

**Trip report: Chimney Rock and Lake Lure**  
**April 3, 2021**

A cool but clear spring morning greeted us as we wended our way down the Hickory Nut Gorge to Chimney Rock State Park. We began birding in the upper parking area of Chimney Rock State Park. Black-and-White and Black-throated Green Warblers sang from high in the deciduous forest. We began climbing up the many stairs that would get us to Pulpit Rock, the observation point for watching nesting Peregrine Falcons. We settled down and relaxed for a while, watching the rock face that the falcons historically nest on and taking in the incredible view of the surrounding Hickory Nut Gorge. Although we did not see any falcons we did have a couple impressive fly-bys of Common Ravens. As we made our way down the mountain we encountered some other early spring migrants including Blue-headed and Yellow-throated Vireos. A lingering, overwintering Yellow-bellied Sapsucker showed nicely for us foraging among the towering Tulip Poplars.

We exited the state park and headed over to Morse Park, a peninsula on Lake Lure that has a diverse set of habitats. We quickly encountered some skulking Wood Ducks and a single Blue-winged Teal. A couple Swamp Sparrows actively fed out in the open, providing us with excellent photo opportunities. The repetitive song of the Common Yellowthroat caught our attention and after a few seconds of “pishing” a handsome male emerged from the dense scrub. We broke for a quick lunch and then finished the day driving around Lake Lure looking for waterfowl or nesting Bald Eagles. Our perseverance was rewarded with close views of a Common Loon in fresh breeding plumage! A lovely day of early spring birding in Rutherford County.

Clifton Avery

### **Birdlist (43 species)**

Canada Goose  
Wood Duck  
Blue-winged Teal  
Mourning Dove  
Killdeer  
Common Loon  
Black Vulture  
Turkey Vulture  
Red-tailed Hawk  
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker  
Red-bellied Woodpecker  
Downy Woodpecker  
Pileated Woodpecker  
Eastern Phoebe  
Yellow-throated Vireo

Blue-headed Vireo  
Blue Jay  
American Crow  
Common Raven  
Carolina Chickadee  
Tufted Titmouse  
Northern Rough-winged  
Swallow  
Tree Swallow  
Barn Swallow  
Golden-crowned Kinglet  
Carolina Wren  
Brown Thrasher  
Northern Mockingbird  
Eastern Bluebird

American Robin  
House Finch  
Song Sparrow  
Chipping Sparrow  
Swamp Sparrow  
Eastern Towhee  
Red-winged Blackbird  
Brown-headed Cowbird  
Common Yellowthroat  
Black-and-white Warbler  
Pine Warbler  
Black-throated Green  
Warbler  
Yellow-rumped Warbler  
Northern Cardinal