

Cleveland County Explorer
Jan 23, 2021

Trip Report

We had a full trip on our latest edition of our new Ebird county birding daytrips. This was a rescheduled trip from earlier in the month. This time around we had beautiful weather with temperatures in the mid 50's when we finished up in the afternoon. Everyone was masked up and socially distanced on our walks and drove their own vehicles to each spot. We all met in Shelby to start with and quickly transferred to our first birding spot to look for sparrows and other songbirds. The first notable bird of the day was a cooperative HERMIT THRUSH as we got out of the car! A great start. NORTHERN FLICKERS, both KINGLETS, and two surprise PURPLE FINCHES were a delight to everyone.

The next spot was a working dirt farm in the county that has been good for birds in the past. We worked the edges of the road looking for sparrows. A PALM WARBLER foraged on the ground in front of us. Soon after we were able to locate a HOUSE WREN in with a CAROLINA WREN. We had very brief looks and heard a HORNED LARK on the dirt fields. On the way out a COMMON YELLOWTHROAT chipped away. A little way down the road we found a LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE sitting on a fence post. Off we went to find a staked-out BARN OWL in an abandoned barn and were successful in finding two! This was quite a bit of birding for the morning and we were already quite successful. It was about lunch time, so we headed to the farmstead of a very friendly local birder who let us eat lunch on his back deck while watching his feeders. Three PINE WARBLERS were eating the suet cakes out of their feeders as a PINE SISKEN called from the trees. A lone HOODED MERGANSER was on the pond. We took a quick walk around the farm after lunch and it produced SAVANNAH SPARROW, WILSON'S SNIPE, and RED-HEADED WOODPECKER. We were extremely fortunate to be able to walk around the farm! The last stop of the day was at Moss Lake. We were driving to the stop when we spotted a white goose in with a lot of CANADA GEESE. It turned out to be a ROSS'S GOOSE. A great sighting for everyone and a lifer for several in the group. At the lake we had an adult BALD EAGLE, HORNED GREBES, BUFFLEHEAD, and BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCHES.

This was a great day of birding that tallied us sixty-one species in total. I highly recommend birding in this under birded county. The potential for new and exciting birds to show up in the diverse habitats is high. I hope that our next trip down to Cleveland County is not too far away.

Kevin Burke