

Field Trip Report – Sterling State Park

August 23, 2026

Leader: Don Burlett

The day started as a cool but sunny bird walk. Sterling State Park has lots of water and impoundments, but the nature of the place has changed significantly versus my last trip there. We started near the entrance area with water on both sides of the road. Distant Ospreys were a welcome sign. However, there were only a few birds in the water in this area. We drove back to the parking lot to walk the southwest-most impoundment. We immediately noticed that the trees and bushes along the first section of the dike had been removed leaving this area wide open. As it was windy, there was little chance of seeing any birds here except the multitude of swallows swirling around. Further along, the brush and some trees were still present. However, there were few birds singing and they were very sparse. Wood Ducks were there in large numbers along with abundant Great Egrets and Great Blue Herons. A few Green Herons let their presence know, flying around and Belted Kingfishers were all around the area.

Shorebirds were few, with a few Killdeer, one Semipalmated Sandpiper and a Spotted Sandpiper being the only ones seen. No warblers were observed and very few sparrows. One pair of Indigo Buntings made up most of the passerines.

Overall, it was a bit disappointing, but we did get a nice walk in, and we had plenty of time for discussion and socializing. A list of species seen is provided below, totaling 36 species for the day.

Canada Goose	Belted Kingfisher
Trumpeter Swan	Downy Woodpecker
Wood Duck	Least Flycatcher
Mourning Dove	Eastern Phoebe
Killdeer	Eastern Kingbird
Spotted Sandpiper	Tree Swallow
Semipalmated Sandpiper	Barn Swallow
Ring-billed Gull	Northern House Wren
Caspian Tern	Carolina Wren
Pied-billed Grebe	European Starling
Double-crested Cormorant	Gray Catbird
Green Heron	American Robin
Great Egret	Cedar Waxwing
Great Blue Heron	House Sparrow
Osprey	House Finch
Bald Eagle	Song Sparrow

Red-winged Blackbird
Common Grackle

Northern Cardinal
Indigo Bunting