



Field Trip: Cane Creek Mountains Natural Area, November 13, 2021

submitted by Lynn Moseley, Field Trip Leader

On a bright, cool, breezy morning, 10 members of the Piedmont Bird Club met at the Cane Creek Mountains Natural Area in Snow Camp, North Carolina. On this occasion we birded two trails: first, the new Longleaf Trail, which follows a straight, level path through old fields and second-growth habitat. This one-mile packed-gravel trail was designed to be accessible for those with mobility issues. During the winter, the Longleaf Trail typically affords sightings of more birds, given the variety of vegetation (young trees, shrubs, and open fields), compared to the chestnut oak-dominated forest of the trail up to the ridge. One of the unusual aspects of this trail is that longleaf pines (*Pinus palustris*) were planted by the previous owner before the county acquired the tract. Presumably the purpose was to see if climate change might extend the original range of these pines.

After the Longleaf Trail, the group continued to the one-mile-long Heartleaf Loop, which passes through some of the chestnut oak habitat at the base of the ridge. On that hike we picked up a number of Golden- and Ruby-crowned Kinglets and a few other species to add to our list of multiple sparrows and birds from the Longleaf Trail.

On this day we observed 25 species of birds, including permanent residents and winter visitors. According to park managers, additional trails are planned for this area, which should add to the appeal of this preserve for birders, botanists, and anyone interested in exploring a relatively remote part of the Piedmont.



photo by Jim Eldrett



Golden-crowned Kinglet, by Ann Van Sant

Species List

- 10 Black Vulture
- 16 Turkey Vulture
- 1 Red-bellied Woodpecker
- 2 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- 2 Downy Woodpecker
- 1 Eastern Phoebe
- 2 Blue Jay

- 15 American Crow
- 2 Carolina Chickadee
- 2 Tufted Titmouse
- 1 White-breasted Nuthatch
- 2 Carolina Wren
- 5 Golden-crowned Kinglet
- 3 Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- 1 Eastern Bluebird
- 2 Hermit Thrush

- 4 Cedar Waxwing
- 2 American Goldfinch
- 3 Field Sparrow
- 1 Dark-eyed Junco
- 1 White-crowned Sparrow
- 1 White-throated Sparrow
- 2 Song Sparrow
- 2 Eastern Towhee
- 1 Yellow-rumped Warbler