

Sussex Bird Club Field Trip Report

Location: Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge and Cambridge, MD waterfront

Date: January 22, 2020

Time: 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM: Cold (28-35F), sunny, clear, little to no wind

Leaders: Rob Schroeder, Sharon Lynn, Carol and Rob Blye

Twelve SBC members met at Lowes and departed in four cars to Blackwater NWR where we met two additional members at about 9:45 AM.

We birded the fields on the way to the refuge Visitor Center where hundreds of Canada geese and 30 or more eastern meadowlarks were feeding. We entered the VC then birded the garden and observation deck where we saw several savannah sparrows and a thousand red-wing blackbirds before heading to Wildlife Drive. We drove the loop stopping when we heard or saw something of interest including a stop to walk a short boardwalk to a platform overlooking the marsh and impoundment. Of interest were two American white pelicans and a large rail that responded to Rob's guttural clicking. It was either a clapper or king rail which did not vocalize and did not show itself long enough to identify. Geese, ducks, swans, harriers, red-shouldered and red-tailed hawks and 13 bald eagles on a mudflat kept our attention.

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S63667469>

We then made our way to the Tubman Road Trail parking lot where we found a pine warbler, several bluebirds, a ruby-crowned kinglet, myrtle warbler, Carolina chickadees and tufted titmouse, among others. <https://ebird.org/checklist/S63667443>

Back to the VC for a bathroom break and short drive to Cambridge. As we approached the left on Egypt Road several of us spied a Delmarva fox squirrel on the side of the road. Our two way radios came in handy as we called all the cars to turn around and look at the formerly endangered squirrel. Several of the group got some good photographs which we will display on the website. The drive to Cambridge yielded large numbers of tundra swans feeding in fields and several raptors. <https://ebird.org/checklist/S63680473>

Our last stops of the day were at Snapper's Waterfront Café and Tiki Bar for lunch on Cambridge Creek, then Long Wharf Park near the lighthouse and finally Oakely Street waterfront landing on the Choptank. We got great views and photos of many ducks including canvasback, lesser scaup. American wigeon and single redhead and greater scaup.

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S63674450>

We departed Cambridge about 3:30 PM and arrived back at Lowes about 5 PM. A long but fruitful day; we observed some 59 species of birds, the iconic Delmarva fox squirrel and at least 20 bald eagles.