

Mid-summer Birding @ Indian Springs



On a warm July morning, Oakland Audubon Young Birders' Club Families and Friends gathered at Indian Spring Metropark in White Lake to explore the prairie restoration near the Environmental Discovery Center. The restored prairie surrounding the center supports a great deal of biodiversity. Several flowers were in bloom and the group had a chance to see important plant and insect interactions including the connection between milkweed species and monarch butterflies.

At EDC pond we encountered a flurry of Swallows. Numerous swallows soared over the pond from the building. The EDC structure is suitable for the nests of Barn Swallows and Cliff Swallows. Nests were visible along with newly fledged young. Other Swallows including Tree Swallows, **Bank Swallows** and Purple Martins were part of the aerial formation. In a brief time, we saw five different swallows.



Beyond the pond and deeper into the prairie, the group was greeted by bouncing trills of the Field Sparrow. The repetitive clear strong song originates from a small, rusty-capped little brown, buffy bird with pink bill. Although still common, Field Sparrows have declined over the last 50 years, due to habitat loss. Old field specialists, Field Sparrows depend on undeveloped fields and prairie for breeding and their survival.

Further along the trail, the group encountered a female (hen) Wild Turkey. The hen was not disturbed by the group and moved slowly through the tall plants in the prairie. Due to its size and proximity, everyone was able to see this hen. Soon, it was apparent that she was not concerned about the group because she was pre-occupied with watching over eight poults or young turkeys foraging in the tall grasses near her. Young Wild Turkey are precocial which means that upon hatching they are feathered and able to leave the nest within hours. Newly hatched poults stay with their mothers for a few days while they learn to find food on their own dining on insects primarily at this stage.



The group turned back from the Woodland Trails after being swarmed by Deer Flies. As a result, we did not see the White-breasted Nuthatch which is the Oakland Audubon mascot and the bird that we always try to see on field trips. Mary K ventured into the deep woods and provided us with some great photos of the flowers we missed including the stunning Michigan Lily. Most of the group walked back toward the EDC while continuing to bird.



Young Birders' Club field trip on July 16th reported **twenty-nine species:**

Wild Turkey

Mourning Dove

Killdeer

Ring-billed Gull

Great Egret

Turkey Vulture

Downy Woodpecker

Northern Flicker

Eastern Kingbird

Blue Jay

Black-capped Chickadee

Purple Martin

Tree Swallow

Bank Swallow

Barn Swallow

Cliff Swallow

Gray Catbird

Eastern Bluebird

American Robin

Cedar Waxwing

House Sparrow

American Goldfinch

Field Sparrow

Song Sparrow

Red-winged Blackbird

Common Yellowthroat

Yellow Warbler

Rose-breasted Grosbeak

Indigo Bunting

After the hike, the group visited the EDC to see some of the unique exhibits and spend time in the underwater room that extends into the pond.



Thank you to Indian Springs, Ray Bosshard, Mary Korde & Young Birders' Families

Photo Credits – Ray Bosshard, Kathleen Dougherty, Marcy Korde & OAS Gallery.