**Field Trip Report – Detroit River – Lake Erie Shoreline Field Trip – Jointly with Grand Rapids Audubon Club**

**October 26, 2024**

**Leader: Don Burlett**

This field trip was a collaboration between Oakland Bird Alliance (OBA) and Grand Rapids Audubon Club as suggested by Audubon Great Lakes. It was a gloriously sunny and cool day to be out birding. The group of 12 birders gathered at the Detroit International Wildlife Refuge and began the day birding the Humbug Marsh area. As the first stop of the day, the birds were very active and swirling around. We immediately began seeing young Cedar Waxwings and many Rusty Blackbirds. We soon found lots of Golden-crowned Kinglets feeding in the area. Raptors and herons/egrets were to be found along with droves of American Robins and White-throated Sparrows. Several Hermit Thrushes were seen, often chasing the robins as they fought over available berries in the woods. Water levels in the region were quite low and the only shorebirds found here were Killdeer. We also enjoyed the return of the Dark-eyed Juncos.

A bird flying in the sky

Description automatically generated

Red-tailed Hawk (photo by Malissa Bossardet)

A group of people walking in the woods

Description automatically generated

The Group at Humbug Marsh (photo by Don Burlett)

We then drove to Lake Erie Metropark and began by birding the Marshland Museum trails. Things began to get quiet quite quickly in the morning but there were birds to be found. We spotted some Greater Yellowlegs on the way in and found lots of Great Egrets and Great Blue Herons in the areas. The normally well watered channels were closer to mud flats, but some Wood Ducks, Mallard and Pied-billed Grebes kept us busy with identification. More Golden-crowned Kinglets were buzzing around with some Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Black-capped Chickadees. We also observed a flight of American Crows moving along the river in this area.

A bird sitting on a branch

Description automatically generated

Golden-crowned Kinglet (photo by Malissa Bossardet)

We then moved over to the Hawk Watch site at Lake Erie Metropark. We had the opportunity to watch the “professionals” identifying raptors as quite large distances. It wasn’t a huge day for movement, but some Eagles, Turkey Vultures and Sharp-shinned Hawks were seen in the area. We were provided informational packets by the volunteers there, provided additional insight into the work they do.

The final stop involved a drive south to Sterling State Park. Here, we found a large number of Bonaparte’s Gulls, where they obviously found the habitat inviting. We walked around a large impoundment where we found Swans (Mute and Trumpeter) and a number of duck species. About the only passerine species we saw were Yellow-rumped Warblers and a few other species scattered about.

A bird perched on a branch with yellow and orange leaves

Description automatically generated

Yellow-rumped Warbler (photo by Malissa Bossardet)

We concluded our day after walking about 5 miles of trails and about 6 hours of birding. It was great fun, and we enjoyed the day together as a group. A complete list of the species seen (54 species) is provided at the end of the report. And we were all smiles after this wonderful day of birding.

A group of people standing in front of a sign

Description automatically generated

(photo by Don Burlett with the help of a volunteer)

**Detroit IWR (Humbug Marsh) - 32 species**

Canada Goose

[Mallard](https://ebird.org/species/mallar3)

[Mourning Dove](https://ebird.org/species/moudov)

[Killdeer](https://ebird.org/species/killde)

[Ring-billed Gull](https://ebird.org/species/ribgul)

[Double-crested Cormorant](https://ebird.org/species/doccor)

[Great Egret](https://ebird.org/species/greegr)

[Great Blue Heron](https://ebird.org/species/grbher3)

[Northern Harrier](https://ebird.org/species/norhar2)

[Bald Eagle](https://ebird.org/species/baleag)

[Red-tailed Hawk](https://ebird.org/species/rethaw)

[Red-bellied Woodpecker](https://ebird.org/species/rebwoo)

[Downy Woodpecker](https://ebird.org/species/dowwoo)

[Northern Flicker](https://ebird.org/species/norfli)

[Eastern Phoebe](https://ebird.org/species/easpho)

[Blue Jay](https://ebird.org/species/blujay)

[Black-capped Chickadee](https://ebird.org/species/bkcchi)

[Golden-crowned Kinglet](https://ebird.org/species/gockin)

[White-breasted Nuthatch](https://ebird.org/species/whbnut)

[Carolina Wren](https://ebird.org/species/carwre)

[European Starling](https://ebird.org/species/eursta)

[Hermit Thrush](https://ebird.org/species/herthr)

[American Robin](https://ebird.org/species/amerob)

[Cedar Waxwing](https://ebird.org/species/cedwax)

[American Goldfinch](https://ebird.org/species/amegfi)

[Dark-eyed Junco](https://ebird.org/species/daejun)

[White-throated Sparrow](https://ebird.org/species/whtspa)

[Song Sparrow](https://ebird.org/species/sonspa)

[Red-winged Blackbird](https://ebird.org/species/rewbla)

[Rusty Blackbird](https://ebird.org/species/rusbla)

[Common Grackle](https://ebird.org/species/comgra)

[Northern Cardinal](https://ebird.org/species/norcar)

**Lake Erie Metropark – 32 species**

Canada Goose

Wood Duck

Mallard

Mourning Dove

Killdeer

Greater Yellowlegs

Ring-billed Gull

Pied-billed Grebe

Great Egret

Great Blue Heron

Turkey Vulture

Sharp-shinned Hawk

Red-tailed Hawk

Red-bellied Woodpecker

Downy Woodpecker

Hairy Woodpecker

American Crow

Black-capped Chickadee

Tufted Titmouse

Ruby-crowned Kinglet

Golden-crowned Kinglet

White-breasted Nuthatch

Hermit Thrush

American Robin

Purple Finch

White-throated Sparrow

Song Sparrow

Red-winged Blackbird

Rusty Blackbird

Orange-crowned Warbler

Yellow-rumped Warbler

Northern Cardinal

**Sterling State Park – 19 species**

Mute Swan

Trumpeter Swan

Wood Duck

Blue-winged Teal

Northern Shoveler

Gadwall

American Wigeon

Mallard

Ring-necked Duck

Ruddy Duck

American Coot

Pectoral Sandpiper

Bonaparte's Gull

Ring-billed Gull

Double-crested Cormorant

Great Egret

Great Blue Heron

Downy Woodpecker

Yellow-rumped Warbler