

Trip Report
Western NC Rarity Round-up
March 10, 2021

We started our day at the Martin Candler section of the Sandy Mush Gamelands, where much of the ground was still covered by an overnight frost. The sky was an intense blue and we walked the trails hoping to hear Northern Bobwhite. Alas they were quiet, but the morning was brightened by a local guy running his Beagles. The pack of dogs were so cute as they ran through the brush looking for rabbits, all with their collars and tracking aials. A female American Kestrel was sitting atop a nest box and a pair of Red-tailed Hawks were seen mating atop a distant tree- all signs of spring! A walk at Bear Creek, another nearby portion of the Sandy Mush Gamelands, was particularly quiet with very few birds, so we moved on to the MSD along the French Broad River. The Purple Martins had not arrived yet and the colony was quiet except for a few European Starlings and a pair of Wood Duck on the French Broad River. Hopefully the Martins will be back soon. Our next stop was near UNCA where a female Rufous Hummingbird was super cooperative and soon appeared for a few quick photos. Thanks to David for keeping her safe and fed all winter. Another stop at UNCA produced a beautiful Great Horned Owl and her well-grown chick. We finished the day with a picnic down at Lake Julian where a lot of folks were enjoying the warm day and the park's facilities. We checked the lake, but the quantity of boats on the lake had obviously pushed birds away for the afternoon. We finished the day with some nice birds, but the beautiful weather had probably forced many wintering species farther north.

Simon Thompson

Birds 46 Species Encountered

Canada Goose	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Carolina Wren
Wood Duck	Downy Woodpecker	European Starling
Mallard	Hairy Woodpecker	Brown Thrasher
Bufflehead	Pileated Woodpecker	Northern Mockingbird
Wild Turkey	American Kestrel	Eastern Bluebird
Mourning Dove	Eastern Phoebe	American Robin
Rufous Hummingbird	Blue Jay	Field Sparrow
American Coot	American Crow	Dark-eyed Junco
Double-crested Cormorant	Fish Crow	Song Sparrow
Black Vulture	Carolina Chickadee	Eastern Towhee
Turkey Vulture	Tufted Titmouse	Eastern meadowlark
Cooper's Hawk	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Common Grackle
Red-shouldered Hawk	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Pine Warbler
Red-tailed Hawk	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Northern Cardinal
Great Horned Owl	White-breasted Nuthatch	
Belted Kingfisher	House Wren (Heard)	