



An Observation: by Wilton Corkern, June 29, 2007

Despite a little rain at the end of the week, the landscape is dry. The flooded Ferguson Meadow along Accokeek Creek dried up weeks ago, and last night's shower soaked in immediately. With the prospect of cooler, drier days over the weekend, Lee Kelly began to cut hay today, but he warns the yield will be modest. The Farm Pond's banks lie exposed several feet below the usual water line, and the fish-eating birds are taking advantage. A single circuit on the Persimmon Trail brought sightings of a Green Heron, a Blue Heron, and a Belted Kingfisher perched in various trees scanning the water's surface for signs of easy prey. In the air, Rough Winged Swallows and Barn Swallows sweep for insects and overhead a pair of Osprey hover and glide, also looking for the chance to grab dinner. A female Wood Duck splashes noisily into the water underneath overhanging trees, and leads three downy ducklings across the open water. Along the way, she apparently startles a beaver, which scurries down the bank and into the water. The beaver swims in circles for a good five minutes, occasionally slapping the water with its tail to indicate either alarm or annoyance at the intruders (the ducks and the walker). Farther along the trail, dense banks of brambles festooned with plump red berries promise a juicy and delicious feast when the Blackberries ripen. These fruits are well adapted to hot, humid weather, and they appear to be thriving. The Persimmon trees, for which the trail is named, are loaded, too. These mature more slowly and we won't be able to predict the yield until September or October. A young buck, his velvet covered antlers just beginning to branch out, flushes from the edge of the briar patch. None of these creatures seems to appreciate the presence of the walker as much as he appreciates theirs.