

April 6-8, 2018 – Illinois Prairie-Chicken Trip

Leader: Don Burlett

Seventeen (yes, seventeen in six cars) hardy birders ventured forth on Friday to Illinois in search of the Greater Prairie-chicken. Friday was cold and windy as we birded from southwestern Michigan, across Indiana to Illinois. After having visited Southwest Michigan Regional Airport, Reynold's Creek Gamebird Habitat area, Kankakee Sands and lots of farmland, we landed in Newton, Illinois. Bright and early Saturday morning (5 AM), we headed out to the lek and awaited their arrival. Right on cue, 14 Greater Prairie-chickens came out to dance and jump for the girls. It was a wonderful sight and, despite the cold and wind, everyone was very happy.

We then proceeded to bird across southern Illinois to Stephen A. Forbes State park, Douglas-Hart Nature center and on to Terra Haute. The next morning we, birded Goose Pond FWA and then headed toward home. With a stop at Kinderhook Sewage lagoons, we concluded our trop. 1200 miles of driving and 95 species later, we were all happy. Highlights included lots of ducks, plenty of hawks (Red-shouldered, Red-tailed, Rough-legged, Northern Harrier, Bald Eagle, Sharp-shinned), American White Pelicans, American Golden Plovers, swallows and Purple Martin, Carolina Chickadee, Western Meadowlark, Black-necked Stilts and Snow Goose. Another fun trip with a fun group. All species seen are listed below.

1. Snow Goose
2. Canada Goose
3. Mute Swan
4. Wood Duck
5. Blue-winged Teal
6. Northern Shoveler
7. Gadwall
8. American Wigeon
9. Mallard
10. Northern Pintail
11. Green-winged Teal
12. Canvasback
13. Redhead
14. Ring-necked Duck
15. Lesser Scaup
16. Bufflehead
17. Ruddy Duck
18. Greater Prairie-Chicken
19. Wild Turkey
20. Common Loon
21. Pied-billed Grebe
22. Double-crested Cormorant
23. American White Pelican
24. Great Blue Heron

25. Great Egret
26. Turkey Vulture
27. Northern Harrier
28. Sharp-shinned Hawk
29. Bald Eagle
30. Red-shouldered Hawk
31. Red-tailed Hawk
32. Rough-legged Hawk
33. American Coot
34. Sandhill Crane
35. Black-necked Stilt
36. Black-bellied Plover
37. American Golden-Plover
38. Killdeer
39. Pectoral Sandpiper
40. Wilson's Snipe
41. Greater Yellowlegs
42. Lesser Yellowlegs
43. Ring-billed Gull
44. Herring Gull
45. Rock Pigeon
46. Mourning Dove
47. Belted Kingfisher
48. Red-headed Woodpecker
49. Red-bellied Woodpecker
50. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
51. Downy Woodpecker
52. Northern Flicker
53. American Kestrel
54. Eastern Phoebe
55. Blue Jay
56. American Crow
57. Horned Lark
58. Northern Rough-winged Swallow
59. Purple Martin
60. Tree Swallow
61. Barn Swallow
62. Carolina Chickadee
63. Black-capped Chickadee
64. Tufted Titmouse
65. White-breasted Nuthatch

66. Brown Creeper
67. Carolina Wren
68. Golden-crowned Kinglet
69. Ruby-crowned Kinglet
70. Eastern Bluebird
71. American Robin
72. Brown Thrasher
73. Northern Mockingbird
74. European Starling
75. Yellow-rumped Warbler
76. American Tree Sparrow
77. Chipping Sparrow
78. Field Sparrow
79. Fox Sparrow
80. Dark-eyed Junco
81. Savannah Sparrow
82. Song Sparrow
83. Swamp Sparrow
84. Eastern Towhee
85. Northern Cardinal
86. Western Meadowlark
87. Eastern Meadowlark
88. Red-winged Blackbird
89. Brown-headed Cowbird
90. Rusty Blackbird
91. Brewer's Blackbird
92. Common Grackle
93. House Finch
94. American Goldfinch
95. House Sparrow