KC	1' + 4"	p
WA	4.5' + 0"	v
WA	10' + 8"	v
last 15 m empty of trees except for		
BW	2' + 0"	v
by the track		