

Merry Lea Birding Expedition

Muscatatuck & Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuges

April 18-20, 2015

What a trip! Our goal was to investigate two of Indiana's National Wildlife Refuges, Muscatatuck and Big Oaks. They are both impressive places for Indiana. Muscatatuck is much more accessible and we explored it several times in the sun and in the rain. Big Oaks is much larger at over 50,000 acres, but since it is an old bombing range it is not very accessible. We had a guided tour from two local volunteers, George Terlinden and Walt Seeds, who showed us around just a small section of the huge refuge.

On the way down, we stopped at Eagle Creek park to try for two rare species, the Fish Crow and Neotropic Cormorant. The Fish Crows were quite cooperative and showed up shortly after our stop at the airport parking lot and let out their famous "Uh-Uh" calls. The Neotropic Cormorant was elusive and not to be seen. That's how it goes, you get some and miss others.

All in all it seemed that we did pretty well in the rain and wind with over 100 species for the trip.

	Total Species Guess	Target Bird
Paul McAfee	150	Golden Eagle
Lisa Zinn	142	Worm-eating Warbler
Ed Burkholder	97	*Henslow's Sparrow
Bob Guth	105	*Fish Crow
Darci Zolman	123	*Fish Crow
Carole Koos	130	Blue Grosbeak
Marie Smith	92	Summer Tanager
Patricia Frank	72	Summer Tanager
Ruth Middleton	102	Summer Tanager
Al Shelly	115	No target
Els Shelly	121	Indigo Bunting

* = bird was found

Bird List

The final tally was 101 species. The winner of the coveted "Total Species Guess" award was Ruth with 102, only off by one, with Bob & Ed tied for second, both being off by only four birds.

- Common Loon
- Pied-billed Grebe
- Double-crested Cormorant
- Great Blue Heron
- Turkey Vulture
- Black Vulture
- Canada Goose
- Mute Swan

Wood Duck
American Wigeon
Mallard
Blue-winged Teal
Northern Shoveler
Bufflehead
Osprey
Bald Eagle
Northern Harrier
Cooper's Hawk
Broad-winged Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
American Kestrel
Wild Turkey
Northern Bobwhite
Sora
American Coot
Killdeer
Greater Yellowlegs
Lesser Yellowlegs
Solitary Sandpiper
Spotted Sandpiper
Pectoral Sandpiper
Common Snipe
American Woodcock
Ring-billed Gull
Rock Dove
Mourning Dove
Barred Owl
Chimney Swift
Belted Kingfisher
Red-headed Woodpecker
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker
Eastern Phoebe
White-eyed Vireo
Yellow-throated Vireo
Blue Jay
American Crow
Fish Crow

Horned Lark
Tree Swallow
Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Barn Swallow
Carolina Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
White-breasted Nuthatch
Carolina Wren
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Eastern Bluebird
Hermit Thrush
Wood Thrush
American Robin
European Starling
Brown Thrasher
American Pipit
Blue-winged Warbler
Northern Parula
Yellow Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Yellow-throated Warbler
Pine Warbler
Prairie Warbler
Palm Warbler
Cerulean Warbler
Worm-eating Warbler
Ovenbird
Louisiana Waterthrush
Common Yellowthroat
Scarlet Tanager
Eastern Towhee
Chipping Sparrow
Field Sparrow
Savannah Sparrow
Henslow's Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Swamp Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Northern Cardinal
Indigo Bunting

Red-winged Blackbird
Eastern Meadowlark
Common Grackle
Brown-headed Cowbird
House Finch
American Goldfinch
House Sparrow