

# Oakland Owlets' January 2020 @ Stony Creek MP

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The first young birders' club field trip of 2020 was held at Stony Creek Metropark on Saturday, January 26<sup>th</sup>. This field trip was also the first Oakland Audubon field trip for 2020. Bad weather caused cancelation of all OAS field trips this year so far. The weather on January 26<sup>th</sup> was not an ideal day either. The option to snowshoe was washed away by two days of rain. By Saturday the snow on the trails transformed to a layer of slush. Despite the unfavorable weather, 15 birders arrived ready to go birding. It is hard to keep birders indoors even when the weather does not cooperate.

Rain persisted at the beginning of the field trip but eventually stopped. Luckily, the nature center opened early. Everyone was able to watch the fabulous feeders inside the nature center out of the elements. For new birders, feeder watching is a great way to learn birds. Just about every common feeder bird flitted in and out of view. The chance to compare Downy versus Hairy Woodpeckers is a great learning experience. In addition, a few unusual sparrows appeared like White-throated sparrow. The group was treated to an everchanging array of feeder birds. In a short time, 16 species of birds were recorded at the feeders.



When the rain stopped, the group carpoled to north to the Inwood Rustic Trails. This portion of the park has an active Bald Eagle's nest. This nest has been monitored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for several years. About a kilometer from the Parking Lot, the Eagle's nest can be found 15 meters high in a tree. Eagle nests are massive, as eagles continue to add to nests annually. Some eagle nests used over the years can weigh more than a metric ton. The nest was easy to find, but the eagles were absent. Further along the trail, the group flushed a Great Blue Heron which flew to another nearby wetland.





The next stop was the 500-acre Stony Lake to view waterfowl. Finding good spots to see the swans and ducks congregating was challenging, but worth the effort. Small pockets of open water offer places for diving ducks to forage. Swans sat on top of the ice as smaller Redhead and Goldeneye swirled in the pools of open water nearby. **Twenty -three** species of birds were seen along with one other taxa. A complete checklist of birds reported to eBird is listed below.

A special thank you to the staff at the Stony Creek Nature Center for their hospitality and assistance to make this field trip memorable. Thank you to Emmanuel Salas for the great bird photos.

**The bird checklist from Stony Creek is as follows:**

- Canada Goose
- Mute Swan
- Tundra Swan
- Trumpeter/Tundra Swan
- Mallard
- Redhead
- Common Goldeneye
- Wild Turkey
- Mourning Dove
- Great Blue Heron
- Red-bellied Woodpecker
- Downy Woodpecker
- Hairy Woodpecker
- Blue Jay
- American Crow
- Black-capped Chickadee
- Tufted Titmouse
- White-breasted Nuthatch
- House Finch
- American Goldfinch
- American Tree Sparrow
- Dark-eyed Junco
- White-throated Sparrow
- Northern Cardinal



Photo Credits: Kathleen Dougherty & Emmanuel Salas