

## **Field Trip Report – Beaudette Park St. Clair Metropark**

**February 25, 2023**

**Leader: Kayla Niner**

In true form to the odd weather of 2023, the week before the Beaudette Park trip was scheduled to happen, we had an unusual warm spell after a major ice storm. Blache Wicke was kind enough to do a pre-trip scout and she reported that the ducks had got the hint, and by Friday, had left Beaudette behind for colder waters. So at midday Friday, the decision was made to move the trip to St. Clair Metropark, where ducks had been seen reliably all week. Saturday morning brought treacherous snow-covered roads and a bitter eastern wind, but six of us braved the cold to look for ducks at St. Clair Metropark. Pulling up, it looked like we might be out of luck, but as we studied the waves from the relative wind-block of a dumpster, we managed to find seven duck and one merganser species, including a Long-tailed Duck and several large rafts of Canvasbacks. From there we checked the little bay by the nature area wetlands, but the normally protected area was mostly frozen and getting the brunt of the east wind. Only a few Canada Geese and Mallards were there. Taking refuge once more, this time by the Daysail restrooms, we checked the rafts of Canvasbacks for any other odd ducks out, but our count didn't change, unless you were counting the two overly-friendly Fox Squirrels who were hoping for handouts. They left disappointed.

Hoping to thaw out a little, the group returned to their cars and made for the Boat Launch. This spot was far more sheltered from the wind, and despite a little ice, was another good spot for birds. We added six more species to our list, including Tundra Swans, American Black Ducks, a Red-breasted Merganser, and two sleeping Sandhill Cranes doing their best Canada Goose impressions. Using our scopes brought us a Great Black-backed Gull. Everyone was able to see the bird through a scope and we left the Boat Launch feeling pretty accomplished with a good number of species on our list.



(Photo Credit: Kayla Niner)



(Photo Credit: Andrea Niner)



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(Photo Credit: Kayla Niner)

Not done yet, we regrouped at the Nature Center and spent some time indoors watching the bird feeders out the window. We were treated to two Fox Sparrows digging away amongst the other birds. We also added Black-capped Chickadees, Red-winged Blackbirds, White-throated Sparrows, Northern Cardinals, House Finches, and made the field trip official with the addition of a White-breasted Nuthatch. After we were warm enough, we took the trails out hoping to spot some owls, as three species had been spotted there in the last month or so. Sadly, we found no owls, but we did get to add another sparrow to our list with a Song Sparrow and the group managed to spot a Carolina Wren. We also saw a Downy Woodpecker that was pulling the bark off a twig in the hopes of a snack.

On the walk back to the Nature Center, a group of four deer came crashing out of the scrubby area by the river. One of the deer decided to try taking a walk across the ice and its front legs went through the ice! Thankfully, it was able to get out safely. We watched as one of the others thought about trying it too, but seemed to realize the ice was much too thin to support the weight of an adult deer and decided to stay on solid ground.

Before we reached the parking lot to split off, we got to add one last species to our list; a Red-tailed Hawk. With that species, we capped our list for the day at 39. All in all, we had a good trip, and by the time we left, the sun was trying to come out and the bitterness of the morning winds were all but forgotten.



(Photo Credit: Kayla Niner)



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**Lake St. Clair Metropark (Metro Beach Metropark), Macomb, Michigan, US**

Feb 25, 2023 8:03 AM - 10:55 AM

Protocol: Traveling, 3.76 mile(s)

Checklist Comments: Cloudy. Snowing sometimes. In the 20s and rising. Windy, with a cold wind-chill. Wind from NE.

39 species

Canada Goose 30  
Mute Swan 16  
Tundra Swan 20  
Mallard 8  
American Black Duck 2  
Canvasback 300  
Redhead 1  
Greater Scaup 2  
Lesser Scaup 15  
Long-tailed Duck 1  
Bufflehead 5  
Common Goldeneye 15  
Hooded Merganser 6  
Common Merganser 18  
Red-breasted Merganser 1  
Mourning Dove 1  
Sandhill Crane 2  
Ring-billed Gull 16  
Herring Gull 1  
Great Black-backed Gull 1  
Red-tailed Hawk 1  
Red-bellied Woodpecker 1  
Downy Woodpecker 6  
Hairy Woodpecker 1  
American Crow 3  
Black-capped Chickadee 6  
Tufted Titmouse 1  
White-breasted Nuthatch 2  
Carolina Wren 1  
European Starling 30  
House Sparrow 50  
House Finch 2  
American Tree Sparrow 15  
Fox Sparrow 3  
Dark-eyed Junco (Slate-colored) 16  
White-throated Sparrow 2  
Song Sparrow 1  
Red-winged Blackbird 60  
Northern Cardinal 6