

A Dawes Morning

By Joey Tomei (OYBC Central Chapter)

The Central Ohio Chapter members of the Ohio Young Birders Club met on Saturday, April 6th at The Dawes Arboretum in Newark, Ohio to go on a morning bird walk. Members of the Birding FAN (Fun and Nature) Club led the bird walk. Before the bird walk, I heard several bird calls. These included a House Finch, Blue Jays, Northern Cardinals, and Red-Winged Blackbirds. We also spotted a Great Blue Heron flying overhead.

OYBC member points out birds to Gerry and John, who apparently are not quite so skilled in finding them! At 9:30 am, the bird walk began, and we started to spot and hear more birds. I mostly saw American Crows flying above the forest and heard the calls of Red-bellied Woodpeckers. The call of the Red-bellied Woodpecker is a new call I learned on the trip, and I also learned the Song Sparrow's



call. Later in the walk, we encountered a field with several Eastern Bluebird nest boxes. There was an Eastern Bluebird on one nest box, and there was a pair of Tree Swallows attempting to take over the box. The Tree Swallows dive-bombed the Bluebird, and the Bluebird reacted by flying off the nest box temporarily. I witnessed this several times before we moved on to another area.

At one point in our walk, we stopped in an open area surrounded by coniferous and deciduous trees. A few minutes later, we spotted Turkey Vultures. At first, there were only 3 vultures. Less than a minute later though, there were at least 10 Turkey Vultures. This moment was fascinating to me, and it was definitely one of the highlights of the bird walk.

OYBC members check out a vernal pool near the end of the bird walk, our group walked on a boardwalk through a vernal pond filled with cypress trees. A vernal swamp or pond is an area that is filled with water in the spring, but can be dry during the summer. As we walked, our guide pointed out that salamander eggs were floating in the water. I found this to be interesting because I



never had an opportunity to see salamander eggs. After the bird walk ended, we entered the main nature center to eat lunch.

I sat to eat my lunch near a large window that gave a wide field of view of a bird feeder station situated below. We were very pleased to see a Fox Sparrow, which is a type of bird I had never seen before. It is interesting how the bird scratches the ground like a chicken to forage. Also, an Eastern Towhee appeared on the ground below a tree near the feeders.

In conclusion, I believe this bird walk was an entertaining and educational experience. I also got the chance to practice my birding by ear. I am also thankful to the Birding FAN Club for leading this impressive bird walk.



Student member Trevor Zook compiled the following list of species seen on the trip.

Cedar Waxwing	House Finch
Turkey Vulture	Carolina Chickadee
Northern Mockingbird	Cooper's Hawk
Great Blue Heron	Mallard
Canada Goose	Brown-headed Cowbird
American Goldfinch	Tree Swallow
Dark-eyed Junco	Field Sparrow
Northern Cardinal	Red-tailed Hawk
White-breasted Nuthatch	Blue Jay American Tree-Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow	Downy Woodpecker
Red-breasted Nuthatch	Golden-crowned Kinglet
American Robin	Tufted Titmouse
European Starling	Fox Sparrow
Common Grackle	House Sparrow
Red-winged Blackbird	Eastern Towhee
"Kite"	Eastern Meadowlark
Chipping Sparrow	American Kestrel
Eastern Bluebird	Killdeer
American Crow	Rock Pigeon
Red-bellied Woodpecker	
Song Sparrow	