

Field Trip Report – Downriver Ducks Tour
(includes Elizabeth Park, Bishop Park, and Dingell Park)

February 3, 2024

Leader: Kayla Niner

Despite the forecast for sun, a cloudy sky with fog greeted the 11 birders who gathered at Elizabeth Park in Trenton. There was a decided lack of ice despite the early February date and the Detroit River was flowing freely. Our first waterfowl of the morning were Canada Geese and Mallards. We also attempted to look for some sparrows in the scrubby section along the interior river, but did not turn up anything. We then lugged our scopes over to the main part of the river to check for ducks. On the way, an American Black Duck was spotted amongst the Mallards, so we got our second duck species for the day, and one of the local pair of Belted Kingfishers put on a show for us, posing on top of a lamppost by the river.



There were no ducks in the main part of the river, but some Mute Swans flew by. We also spotted an immature Bald Eagle sitting in a tree. One member of our group frequented the park in all seasons and led us inside the island's trails to where a Great-horned Owl pair has been seen hanging out, but we did not find them. However, we did have a Red-tailed Hawk fly by and we saw some Dark-eyed Juncos foraging high in a tree. Other birds seen at Elizabeth Park included Northern Flicker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, and Starlings.

Our second stop was Bishop Park in Wyandotte where the ducks were mostly lacking again, but we did see some Common Mergansers and Common Goldeneyes along with another very distant Bald Eagle. There is a Peregrine Falcon that likes to hang around the spot, but it, like the Owls, was not present that day. Our only close-up birds at this park were Canada Geese and a lone Mute Swan. The Canada Geese were quite noisy honking at each other, and the group witnessed one of the geese chase a fox squirrel away.



Our third and final stop was Dingell Park in Ecorse where we finally found the ducks. We first found a group of Ruddy Ducks, some Buffleheads, Goldeneyes, and a pair of Hooded Mergansers along with a large group of Mute Swans on the south side of Mud Island (part of Detroit River IWR). We then walked and drove down to the pavilion by the restaurant at the north end of the park. On the north side of Mud Island, we found a raft of Redheads, more Hooded Mergansers, a few more Goldeneyes, and another Ruddy Duck along with Mallards and Canada Geese. Our total duck count for the day ended up being seven species, which is low for these parks at this time of year, but better than hoped for with the abnormally warm conditions.



(Photo Credits: All pictures: Kayla Niner)

Species total across all three parks: 29

Elizabeth Park (Trenton), Wayne, Michigan, US

Feb 3, 2024 7:58 AM - 9:29 AM

Protocol: Traveling, 2.22 mile(s)

Checklist Comments: Foggy/cloudy. Upper 20s or low 30s.

19 species (+2 other taxa)

- Canada Goose 24
- Mute Swan 4
- swan sp. 2
- Mallard 32
- American Black Duck 1
- gull sp. 8
- Bald Eagle 1
- Red-tailed Hawk 1
- Belted Kingfisher 1
- Red-bellied Woodpecker 1
- Downy Woodpecker 2
- Northern Flicker 2
- Blue Jay 1
- Black-capped Chickadee 3
- Tufted Titmouse 2
- White-breasted Nuthatch 2
- European Starling 9
- American Robin 4
- American Goldfinch 1
- Dark-eyed Junco 8
- Northern Cardinal 1

Bishop Park, Wayne, Michigan, US

Feb 3, 2024 9:50 AM - 10:30 AM

Protocol: Traveling, 0.5 mile(s)

Checklist Comments: Cloudy. Low 30s.

7 species

Canada Goose 36
Mute Swan 4
Common Goldeneye 4
Common Merganser 3
Ring-billed Gull X
Herring Gull X
Bald Eagle 1

Dingell Park (formally Ecorse Park), Wayne, Michigan, US

Feb 3, 2024 10:42 AM - 11:25 AM

Protocol: Traveling, 0.54 mile(s)

Checklist Comments: Cloudy. Mid 30s.

11 species (+1 other taxa)

Canada Goose 24
Mute Swan 34
Mallard 16
Redhead 31
Bufflehead 7
Common Goldeneye 8
Hooded Merganser 18
Common Merganser 4
Ruddy Duck 6
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) 4
gull sp. 1
Great Blue Heron 1