

January 14, 2018 – St. Clair River Leader – Don Burlett

The trip began at the Harley Ensign boat launch with the skies clear and the temperature cold – 5°F. Calm weather was the only relief. The sun came up and we checked out the local Mute Swans, Common Goldeneyes and Mergansers. We quickly gathered ourselves and started driving along the lake and then the river. The ice was impressive, with jagged piles of ice jammed together as far north as St. Clair. Just south of Port Huron, the river began to open up and diving ducks appeared in numbers. Lots of canvasbacks and Redheads, Long-tailed Ducks and Bufflehead dotted the river at several stops along the way. As we hit the open water, mergansers also became more common, especially those fishing (below).

When we reached the small park near the Coast Guard vessel (at Lincoln Ave. and Michigan St.), we found both a collection of ducks sitting on the edge of the parking area and a group of ducks in the water below just south of the boat. There were Black Ducks, Mallards, Red-breasted and Common Mergansers, Long-tailed Ducks, Common Goldeneye and others. A male Wood Duck was cozied up to a female Mallard and an American Wigeon was hanging out.

From there, we went to the Blue Water Bridge and quickly spotted a Peregrine Falcon on the bridge. We also had a beautiful flyover of a Glaucous Gull, with wonderful white wingtips. Then we headed to the Lighthouse Park where we set up the scopes to check out the ducks in the mouth of the river. Unfortunately, no scoters or eiders were present but there were lots of Long-tailed Ducks (thousands). The lack of clouds, winds and precipitation doomed us from getting closer looks. A couple of Bald Eagles added to the flavor of the site.

We then headed to the Blackfish restaurant for a nice lunch, enjoying the warmth of the indoors and our friends. Another good trip with 32 species.

Canada Goose
Mute Swan
Wood Duck
American Black Duck
Mallard
Canvasback
Redhead
Greater Scaup
Lesser Scaup
Long-tailed Duck
Bufflehead
Common Goldeneye
Common Merganser
Red-breasted Merganser
Bald Eagle

Ring-billed Gull
Herring Gull
Lesser Black-backed Gull
Glaucous Gull
Greater Black-backed Gull
Rock Pigeon
Mourning Dove
Downy Woodpecker
Peregrine Falcon
Blue Jay
American Crow
American Robin
European Starling
Common Grackle
House Finch
American Goldfinch
House Sparrow

On return drive

Red-tailed Hawk
Cooper's Hawk