

February 3, 2019 – St. Clair River Trip

Leader: Don Burlett

Another traditional winter field trip was held on the second thaw day after our mid-winter run-in with the polar vortex. Unseasonably warm weather, temperatures reaching the 430's, started with cloudy skies but eventually gave way to sunny skies. 23 birders took part in this trip. Navigating our way north to and along the St. Clair River with nine vehicles proved less trouble than might be expected.

The feeders at St. Clair Metropark's Nature Center gave us a group of passerines along with a Cooper's Hawk that made an early visit to the site. The river was mostly clogged with ice in the lower stretches but soon gave way to patches of open water north of Algonac and at St. Clair. Lots of ducks were seen along the river in the open water including Long-tailed Ducks, Common Goldeneye, Redheads, Canvasbacks and others. Bald eagles were seen on the ice and flying in the area. A special delight was the Merlin seen in the park in St. Clair. Sightings of a couple of Sharp-shinned Hawks had to make up for the absent Peregrine Falcon.

Lake Huron was completely free of ice and offered no help, especially in the sunny and warm conditions. No pain, no gain!!

All totaled, we had 43 species and a good day. Lunch, with a variety of lively topics topped off the day. The list of birds seen is below.

Canada Goose
Mute Swan
American Black Duck
Mallard
Northern Pintail
Canvasback
Redhead
Ring-necked Duck
Greater Scaup
Lesser Scaup
Long-tailed Duck
Bufflehead
Common Goldeneye
Hooded Merganser
Common Merganser
Red-breasted Merganser
Bald Eagle
Sharp-shinned Hawk

Cooper's Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Ring-billed Gull
Herring Gull
Glaucous Gull
Greater Black-backed Gull
Rock Pigeon
Mourning Dove
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Merlin
American Kestrel
Blue Jay
Black-capped Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
White-breasted Nuthatch
Horned Lark
American Robin
European Starling
American Tree Sparrow
Northern Cardinal
Brown-headed Cowbird
House Finch
American Goldfinch
House Sparrow