

# Where The Wild Things Are: OYBC Trip to the Wilds

by Aaron Tayal



Where do an Eastern Meadowlark, a Bactrian camel, a Northern Harrier and a giraffe live in the same place? The Wilds!

OYBC traveled to The Wilds on October 9, 2011 to see both the amazing Ohio birds and the African Savannah animals found there. When we arrived at the Wilds, we met up with two naturalists, Al Parker and Zach Rebar. We went to a pond close by and started to bird.

We were looking at the far side of the pond when we spotted a group of Trumpeter Swans. The adults were pure white, and the juveniles were

mottled gray. Trumpeter Swans were introduced at the Wilds as part of a conservation project. Before this, I hadn't had a good look at a Trumpeter Swan. When they took flight, they looked like pieces of rippling white cloth.

While we were birding, our guides told us about the history of The Wilds. The area used to be a coal mine. After the coal was mined, the land looked almost as barren as the surface of the moon. Trees were planted, and slowly The Wilds was transformed into what it is now. The Wilds encompasses many habitats, including forest, shrubland, grassland, wetland, and prairie. We traveled to a place where a prairie was being built and learned about this habitat. Three common kinds of prairie grass are: Indian, Panic, and Turkey Foot. While we ate lunch, one of our guides gave us a presentation on birding at The Wilds.



Another highlight of the trip was seeing a Northern Harrier, far away, soaring on the wind. Overall, we saw 32 birds. Though we didn't see all the birds that are found at The Wilds, we saw some unique species that are not common in Ohio.



## Bird List for OYBC trip to The Wilds:

Pied-billed Grebe  
Great Blue Heron  
Great Egret  
Turkey Vulture  
Trumpeter Swan  
Canada Goose  
Wood Duck  
Green-winged Teal  
Mallard  
Osprey  
Northern Harrier  
Red-tailed Hawk  
American Kestrel  
Killdeer  
Greater Yellowlegs  
Rock Dove

Mourning Dove  
Belted Kingfisher  
Downy Woodpecker  
Pileated Woodpecker  
Blue Jay  
American Crow  
Carolina Wren  
American Robin  
Northern Mockingbird  
European Starling  
Song Sparrow  
Red-winged Blackbird  
Eastern Meadowlark  
American Goldfinch  
House Sparrow