

Trip report for Blue Ridge and Mt Mitchell, NC
June 24, 2020

After hearing about crowds at Mt Mitchell and the park having to close due to the number of visitors we decided to head directly to the mountain and work our way down. Well, the closer we got to into the Craggies, the lower the cloud ceiling became and we were soon crawling along the Parkway wondering if we had made the right decision. The wind was also whipping the branches around making it look more like a March storm! Thankfully by the time we got to Ridge Junction we were back in the sunshine again, although there were still gusty winds making for difficult bird observation. A walk along the Mt Mitchell access road was pretty good with some very obliging Canada and Blackburnian Warblers. We then explored the picnic area which was a little quiet, although a male Black-throated Green Warbler gathering food on the path was very nice indeed. We tried to see several singing Winter Wrens, but they all played hide-and-seek in the dense vegetation and refused to show themselves. We had lunch back at Balsam Gap, where the sun had now appeared, but the Crossbills never showed themselves. A walk at Bee Tree Gap was fairly quiet with Canada Warblers calling from the rhododendron tangles and a multitude of Dark-eyed Juncos in the road. It was now warming up and it was only Indigo Buntings and Red-eyed Vireos singing during the heat of the early afternoon. A few of us stopped around the Tanbark Ridge Tunnel to see what was singing in the lower elevations. It was again pretty quiet, although Indigo Buntings were very apparent. Both Cerulean and Worm-eating Warblers were singing, but neither showed with more than just glimpses; still nice to at least hear their songs. Despite the cloudy conditions to start with, it was a beautiful day to be up in the mountains.

Simon Thompson

Birdlist

Chimney Swift	Carolina Chickadee (Heard)	Dark-eyed Junco
Turkey Vulture	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Ovenbird
Broad-winged Hawk	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Blackburnian Warbler
Red-tailed Hawk	Brown Creeper (Heard)	Black-throated Green
Least Flycatcher (Heard)	Winter Wren (Heard)	Warbler
Blue-headed Vireo	Carolina Wren	Canada Warbler
Red-eyed Vireo (Heard)	Veery	Worm-eating Warbler
Yellow-throated Vireo	Hermit Thrush (Heard)	(Heard)
(Heard)	American Robin	Cerulean Warbler
American Crow	Pine Siskin	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Common Raven	Cedar Waxwing	(Heard)
Blue Jay	American Goldfinch	Indigo Bunting