

Red, White and Blue Bird Hike

The Oakland Owlets' Families and Friends gathered at Bear Creek Nature Park in Oakland Township on Flag Day to search for birds with the colors of the American Flag in their plumage. Rainy weather threatened but held off until the end of the hike. Despite the overcast skies it was a good morning to see birds. The group posed for a photo prior to setting out.



Everyone was anxious to start birding. On the trail the number of birds singing was overwhelming. Birds were nesting and male birds were

declaring their territories. The chorus had many voices. One of the loudest singers initially heard was the Rose-breasted Grosbeak. We were able to observe the brightly colored male perching despite all of the foliage on the trees. This was the bird of the day and we saw several along the trail. Luckily an ace photographer joined this hike and shared her photos. In this area we were also able to hear and see several birds including the Eastern Warbling Vireo, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, Indigo Bunting, Downy Woodpecker and Red-bellied Woodpecker.



From the forested area, the trail opened to fields with several mature trees lining the pathway. This open habitat is where the nest boxes are located. Bear Creek has a Bluebird trail with twelve nest boxes monitored by stewardship volunteers. Nest boxes offer cavity nests for birds like Bluebirds and Tree Swallows. Eastern Bluebirds are champion nesters, starting to nest in April and continuing into



August-sometimes raising up to three broods of chicks. Bluebirds were foraging on the insects attracted to the variety of plants in the field.



The trail eventually led to a pond with a dock where everyone gathered to listen and look. Green frogs and Bullfrogs were calling. We began to hear and see Common Yellowthroat and Northern Yellow Warbler. An Eastern Kingbird was hunting for dragonflies along the edge of the pond. A lone Mallard was spotted as well. Our arrival caused a Green Heron to leave but there was still a lot to see. Benches on the dock allowed the group to stop, rest and enjoy the space. We continued around the pond

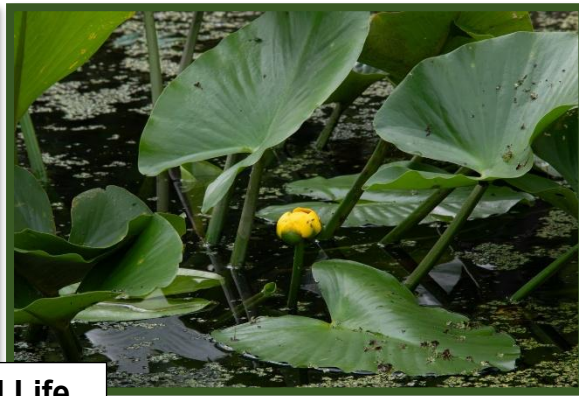
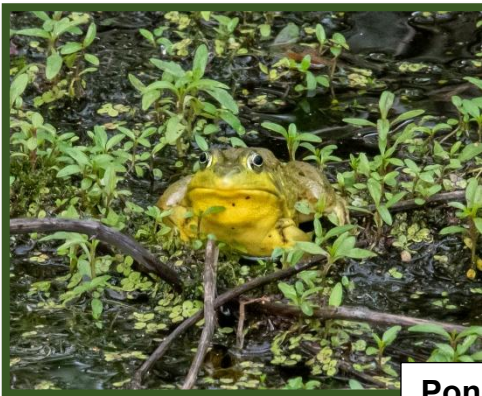
where we had a good look at the Common Yellowthroat, The masked male was constantly singing overhead at the edge of pond. On the way back to the parking lot, we saw Turkey Vultures soaring on columns of rising air, soaring



effortlessly in the sky overhead. Getting closer the parking lot, a few drops of rain began to fall but most of the rain held off until we returned to the parking area.



It was a good morning for birding. We saw and/or heard 35 species as we casually walked about a mile. Bear Creek is one place where you can see both the Baltimore and Orchard Orioles. Orchard Orioles are great birds to see and not as common as its cousin, the Baltimore Oriole. Bear Creek is a wonderful park to spend time outdoors birding. A special thank you to Mary Zednik for sharing several photos. All field trip eBird checklist are available upon request.



Pond Life

Photo Credits - Kathleen Dougherty & Mary Zednik.