

**Trip Report**  
**Mills River Migration**  
**August 27, 2020**

We were out searching for any early migrants that may be moving through the area on this day trip. Starting at the Ingles in Mills River gave us a chance to see the EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVES that nest at the farm behind the Ingles. The birds did not stop there though - we had a flyover EASTERN KINGBIRD and RED-TAILED HAWK - all before we got started! Our first official stop was at the North Mills River Recreation Area near the campground. We walked around a bit and had SCARLET TANAGER, AMERICAN REDSTART, and RED-EYED VIREO. A good start to the day. Our next destination was the Trace Ridge Trail and Horse Camp. We got into a nice little flock of migrants that included BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER, WORM-EATING WARBLER, HOODED WARBLER, and NORTHERN PARULA. They were foraging for caterpillars and whatever else they could find to fatten up for the long trip South. Other birds in the flock were BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHERS, RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRDS, and AMERICAN REDSTART.

Once we were done with the forest, we moved into the open country of Mills River Park and Hooper Lane. We were in search of shorebirds and raptors, as well as anything else we could find. At Mills River Park a nice male BLUE GROSBEAK sat at the top of a Willow Tree. A family of NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRDS were feeding on a fruiting tree. BARN SWALLOWS flew past us and a single WILLOW FLYCATCHER gave us brief but diagnostic looks. Hooper Lane was a little humid, but we made the best of it. The first bird we saw over the trees was a MISSISSIPPI KITE. These slender raptors are in post-breeding dispersal here and can be seen feeding on the migrating dragonflies anywhere in the area. KILLDEER called from the sod fields. We soon saw a very long-distance migrant, a PECTORAL SANDPIPER. These sandpipers travel from the Arctic to South America every year and come through our area in large numbers every year. In with the 'pecs' and Killdeer was a WILSON'S SNIPE, an expected winter visitor but this one was a little early.

As we got a little later in the day the warm air started to rise, and the local BLACK VULTURE roost got up and started to circle. This flock is 75-100 birds strong and usually has other birds mixed with them, in this case a few more MISSISSIPPI KITES. We ended the day with 44 species in total. It was nice to get out and enjoy a good day of birding with like-minded bird enthusiasts! Migration is starting to get into full swing so get out there and enjoy the show!

Kevin Burke

**Birds Seen or Heard (44 species)**

Canada Goose	Red-eyed Vireo	Field Sparrow
Eurasian Collared-Dove	American Crow	Song Sparrow
Mourning Dove	Fish Crow	Eastern Towhee
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Carolina Chickadee	Red-winged Blackbird
Killdeer	Tufted Titmouse	Eastern Meadowlark
Pectoral Sandpiper	Barn Swallow	Worm-eating Warbler
Wilson's Snipe	White-breasted Nuthatch	Hooded Warbler
Great Egret	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	American Redstart
Black Vulture	Carolina Wren	Northern Parula
Mississippi Kite	European Starling	Black-throated Green
Red-tailed Hawk	Northern Mockingbird	Warbler
Downy Woodpecker	Eastern Bluebird	Scarlet Tanager
Willow Flycatcher	House Finch	Northern Cardinal
Eastern Phoebe	House Sparrow	Blue Grosbeak
Eastern Kingbird	American Goldfinch	