

Leesylvania State Park Trip Report

September 15, 2018

By Brenda Chase

Not to be deterred by Hurricane Florence, nine of us birders gathered at 7:00 am on Saturday, September 15th, in the Leesylvania State Park parking lot. The sky was gray with a hint of mist as Bev and Jim Arnold, Curt Bradford, Scott Byrd, Brenda Chase, Sally Knight, Candace Lowther, Brenton Mundt, and Tim Stamps greeted each other. Candace had graciously agreed to guide us through her favorite state park. We were not only grateful for her expert knowledge and good ears, but that Florence had stayed south and had very little impact on our area.

The parking lot near the entrance was decidedly quiet so we quickly moved further into the park past the Visitor's Center. Our hope was that some migrating warblers had decided to put down in the park rather than face the bad weather to the south. But, alas, that did not seem to be the case. We strolled around the parking lots, shoreline, and picnic area to be rewarded with Northern Parulas, a Yellow-throated warbler, and an American Redstart. While we may have been lacking in warblers we did have good numbers of woodpeckers, including Downy, Hairy, Red-bellied, and a Northern Flicker. There were numerous Blue Jays and Eastern Bluebirds, some of which appeared to display some breeding behaviors. They were obviously confused as to what season it was! One of the more unusual displays was by two White-breasted Nuthatches who were dancing around each other on the ground with their tails spread wide.



As we moved down the shoreline we saw numerous Laughing and Ring-billed Gulls on the rocky jetties. A few Double-crested Cormorants floated in the water and a Great Blue Heron flew over. Later, from the Bushey Point trail we spotted an Osprey, a couple Mallards, a Green Heron, and two Bald Eagles.

We moved uphill to the higher trail that overlooks the river, still in hopes of finding some warblers.

Instead we were treated to a Wood Thrush, a slightly elusive Veery and a very cooperative Yellow-billed Cuckoo.

Throughout the morning we were also visited by singing Carolina Wrens, fussy Tufted Titmice, and bustling Carolina Chickadees. Both Eastern Wood-Pewees and Eastern Phoebes presented themselves so we could study and compare them.

While we would have liked to rack up more species, in particular those migrating warblers, we all agreed it had been a productive morning. We appreciated the fact that we were not in the eye of a hurricane and were able to get outside and have another enjoyable birding experience.



Species total – 40

Mallard	2	Blue Jay	15
Mourning Dove	5	American Crow	4
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	1	Tree Swallow	1
Chimney Swift	30	Carolina Chickadee	3
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	1	Tufted Titmouse	8
Laughing Gull	23	White-breasted Nuthatch	4
Ring-billed Gull	5	Carolina Wren	7
Double-crested Cormorant	5	Eastern Bluebird	13
Great Blue Heron	1	Veery	1
Green Heron	1	Wood Thrush	1
Turkey Vulture	2	American Robin	3
Osprey	2	Northern Mockingbird	1
Bald Eagle	1	European Starling	50
Red-bellied Woodpecker	3	House Finch	1
Downy Woodpecker	2	American Goldfinch	2
Hairy Woodpecker	1	Chipping Sparrow	3
Northern Flicker	1	American Redstart	1
Eastern Wood-Pewee	4	Northern Parula	3
Eastern Phoebe	2	Yellow-throated Warbler	1
Red-eyed Vireo	3	Northern Cardinal	5

