

Rankin Bottoms Trip Report: 9/6/2020

This years Rankin Bottoms trip was a little different than other years. The water levels were higher due to the Labor Day holiday. There were still plenty of opportunities to see some great birds. We arrived at Rankin Bottoms around 8:30 in the morning and the birds were very active at the entrance. NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED, TREE, and BARN SWALLOWS buzzed our heads. Our first of dozens of GREAT EGRETS came into view. An OSPREY flew by and caught a fish in front of us. INDIGO BUNTINGS, EASTERN KINGBIRDS, and a SUMMER TANAGER flitted about in the trees. The entrance to the bottoms is always productive as a first stop.

Moving a little further down the slough we entered the main part of Rankin Bottoms and started to see more wading birds. GREEN HERONS foraged around the banks. The DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS were flying by and foraging in the slough. One cormorant looked a little different. It was young bird with a chocolaty brown breast and a nice white line under the bill. Upon further inspection it was a tad smaller than the other cormorants and had a long tail, it was a NEOTROPIC CORMORANT. A great bird! Looking further down the slough, we saw five EGYPTIAN GEESE of unknown origin. They were tame, pointing to escaped birds. We walked down the road and encountered many butterflies including: MONARCH, VICEROY, EASTERN TIGER SWALLOWTAIL, and COMMON BUCKEYE to name a few.

The day was heating up, so we decided to find some shade for lunch. Eating lunch, we were serenaded by a WHITE-EYED VIREO and a NORTHERN PARULA. We travelled a little way away after lunch to Dutch Bottoms. This is typically a good area in the winter for ducks, but this time of year if the water is down it can have great habitat for shorebirds. We had several RING-BILLED GULLS flyover. A BALD EAGLE soared by us over the open water. A chance encounter with two flyover COMMON RAVENS was an unexpected sight. They seemed a little out of range from there more normal high elevation home. We ended the day with the last new bird of the day being a SCARLET TANAGER.

This was a fun day. The weather in East Tennessee this day was perfect. The temp never got above 82 degrees. Which is almost unheard of this time of year! I am looking forward to going back again next year.

Good Birding,

Kevin Burke

Species encountered: 54 species

Canada Goose
Egyptian Goose
Wood Duck
Mallard
Pied-billed Grebe
Rock Pigeon
Mourning Dove
Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Chimney Swift
Ruby-throated
Hummingbird
Killdeer
Solitary Sandpiper
Ring-billed Gull
Neotropic Cormorant
Double-crested
Cormorant
Great Blue Heron
Great Egret
Green Heron

Black Vulture
Turkey Vulture
Osprey
Cooper's Hawk
Bald Eagle
Red-tailed Hawk
Belted Kingfisher
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Pileated Woodpecker
Eastern Wood-Pewee
Eastern Phoebe
Eastern Kingbird
White-eyed Vireo
Blue Jay
American Crow
Common Raven
Carolina Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse

Northern Rough-winged
Swallow
Tree Swallow
Barn Swallow
White-breasted
Nuthatch
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Carolina Wren
European Starling
Gray Catbird
Northern Mockingbird
Cedar Waxwing
House Finch
American Goldfinch
American Redstart
Cape May Warbler
Northern Parula
Summer Tanager
Scarlet Tanager