

Oakland Owlet April Field Trip 2019 @ Highland Recreation Area

A special thank you to the Friends of the Highland Recreation Area (FOHRA) for hosting the April Young Birders' Club field trip. It was a memorable evening filled with many amazing wildlife encounters. The FOHRA helped boost the attendance as several members and their families attended. They shared the unique history of this wonderful park with the group. Lawrence Falardeau from the FOHRA went out of his way to show a video presentation from the back of his vehicle about the park. He shared the unique history and national natural area designation of Highland Recreation Area (HRA). In addition, several other members of FOHRA shared the work, programs and projects they are doing at HRA.



Sandhill Cranes were calling and chasing each other during the presentation. After the presentation and introductions, a group of about 20 hit the trail, hiking about 1.5 miles through the hardwood forest and by Haven Hill Lake. There were several ducks on the lake, but the lighting and distance made it hard to see all the species. Nevertheless, it was a beautiful evening with many views of the natural area and the sky. The field trip started in the evening since the target bird was the American Woodcock, a shy shorebird that performs an amazing courtship aerial display in the spring at sunset.

Along the trail, we encountered typical woodland birds and returned to the meadow just before sunset to review the display of the American Woodcock and all the auditory clues to know what the bird is doing. As the light dimmed, the American Woodcock did not disappoint. While it is difficult to see the bird as the light diminished, everyone heard the sounds associated with the Sky Dance. Twenty-four species and one taxon were reported to eBird. The checklist is below.



Special Thanks to the FOHRA for their assistance and expertise. Jay Fitzgerald from FOHRA posted a wonderful blog on their website. In addition, Jonathan Schechter, nature writer for Oakland County attended and wrote a terrific story of his experience on the Wilder Side of Oakland County. Here is the link to read Jonathan's account <https://oaklandcountyblog.com/2019/04/12/a-night-to-remember/#more-36584> . He also provided several photographs.

Canada Goose
Mute Swan
Wood Duck

Mallard
Ring-necked Duck
duck sp.
Mourning Dove
Sandhill Crane
American Woodcock
Ring-billed Gull
Great Blue Heron
Red-tailed Hawk
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Blue Jay
American Crow
Black-capped Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
White-breasted Nuthatch
Eastern Bluebird
American Robin
Song Sparrow
Eastern Towhee
Northern Cardinal

