

Birding on Lake Randleman May 28, 2016

By Julien McCarthy, Trip Leader and Field Trips Chair

Three members showed up for this aquatic foray, and we launched at about 9:30 a.m. into the vast expanses of Randleman Lake at Southeast Park, a very thorough facility where canoes and kayaks may be rented. Birds were serenading us from the get-go, and so birding by sound was easy. As we put in near the boathouse, there was a huge Great Blue Heron wading in the shallows (the amazing large rookery in the lake's headwaters was nearby).

Paddling the shoreline revealed the ever-present Common Yellow Throat, and we were constantly aware of both the Summer and Scarlet Tanagers in the adjacent hardwood canopy. Eventually the gorgeous Summer Tanager revealed itself on a bough way up in a tall oak tree. Gold Finches chirped above as they sailed across the lake from treetop to treetop, and as we tracked them, suddenly Matt Wangerin noticed a Red-tailed Hawk rather low in a tree overhanging the lake. It decided to sail out across the water, and as it approached the opposite shore, it crashed through a thicket of maple leaves while trying to land on a limb. Further investigation revealed its nest close at hand with a sibling standing in it. These then were obvious juveniles from the same nest that we had found the year before. BINGO!

We paddled all the way to Wall Road and were rewarded with sightings of many Great Blue Herons, Black and Turkey Vultures, a loudly crying Red-shouldered Hawk, and a fabulous Orchard Oriole.

All together we found 28 species and spent about three hours on the lake. We will soon discuss the future of this sort of trip in a meeting of the Field Trips Committee and will begin planning all the trips for 2017.