

**Field Trip Report: Late Winter Wildcard – Kensington Metropark**

**March 17, 2024**

**Leader: Kayla Niner**

Chilly temperatures greeted the six birders that met at the Kensington Metropark Nature Center. The birds were up and about however, and we were greeted by many hungry Black-capped Chickadees and Tufted Titmice looking for handouts. They weren't disappointed by the group's offerings of sunflower seeds and peanuts.

Our first stop was at the bridge just beyond the Nature Center. There we hoped to find the Red-headed Woodpecker. We waited and sure enough, the Red-headed Woodpecker showed up and we got some good looks at the bird. On the way back, we spotted a Red-tailed Hawk on top of a dead tree. Near the Nature Center, there was a pair of Sandhill Cranes. They, too, wanted a handout, but they were disappointed... until they noticed some seed left behind by previous visitors\*. *\*Which is not permitted at the park!*



From there we went to the boardwalk at Wildwing Lake in Livingston County, where we saw many types of ducks through Don's scope including Gadwalls, American Wigeons, American Black Ducks, Green-winged Teals, Ring-necked Ducks, Buffleheads, Hooded Mergansers, and Common Mergansers. The Great Blue Herons were back on their nests and prepping for spring and two Bald Eagles occasionally flew over and harassed the herons. The group also found a Wilson's Snipe which fed on the mudflats for some time before it flew away. It was the most exciting bird of the trip.



On the way to the next stop, we slowed along the side of the road to briefly watch dancing Sandhill Cranes. They didn't like the audience, however, and quit dancing when we were watching.

The next stop was supposed to be the boat launch, but the parking lot was closed, so we went up the road to Maple Beach and braved a cold wind to scope for more ducks. Not much was there, but we got to see some Horned Grebes and Lesser Scaup. We also saw some early Tree Swallows.

Our fourth stop was the Farm Center. We hiked out into the Farm Center to check the overlook of the Osprey Nesting area to look for ducks. There wasn't much on that lake, but we added Wild Turkeys, Eastern Bluebirds, and Killdeer to our list as we walked to and from the overlook.

We then drove from the Farm Center to the side of the road across from the Osprey Nesting area to see if there was anything to see from that viewpoint, but the lake was just as empty. From there, we wanted to check one more beach, but the wind had picked up and on the way there the trip leader noted whitecaps on the normally calm lake and the group decided to stay warm and call it a day.



*Photo Credits:*

*Red-headed Woodpecker, Wilson's Snipe, Great Blue Heron, Eastern Bluebird by Malissa Bossardet  
Sandhill Crane, Immature Bald Eagle, Killdeer by Kayla Niner*

**Total: 46 species**

**Kensington Metropark--general (Oakland Co. only), Oakland, Michigan, US**

Mar 17, 2024 7:55 AM - 8:55 AM

Protocol: Traveling, 0.59 mile(s)

Checklist Comments: Nature Center only. Partly cloudy. Mid 30s. Windy.

24 species

Canada Goose 5  
Mute Swan 1  
Mallard 2  
Mourning Dove 1  
Sandhill Crane 4  
Ring-billed Gull 2

Great Blue Heron 30  
Red-tailed Hawk 1  
Red-headed Woodpecker 1  
Red-bellied Woodpecker 2  
Downy Woodpecker 1  
Northern Flicker 1  
Black-capped Chickadee 5  
Tufted Titmouse 3  
White-breasted Nuthatch 1  
European Starling 1  
American Robin 2  
American Tree Sparrow 2  
Dark-eyed Junco 1  
Song Sparrow 2  
Red-winged Blackbird 12  
Brown-headed Cowbird 6  
Common Grackle 24  
Northern Cardinal 3

**Kensington Metropark--Livingston Co. only, Livingston, Michigan, US**

Mar 17, 2024 8:55 AM - 9:39 AM

Protocol: Traveling, 0.34 mile(s)

17 species

Mute Swan 4  
Gadwall 2  
American Wigeon 4  
American Black Duck 2  
Green-winged Teal 4  
Ring-necked Duck 6  
Bufflehead 1  
Hooded Merganser 2  
Common Merganser 6  
Sandhill Crane 4  
Killdeer 1  
Wilson's Snipe 1  
Great Blue Heron 16  
Bald Eagle 2  
American Crow 1  
Red-winged Blackbird 25  
Brown-headed Cowbird 1

**Kensington Metropark - Maple Beach Drive, Oakland, Michigan, US**

Mar 17, 2024 9:52 AM - 10:24 AM

Protocol: Traveling, 0.19 mile(s)

Checklist Comments: Mostly cloudy. In the upper 30s

17 species

Canada Goose 7  
Gadwall 1

Mallard 2  
American Black Duck 2  
Lesser Scaup 16  
Bufflehead 12  
Common Merganser 3  
Horned Grebe 7  
Sandhill Crane 1  
Killdeer 2  
Ring-billed Gull 14  
Herring Gull 1  
Blue Jay 1  
American Crow 2  
Tree Swallow 1  
American Robin 1  
Red-winged Blackbird 2

**Kensington Metropark--Farm Center, Oakland, Michigan, US**

Mar 17, 2024 10:35 AM - 11:12 AM

Protocol: Traveling, 0.55 mile(s)

22 species (+1 other taxa)

Canada Goose 4  
Mute Swan 1  
Bufflehead 7  
Hooded Merganser 4  
Common Merganser 2  
Wild Turkey 4  
Mourning Dove 2  
Sandhill Crane 2  
Killdeer 3  
Ring-billed Gull 3  
hawk sp. 1  
Red-bellied Woodpecker 1  
American Crow 2  
Black-capped Chickadee 2  
Eastern Bluebird 2  
American Robin 5  
House Sparrow 5  
House Finch 2  
American Goldfinch 1  
Song Sparrow 1  
Red-winged Blackbird 8  
Common Grackle 4  
Northern Cardinal 2