

Field Trip Report – Magee Marsh Crazy Day Trip

May 9, 2026

Leader: Don Burlett

Eight determined birders were along for the day, in search of spring migrants and migrating birds. It was a sunny day with modest temperatures (low 50's to near 70 degrees) while the wind was mild early in the day but grew to a vengeful force late in the day. As is the common situation, each spring migration is slightly different than the last. That said, the general trend for fewer birds and the continued loss of larger trees at Magee have all added to the difficulty of seeing birds as easily as in the past.

Another aspect of this trip was the apparent separation of different groups in their migration. On this day, it was apparent that the ducks and shorebirds had already passed through the area. Then, add to that the apparent late arrival of many of the migrants and you have a challenging time getting lots of birds on the list.



Group Shot

Photo by Don Burlett

We began the day at the Magee Marsh boardwalk. This was sometimes crowded as would be the case during the birding festival but there were other times when the crowds eased. We spent much of the morning here before breaking for lunch. We then headed to Ottawa NWR to drive the “auto drive” route in search of more birds. This segment was light on species, with just a few birds here and there. The next stop was Metzger Marsh where we

added a couple of ducks and a load of Trumpeter Swans. Finally, we headed to Howard Marsh to top off the day. Aside from being blown away, we added a few more species.

All-in-all, we had a meager 76 species for the day. The birds are listed below and I've added a few shots of birds seen on this trip.



Cape May Warbler (female) and Common Tern
Photos by Kim Johnson



Lesser Yellowlegs and Black-necked Stilt
Photo by Kim Johnson

Bird Species Observed:

Canada Goose
Trumpeter Swan
Wood Duck
Northern Shoveler
Mallard
Mourning Dove
Chimney Swift

Common Gallinule
Sandhill Crane
Black-necked Stilt
Killdeer
Wilson's Snipe
Spotted Sandpiper
Lesser Yellowlegs

Dunlin
Ring-billed Gull
American Herring Gull
Caspian Tern
Common Tern
Double-crested
Cormorant

Green Heron
Great Blue Heron
Great Egret
American White Pelican
Turkey Vulture
Osprey
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Northern Harrier
Bald Eagle
Red-tailed Hawk
Bald Eagle
Great Horned Owl
Red-headed Woodpecker
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Least Flycatcher
Eastern Kingbird
White-eyed Vireo

Eastern Warbling Vireo
Blue Jay
Tree Swallow
Purple Martin
Barn Swallow
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Red-breasted Nuthatch
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Northern House Wren
Marsh Wren
Carolina Wren
European Starling
Gray Catbird
American Robin
American Goldfinch
White-throated Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Baltimore Oriole
Red-winged Blackbird

Brown-headed Cowbird
Common Grackle
Northern Waterthrush
Prothonotary Warbler
Tennessee Warbler
Nashville Warbler
Common Yellowthroat
American Redstart
Cape May Warbler
Magnolia Warbler
Northern Yellow Warbler
Chestnut-sided Warbler
Palm Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Wilson's Warbler
Northern Cardinal
Rose-breasted Grosbeak