

## Curtis Creek Road

Old Fort, NC

July 1, 2020

I have always enjoyed driving and walking up Curtis Creek Road. This mostly unpaved road snakes its way from Old Fort up to the Blue Ridge Parkway. From mixed pine and deciduous forest, the habitat changes to Northern hardwoods and a trace of spruce-fir when we reach the summit. As well as driving slowly up the road we also walked a good distance enabling us to see and hear a lot more. The biggest surprise and certainly the bird of the day was the abundance of Swainson's Warblers. At almost every stop in the appropriate habitat we could hear at least 1-2 singing males, with some even showing themselves albeit briefly. This species is probably common all along the escarpment, although accessible habitat probably prevents us knowing their true numbers. We continued up the road enjoying plenty of Northern Parula, Black-throated Green Warbler and Scarlet Tanager and it's always fascinating to pick up additional species as one climbs in elevation. By the time we reached the top of the road Dark-eyed Juncos had appeared, and Blue-headed Vireos were far more common. This is the beauty of Curtis Creek Road- as one drives up in elevation the make-up of species changes adding endless variety to the day.

Simon Thompson

### **Birds we saw or heard Species encountered: 39**

Chimney Swift	Tufted Titmouse	Louisiana Waterthrush
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Purple Martin (Heard)	Black-and-white Warbler
Broad-winged Hawk	White-breasted Nuthatch	Swainson's Warbler
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Hooded Warbler
Downy Woodpecker	Carolina Wren	Northern Parula
Pileated Woodpecker	Gray Catbird	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Acadian Flycatcher	Cedar Waxwing	Black-throated Green
Eastern Phoebe	American Goldfinch	Warbler
Yellow-throated Vireo	Dark-eyed Junco	Canada Warbler
Blue-headed Vireo	Eastern Towhee	Scarlet Tanager
Blue Jay	Brown-headed Cowbird	Northern Cardinal
American Crow	Common Grackle	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Carolina Chickadee	Ovenbird	Indigo Bunting