

All About Bugs & Birds @ Heritage Park

Young birders' club families and friends met at Heritage Park in Farmington Hills on Saturday, August 13th to search for bugs and birds at the park. The group was greeted by insect experts Doris Applebaum and Sue Greenlee. Doris and Sue lead local Butterfly Counts through the North American Butterfly Association and the Michigan Butterfly Network. Sue provided a short explanation of area insects the group would encounter during the hike by showing insects from a collection. Sue also shared that some insects may be heard, but not seen including Cicadas and Crickets.



Heritage Park has extensive native species plantings for pollinators which also encourage monarch butterflies and more. The weather on August 13th was warm, but not sunny. Many more butterflies observed during the field trip preview were absent. Nevertheless, Sue and Doris were able to point out numerous insects along the hike.

Along the trail, Sue and Doris stopped to identify insects plus point out fascinating insect signs like insect galls and leaf miners. Insects have complex and diverse life cycles. For instance, gall insects create unusual plant growths that provide shelter to developing larvae. Insect sounds were ever-present in the background along the way. Sue was able to differentiate the sounds of several insects. Sue and Doris provided the extensive list of invertebrates seen on the trail as follows.



Butterflies:

Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Cabbage White, and Least Skipper

Non-Butterfly species:

Galls on maple leaf from eriophyid mites
Slug on common milkweed leaf
Skeletonized grape leaf due to Japanese beetle
Fall Field Cricket (heard)
Bumblebee sp.

European honeybee
Greater angle-wing katydid (heard)
Water strider
Eastern forktail damselfly
Aster Yellows ~Witches' broom due to infection of leafhoppers

Dog Day Cicada (heard)
 Buzzsaw Cicada (heard)
 Virginia ctenucha wasp moth
 Allard's ground cricket (heard)
 Carolina ground cricket (heard)
 Weevil sp.
 Cicadas sp.
 Pillbug
 Soil centipede (Eastern red centipede)
 Millipede
 Common European earthworm
 Ground nesting ant
 Day-flying moth
 Goldenrod ball gall due to fly larvae
 Leafhopper

Carpenter bee
 Daddy long legs/ Harvestmen
Milkweed bug
 Red milkweed beetle



An eBird checklist was also kept on the hike. The group encountered a Great Blue Heron and Green Heron on Stuart Little Pond near the parking lot. Both herons flew into the pond together and posed for a while. In the fields American Goldfinches were feeding on seedheads of the numerous native plants. The expansive lawn along the park entrance offered great habitat for Canada Geese to forage. Geese wandered freely in the park. Mixed habitats within the park support diverse bird species and although the time of day was not ideal for birding, the group reported twenty-six species:



Young Birders' Club field trip on August 13th eBird checklist:

Canada Goose
 Mourning Dove
 Chimney Swift
 Great Blue Heron
Green Heron
 Red-tailed Hawk
 Downy Woodpecker
 Blue Jay
 American Crow
 Black-capped Chickadee
 Tufted Titmouse
 Tree Swallow
 Barn Swallow

White-breasted Nuthatch
 House Wren
 Gray Catbird
 House Sparrow
 House Finch
American Goldfinch
 Baltimore Oriole
 Red-winged Blackbird
 Common Grackle
 Northern Cardinal
 Rose-breasted
 Grosbeak
 Indigo Bunting



After the hike, the group was invited to visit the nature center.

Thank you to Doris Applebaum and Sue Greenlee along with the Nature Center staff at Heritage Park.

Photo Credits – Kathleen Dougherty, Rashmi Overbeek, Bug Guide (A. Levine) & OAS Gallery.

