

Awesome Ospreys May Field Trip at Kensington Metropark

On May 22, Oakland Owlets families and friends visited Kensington Metropark to see the Ospreys. The group was not disappointed. Kensington Metropark was designated as a site for the reintroduction of Ospreys in southern Michigan more than 20 years ago after Osprey were extirpated in S.E. Michigan. Since then, Ospreys have rebounded and now can be found throughout Michigan. Today over 250 Osprey nests are established, thanks to the efforts of the Restoration Partners.

Young birders and friends met near the east park entrance where **Barb Jensen and volunteers from Michigan Osprey** discussed the restoration program and Osprey natural history. Barb was part of the restoration work group. From her truck, Barb explained Osprey's adaptations that make them an important component of the ecosystem. In addition, Barb showed the tracking devices used to monitor Osprey migration. The Osprey taxidermy mount Barb displayed was part of the tracking project and died during its first year.



After the tailgate talk, the group walked to the Osprey Tower along the park road. A platform is visible from the road and walk/bike path. The female Osprey was seen on the nest. Barb shared that at least one egg had hatched. Mrs. Osprey sat without much movement as we watched from the distance. Mr. Osprey made an appearance flying over the lake but did not land on the nesting tower. We watched for some time before leaving. Other birds seen along the Huron River included mallards, geese, swallows, and a Green Heron. The group departed to other locations in the park after a while.

Our next stop was to spot the Bald Eagle Nest from Island Road. Although the eagle nest was covered by leaves, one of the parent birds was perched nearby on a tree snag. Everyone had a clear view of the Bald Eagle. Island Road extends into the middle of Kent Lake which afforded great views of Canada Geese and Mute Swans. Both species were numerous. The group then headed to Wildwing Lake to the Heron Rookery, our last stop of the day.





A short walk from the West Boat Launch Parking the group was on the boardwalk and able to view the Heron Rookery. Great Blue Herons were coming and going from the approximately 25 nests. Herons nest in colonies with some approaching over 500 nests. Parent birds were on large stick nest on bare limbs of the trees on the small island of Wildwing lake. It is hard to mistake Great Blue Herons because of their size and behaviors. Great Blue Heron are 4.5 feet tall with wing spans between 5.5 – 6.5 feet. Other birds were active on the lake, including Red-winged Blackbirds and Barn Swallows. After a time, we walked to the Nature Center.

Along the way, we encountered the Sandhill Crane greeter near the nature center parking lot. Sandhill Cranes are accustomed to people at the Nature Center. We were advised not to feed the cranes. Many stopped to photograph the meeting without showing the bird that people should be associated with food.



The final stop at Kingfisher Lagoon near the Nature Center proved to be another good spot to watch wildlife. In addition to the birds, everyone saw turtles, fish, and small mammals. Because birds are associated with hand feeding at Kensington Nature Center, group members were given sunflower seeds and instructed to use it to hand feed only the songbirds as permitted by park rules. A few young birders were

successful. The group gathered for a photo, and we took home our thoughts of the day.



Forty species of birds and 295 individuals were reported to eBird from the field trip. Kensington is a great place to birds.

The Bird Checklist is as follows:

Canada Goose
Mute Swan
Mallard
Wild Turkey
Mourning Dove
Chimney Swift
Sandhill Crane
Killdeer
Great Blue Heron

Green Heron
Osprey
Bald Eagle
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Eastern Wood-Pewee
Eastern Kingbird
Warbling Vireo

Red-eyed Vireo
Blue Jay
American Crow
Black-capped Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Tree Swallow
Barn Swallow
White-breasted Nuthatch
Gray Catbird
American Robin

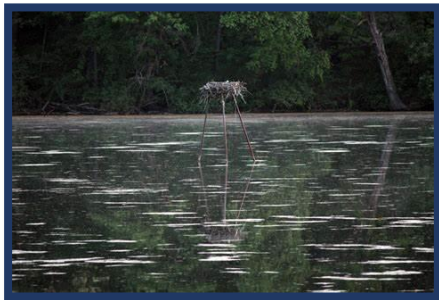
American Goldfinch
Song Sparrow
Swamp Sparrow
Baltimore Oriole
Red-winged Blackbird
Brown-headed Cowbird
Common Grackle
Common Yellowthroat
Yellow Warbler
Northern Cardinal
Rose-breasted Grosbeak

A special thanks to **Barb Jensen and Michigan Osprey for the excellent presentation.**

Photo Credits; Kathleen Dougherty, Rashmi Overbeek, Jim Stayer & Oakland Audubon Photo Gallery.



Learn more about the Osprey Reintroduction program at these websites. Photo of the Osprey Platform at Kensington



[Osprey's southern Michigan comeback a team effort - YouTube](#)

www.michiganosprey.org