

Oakland Owlets Field Trip to Bald Mountain Recreation Area

The OAS evening field trip on **Friday, August 24 at Bald Mountain Recreation Area** highlighted summer insects and birds. Young birders and adult birders hiked about two miles. Mid-summer into the fall is the best time to hear the insect symphony. Several insect musicians performed. Sounds from various species of crickets, grasshoppers and katydids were audible. Although the light was fading, the group of nine tallied 14 of species of birds, plus 2 taxa that we were unable to identify as the light dimmed. The kids were excited to watch Cedar Waxwings in wetland opening; the species **checklist** below was reported to eBird.

Great Blue Heron
Great Egret
Cathartes sp.
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Eastern Wood-Pewee
Blue Jay
American Crow
Tufted Titmouse
American Robin
Cedar Waxwing
American Goldfinch
sparrow sp.
Red-winged Blackbird
Common Grackle
Northern Cardinal



The Insects we heard were varied, but familiar to anyone hiking in August in Michigan. Insect musicians included the **fall field crickets**, buzzy **ground crickets** and a few species of **tree crickets** including the snowy tree cricket also known as the temperature cricket. Its nickname is based on the belief that one can estimate the ambient temperature by counting the number of chirps made by the cricket in 13 seconds and then add this number to 40. As darkness engulfed the group near the end of the hike, **True Katydid**s could be heard calling overhead on the tall deciduous trees. Although the group was small, it



was nice to be outdoors on Friday night instead of in front of a screen. Good to know that insects are thriving at Bald Mountain since birds need them.

Photo Credits: Sue Greenlee (Cricket) and Paula Carlson (People on trail)