

FBC George Washington's Ferry Farm Trip Report
May 11, 2019

Eleven birders led by Jim Goehring met under slightly misty skies to bird George Washington's boyhood home at Ferry Farm on May 11, 2019. Zac Cunningham, Education Manager at FF, began our morning with an interesting overview of the work in archaeology and restoration that is ongoing at the site. With the reproduction of George Washington's boyhood home complete, the kitchen house and enslaved people's quarters are the next projects being undertaken. The long-term goal of the Foundation is to reconstruct all 10 buildings that were known to be part of the farm during George Washington's boyhood. I continue to be amazed at the work George Washington's Fredericksburg Foundation has accomplished on this site that, but for some active citizens, would have been a Walmart parking lot.

So, on to the birding. Cedar Waxwings were the most abundant bird of the day with Jim sighting a flock of about 80 flying over the parking lot. From there Jim led us on to the open field where we heard the sounds of Northern Cardinals, Chipping Sparrow, Blue Jays, and Northern Parula. The vista opened to the field where Tree Swallows circled and we saw several fly-bys including Mourning Doves, Wood Duck, and 2 Osprey carrying fish. There were several Indigo Buntings, and one perched nicely for us to watch once we found him amidst the leaves. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Northern Parulas, Carolina Chickadees and Brown-headed Cowbirds were also seen flitting or perched. Some members heard a Field Sparrow, but he was not to be seen. We did see Eastern Bluebirds, but none in or on a box. The three active bluebird boxes we saw were inhabited by Tree Swallows, two of which poked their heads out to watch the birders bird.

As we approached the woodlands from the field a handsome adult red fox ran across our path! The woods held more Northern Parulas, 2 Yellow-throated Warblers, 2 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds high in the trees, and many Red-eyed Vireos. We also continued to see various sized flocks of Cedar Waxwings. In addition, we observed a Downy Woodpecker that we concluded was feeding young in a nest. He flew to a hole in a tree with a bug in its beak, went through some complex gyrations at the hole, and then flew off without the bug. Heard, but not seen, in the woods were Acadian Flycatchers, Great Crested Flycatcher, Gray Catbird, Yellow Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Tufted Titmouse, and House Finch. After about 3 hours of relaxed walking and birding, we concluded with a distant Eastern Kingbird perched on a snag, and Chimney Swifts flying overhead for a total of 41 species for the day.

Participants:

Jim Goehring (leader), Laurie Gardner, Mike Killian, Tim Stamps, Brenda Chase, Curtis Martin, Maureen Daly Hamm and returning or new members: Kris Boushie, Mary Hartigan, Ginger Burke, and Charlie Naples. Welcome Chris, Mary, Ginger, and Charlie. We look forward to seeing you in upcoming events.

Species Observed:

Canada Goose
Wood Duck
Double-crested Cormorant
Osprey
Black Vulture
Turkey Vulture
Mourning Dove
Chimney Swift
Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Acadian Flycatcher
Great Crested Flycatcher
Eastern Kingbird
Red-eyed Vireo
Blue Jay
American Crow
Crow sp
Tree Swallow
Barn Swallow
Carolina Chickadee

Tufted Titmouse
Carolina Wren
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Eastern Bluebird
American Robin
Gray Catbird
Northern Mockingbird
European Starling
Cedar Waxwing
Northern Parula
Yellow Warbler
Yellow-throated Warbler
Chipping Sparrow
Field Sparrow
Scarlet Tanager
Northern Cardinal
Indigo Bunting
Common Grackle
Brown-headed Cowbird
House Finch
American Goldfinch