

Killdeer Plains Winter Blowout: Raptor Mania!

By Nathan Martineau



The OYBC gang at Killdeer Plains

On Saturday, February 9, 2013 members of the Ohio Young Birders Club were lucky enough to attend a field trip to Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area—and a very productive day it was. It started with the first of many Northern Harriers. One field over was the first and only waterfowl (besides Canada Goose) that we would see that day: a Trumpeter Swan in a cornfield, whose wing appeared to be injured. After that, the pace started to pick up. We quickly saw two American Kestrels, one female and one male, being mobbed by a flicker. There seemed to be a harrier in every field and a Red-

tailed Hawk perching on the edge of every opening. Dozens of harriers and redtails later, we arrived at the famed Owl Woods.

We quickly found a Barn Owl up high in a pine tree with the help of some birders that were already there. We had to crane our necks almost straight upwards, but it was worth it—it was looking right back down at us. We also were able to see a Northern Saw-whet Owl thanks to some friendly birders that were already present. It was about two thirds up the trunk of a pine tree and was bigger than many had imagined.

Next, we went on a successful hunt for a Northern Shrike. The shrike was very active, flying around from bush to bush, coming in close a couple of times. The hawthorns it perched on had some mean-looking thorns.

As the sun was setting, many of us stayed to look for the day's last target species: Short-eared Owl. Along the way we came upon a flock of robins containing a mockingbird, a flock of tree sparrows containing a White-crowned Sparrow, and a Rough-legged Hawk. When we did arrive, we found at least seven Short-eared Owls flying around and perched on dead trees.



Searching for owls at Killdeer -- except for Jacob, who may be searching for mice down there.

We finished the day with 10 birds of prey: Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawks, Northern Harrier, Bald Eagle, American Kestrel, Northern Saw-whet, Barn, Long-eared and Short-eared Owls, and Northern Shrike (actually a passerine, or perching bird, but certainly a bird of prey).

Nathan Martineau is a member of the Central Ohio Chapter of the Ohio Young Birders Club. The following list of species seen is provided by Alex Murray, also a Central Ohio OYBC member.

Trumpeter Swan (1)	Barn Owl (1)
Red-tailed Hawk (20)	Horned Lark (15)
American Kestrel (8)	Northern Saw-whet Owl (1)
Northern Harrier (Between 20 and 25)	Hairy Woodpecker (1)
Northern Flicker (2) Rock Pigeon (5)	Red-Bellied Woodpecker (1)
Blue Jay (5)	House Sparrow (6)
American Crow (10)	American Robin (35)
Northern Cardinal (3)	Rough-legged Hawk (1)
American tree sparrow (25)	White-crowned Sparrow (1)
Pileated Woodpecker (1)	Short-eared Owl (2)
Downy Woodpecker (1)	Tufted Titmouse(2)
Canada goose (250)	Dark-eyed Junco (26)
Bald Eagle (3)	Northern Mockingbird (1)
Long-eared Owl (5)	Red-headed Woodpecker (1)
Northern Shrike (1)	Eastern Meadowlark (2)
White-breasted Nuthatch (1)	Eastern Towhee (1)
Mourning Dove (3)	European Starlings (close to 100)