

Oakland Owlets @ Lake St. Clair Metropark

Oakland Owlets families and friends gathered at Lake St. Clair Metropark on Saturday June 19 to explore the marshes and trails at the park. The weather was partly cloudy and muggy with rain predicted. Luckily, the rain held until the field trip concluded. The group hiked to the Day Sail area from the Nature Center Parking Lot. Along the way species like Yellow Warblers and Red-winged Blackbirds were abundant and repeatedly called.



A Great Blue Heron and Green Heron grabbed everyone's attention early. Both birds were close enough to see their feeding behaviors. The wetlands provide ideal habitat for herons.



Blanche Wicke, co-leader, spotted a resident Great-horned Owl. Although distant, everyone focused on the bird perching on the tree across the marsh. Lake St. Clair is known for the owl bucket that Great-horned Owls have used as a nest for decades. This year however, the owls did not nest in the bucket.

The group meandered through the cattail marsh along a boardwalk where water snakes and frogs floated as Marsh Wren's songs were ever-present. At the Day Sail Parking lot, a pair of Foster's Terns flew into the bay.



The Nature Center recently opened and we stopped to view the exhibits and chat with the staff. The Nature Center had been closed for 19 months because of the pandemic.



A view of an active colony of Cormorants was the final stop of the field trip. Numerous nests were observed on a small island across the water from the boat launch parking lot.

Spotting scopes provided close views of the **Double-crested Cormorants** along with the rare Neotropical Cormorant which was also nesting in the colony. For many in the group this was a



life bird. Thirty-seven species and 424 individuals were reported to eBird.

The Bird Checklist is as follows:

Canada Goose
Mute Swan
Wood Duck
Mallard
Mourning Dove
Sandhill Crane
Ring-billed Gull
Forster's Tern

Neotropic Cormorant

Double-crested Cormorant
Great Blue Heron
Green Heron
Great Horned Owl
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Warbling Vireo
Blue Jay
Black-capped Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse

Tree Swallow
Barn Swallow
House Wren
Marsh Wren
Carolina Wren
European Starling
American Robin
House Sparrow
House Finch
American Goldfinch
Song Sparrow
Baltimore Oriole
Red-winged Blackbird
Brown-headed Cowbird
Common Grackle
Common Yellowthroat
Yellow Warbler
Northern Cardinal

A special thanks to Blanche Wicke for assisting with this field trip and Rashmi Overbeek for providing photos. Thank you as well to all the participants.

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