

Oakland Owlets' November 2019 Field Trip Report

The Oakland Owlets' November 2nd field trip took place on the Clinton River Trail in Rochester Michigan. A small group of birders gathered at the headquarters of Clinton River Watershed Council. The office is a short walk from the Trail. The Clinton Watershed Council, along with the Friends of Clinton River Trail partnered with Oakland Audubon for this hike. The Friends of the Clinton River Trail are celebrating their 15th Anniversary of the trail and this was the last event of a yearlong celebration. The morning was cold and rainy. Thankfully the group sheltered out of the elements at the headquarters before and after the hike. Luckily the rain stopped as the group hit the trail.



This portion of the Clinton River Trail runs parallel to the Clinton River, allowing the group to see several beautiful vistas of the river. The river meanders through a nearly 100-acre natural area which is managed by the City of Rochester Hills. This natural area provides great habitat for wildlife including birds. Numerous berry laden shrubs bordered the trail. During the late summer, fall and winter, berries are an important food source for birds since insects are less abundant. Fat rich berries offer essential nourishment to birds during colder seasons and while migrating.



American Robins were seen everywhere along with another berry loving bird. A flock of Cedar Waxwings caught everyone's attention as they gorged down berries near the trail. Everyone stopped and observed this foraging for some time. It was amazing to see these distinctive birds with their subtle crests, black masks, yellow bands across their tails and bright red wax droplets on their secondaries.

Fun fact -Cedar Waxwings are one of the few North American birds that specializes in eating fruits. Nineteen species of birds were seen on the hike plus one hawk sp. A complete checklist is listed below.



The group concluded the hike at the Clinton River Watershed Council. Information was shared about Project FeederWatch which is a citizen science project through the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. This project is a great way to learn about common winter birds and contribute to science. Snacks were provided by the Friends of the Clinton River Trail. **A special thank you to Gayla Houser from the Friends of the Clinton River Trail and Anne Brasie from the Clinton River Watershed Council.**



The bird checklist is as follows:

- Canada Goose
- Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)
- Mourning Dove
- Ring-billed Gull
- Cooper's Hawk
- hawk sp.
- Red-bellied Woodpecker
- Downy Woodpecker
- Blue Jay
- American Crow
- Black-capped Chickadee
- Tufted Titmouse
- European Starling
- American Robin
- Cedar Waxwing
- House Sparrow
- American Goldfinch
- White-throated Sparrow
- Red-winged Blackbird
- Northern Cardinal

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