

**Date & Time:** Wednesday January 16, 2013, 2:10 - 5:50 pm

**Weather:** Pr 53 mm; RH 73%; clear; SW 20-30 kmh; T +3° C

**Activity:** Flood drowns trail cam while Kee looks for winter flies

In about one visit out of three we are used to being greeted by a Red-tailed Hawk that flies across the Lower Meadow above us. But lately (last three visits), the role of official greeter has been taken over by the Northern Harrier. On today's visit I rolled in on frozen snow-free ground, flushing a Northern Harrier from right beside the track. It flew across the front of the van no more than ten metres away, closely resembling this file image. It then swooped across the meadow up to a low



photo credit: Dennis Endicott

branch on the other side, where it seemed to be watching me -- or else finishing its dinner of vole cutlets. This was the "best bird" of an otherwise windy, bird-poor day. Only Black-capped Chickadees put up any numbers.

The most pressing issue of the day was to retrieve the trail cam cards. Imagine my dismay when I began to descend the creek bluffs only to find the creek backed up from a flood out on the river. Fleming Creek Forest was completely inundated. When I scanned the flood to the place where Trail Cam #2 should be, I couldn't even see the branch it was mounted on! Scratch one trail cam. I just hope it has remained attached to the branch, as the sd card may have some images on it.

Poring over the pages of Steve Marshall's gigantic new tome *Flies*, Pat has become very enthusiastic on the subject. She pointed out that if you know where to look, you can find flies even in the cold months, overwintering in one stage or another, from egg to adult. As a result, I spent some time today making a collection of bracket fungi, leaf & soil litter, bones of a predated turkey, and an old Bitternut log with bark still on it. She will see what comes out of these substrates in large pickle jars for rearing/emergence, reporting her results later on.

I walked to the river to find floodwater almost up to the Landing, probably three metres above normal. Back in camp I spent a longish time taking apart another old wood-slat deck chair in order to recycle the slats into treadways to put over trail seeps during soggy early springs. After a coffee in the trailer at sunset, I was off over firm, drivable ground. What a contrast to our last visit!

**Birds:** (7) American Crow (EW); Black-capped Chickadee (GF); Common Flicker (BCF); Downy Woodpecker (Tr); Northern Harrier (LM); Red-bellied Woodpecker (GF); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr) **Note:** No Dark-eyed Juncos!

**Phenology:** snow cover from December 27 to January 12

## **READERS WRITE:**

Suzanne McDonald-Aziz is the Executive Director of the Thames-Talbot Land Trust: "Thanks so much for your jolly and informative reports on Newport. I feel like you live a portion of your life on "Little House on the Prairie" and I'm jealous. Hopefully, I will get down for a visit soon."

Daniel Botkin is a well-known ecologist, author of *Discordant Harmonies*: [in response to the annual report] "Interesting, especially as an example of what one can call citizen science -- ecological studies that could be done by quite a variety of people."

We present a family of humans with 20 Raccoons in the Land of Beatrix Potter. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2031714/Meet-family-24-That-s-2-adults-2-children-TWENTY-pampered-raccoons.html> (sent in by a well-wisher). Pat and I have rehabbed a few Raccoons over the years, the last under an MNR licence. We know their charms very well, but usually succeeded in avoiding this kind of relationship. Raccoons are considered an invasive species in England

## **IMAGES:**



Fleming Creek backed up with river floodwaters: somewhere in those murky depth our trail cam may be photographing passing fish (in my dreams). The camera was a good 2.5 metres above the rapids! !

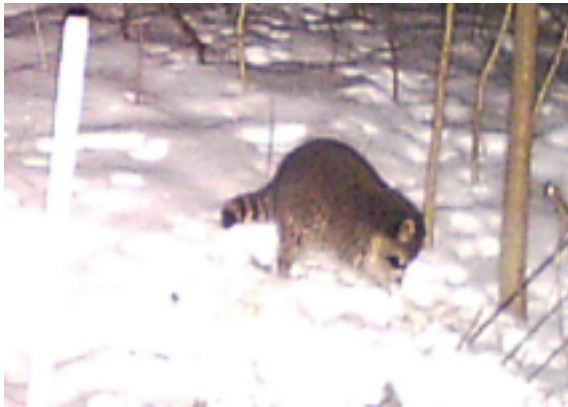
We advised readers to fasten their Tilley Hats in the last Bulletin, owing to the refurbishment of both trail cams. One of those hats may have floated away, as it were, but the other should remain fastened. Here are the images from Trail Cam #1, spanning a period from thick snow to none.



Eastern Cottontails



Virginia Deer peeks shyly into frame



Raccoon is in good shape for Winter



Eastern Gray Squirrel forages in snow



Wild Turkeys perform a march-past