

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