

Lake Conestee Nature Park, Greenville, SC

Day Trip 2/23/20

We had a fabulous time on our Lake Conestee Nature Park day trip! The temperature was a mild 46 degrees to start in Greenville. The enthusiasm of the participants on the trip was outstanding. CHIPPING SPARROWS were among the first birds we saw near the playground at the Reedy River bridge entrance. Our first of many RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS flitted about in the vines near the path. One of the main target birds for the day was BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCH, and we got them in the parking lot! It was a little surprising to see them this early in the day, but we heard the signature “squeaky toy” like call notes coming from the pines. We eventually located three individuals and had good looks. Not a minute later a RED-HEADED WOODPECKER flew in and displayed well for us. Two of our main targets for the day were in the bag in the first fifteen minutes of the day. I was hoping our good luck would continue to roll through the day. As we walked the trails, we had great looks at PINE WARBLER, WOOD DUCK, RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER, and FIELD SPARROW. Having already had great birds in the first hour we stumbled upon a GREAT-HORNED OWL on a nest. A fantastic sight! While watching the owl a Holly tree was alive with CEDAR WAXWINGS. We counted forty-five in total. By this time, we decided that a break for lunch was needed and headed back across the park to the cars. A very entertaining EASTERN PHOEBE was foraging in the marsh and let us all have good views. Lunch was at Greenfields Bagels and Deli, a delicious treat!

With full bellies we decided to spend a little more time in the park. This time we entered the East Bay entrance from Spanco Drive. East Bay is a more open body of water and makes for easier viewing of the water. Two GREAT BLUE HERONS sparred for a spot in the marsh. It is nest building season, so we saw many herons bringing sticks to the rookery. Several PIED-BILLED GREBES were diving out in the water. A COMMON YELLOWTHROAT alerted us to its presence by giving off its chip note that sounds like two stones smacking together. A quick check of the feeders by the trail gave us looks at HOUSE FINCH, AMERICAN GOLDFINCH, and at least a dozen NORTHERN CARDINALS. A quick check of the West Bay area yielded twelve or so WILSON’S SNIPE roosting on the aquatic vegetation. Many RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS were jockeying for good nesting spots. As the day warmed and the birding slowed a bit, we decided to walk back past the feeders one more time. Among the many birds at the feeders was a lone BALTIMORE ORIOLE. This was a life bird for a few in the group and a nice surprise! We ended up with fifty species on the day. A great way to spend a mild February day. I can’t wait to go back there again soon.

Kevin Burke

Birdlist

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| Canada Goose | White-breasted Nuthatch |
| Wood Duck | Winter Wren |
| Mallard | Carolina Wren |
| Pied-billed Grebe | Eastern Bluebird |
| Mourning Dove | American Robin |
| Wilson's Snipe | Cedar Waxwing |
| Great Blue Heron | House Finch |
| Black Vulture | American Goldfinch |
| Turkey Vulture | Field Sparrow |
| Red-shouldered Hawk | White-throated Sparrow |
| Belted Kingfisher | Song Sparrow |
| Red-bellied Woodpecker | Eastern Towhee |
| Downy Woodpecker | Baltimore Oriole |
| American Crow | Red-winged Blackbird |
| Fish Crow | Common Yellowthroat |
| Carolina Chickadee | Yellow-rumped Warbler |
| Tufted Titmouse | Pine Warbler |
| Ruby-crowned Kinglet | Northern Cardinal |