

Field Trip Report – Belle Isle

December 3, 2022

Leader: Don Burlett, Jeff Stacey

To say this was a cold and blustery day would be an understatement. With temperatures in the 30's and the wind whipping at 30-50 mile per hour, it was something different than most trips. After the rain stopped just after 8 AM, we proceeded to carpool around the island in search of birds. It was heart-warming to have 21 people come out to brave the elements. With that wind blowing across the island, it was tough going. We had abandoned the Blue Heron Lagoon early because the lagoon was almost devoid of ducks. We made the effort to push the date of the trip later to help get more ducks, but it didn't work. It appears that the lack of frozen water to our north resulted in fewer ducks coming south for us to see, even in December.

When we got to the beach on the north side of the island, the howling wind eventually forced everyone to seek shelter. As seen in these two pictures, the first shot was the first moments on the beach (with a notable lean into the wind by participants followed by the second shot sheltering from the wind. There were just a few ducks on the river, mostly Buffleheads with a smattering of goldeneye and other ducks along with lots of Mute Swans. The Peregrine Falcon was on his usual building across the river also.



We proceeded around the island with just a handful of birds here and there. We later walked some of the nature trails to see if any land birds were about. We were able to kick up a few sparrows (American Tree, Song, White-throated), a Winter Wren, Blue Jays along with a nice Bald Eagle sitting in a tree right over the trail. He paid no attention to us and enjoy being partially out of the wind. We also found what appeared to be a Great Horned Owl pellet on the trail under a tree with whitewash on the pavement. We later returned to the Nature Center to sadly find no bird feeders up. A few treats from our hospitality folks (Laurie Schubert, Alice Marotti) warmed us after this interesting outing.



Don Burlett
Jeff Stacey

32 species

Canada Goose
Mute Swan
Mallard
Canvasback
Redhead
Bufflehead
Common Goldeneye
Hooded Merganser
Common Merganser
Ruddy Duck
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)
Ring-billed Gull
Herring Gull
Great Black-backed Gull
Double-crested Cormorant
Great Blue Heron
Bald Eagle

Red-bellied Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Peregrine Falcon
Blue Jay
Black-capped Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
White-breasted Nuthatch
Winter Wren
European Starling
American Robin
House Sparrow
American Tree Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Northern Cardinal