

Haw River State Park Iron Ore Belt Access May 18, 2018

Submitted by Matt Wangerin, Trip Leader

Eight intrepid Piedmont Bird Club members gathered at the Iron Ore Belt Access tract of Haw River State Park on Friday, May 18, to participate in a late spring birding walk. There had been thunderstorms all week, with forecasts for more, as well as warnings of harmful insects, and worse, arachnids, that like to pester any humans that enter their domain. Nevertheless, we ventured forth out of the parking lot toward a short woodland trail.

Maybe it was due to the weather, but the trail was much quieter than usual. However, we did soon hear the familiar “chick-bree” of a Scarlet Tanager and the song of a Blackpoll Warbler along that path. Coming out to the power-line break, we picked up a singing Indigo Bunting, some Northern Cardinals and a distant Red-tailed Hawk high on the structure.



Photo Credit: Ann van Sant, Scarlet Tanager

We then continued to the area of the park of managed and secondary-growth fields, where we identified Field Sparrows, Summer Tanagers, and Eastern Towhees, along with a Yellow-billed Cuckoo and a Yellow-breasted Chat. It was about then, over a mile from the parking lot, that our luck ran out, and it began to rain – sufficiently enough that we quickly made out for the equipment barn, which, thankfully, wasn’t far off. The rain didn’t last long, and we were already fairly wet, so we decided to check out the nearby wetlands overlook at the northern end of the park’s trail system.

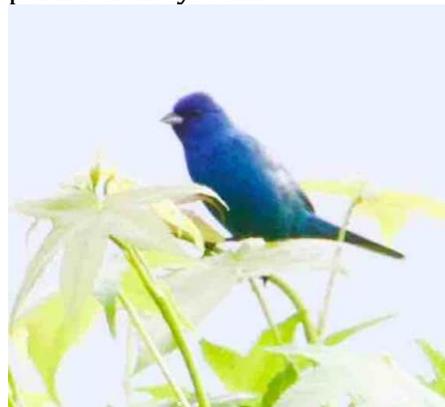


Photo Credit: Ann van Sant, Indigo Bunting

In that more densely wooded section, we heard and saw numerous Acadian Flycatchers, Ovenbirds, and Northern Parulas. The song of the Eastern Wood-Pewee and the scratchy call of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were also heard. A couple of Carolina Wrens were in a very agitated state on the escarpment beneath us, and close examination revealed a large black snake, presumably a Southern Black Racer, in what must have been the wren’s nest area. We weren’t sure of the casualties, but the alarm chatter ceased after a while. Someone said, “A snake has to eat too...”

We tried to decide if we should retrace our path or try the longer, woodland trail for our return to the parking area. Democracy failed, so I flipped my trusty silver coin, and we thus

hiked along the woodland trail, past a larger wetlands section of the park. We heard more Acadian Flycatchers and Ovenbirds, and at just about the end of trail, we finally added Wood Thrush to our bird list. Although we got wet and sweaty, we got some good exercise on that three plus-mile hike, and we built up a nice bird list of 45 species.

Participant List: Roberta Newton, Ann Van Sant, Elizabeth Norman, Wade Norman, Kathy Pennington, Linda & Paul Sumner, and Matt Wangerin.

Bird List:

Turkey Vulture	Tree Swallow	Northern Parula
Red-shouldered Hawk	Carolina Chickadee	Blackpoll Warbler
Red-tailed Hawk	Tufted Titmouse	Prairie Warbler
Mourning Dove	White-breasted Nuthatch	Chipping Sparrow
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Brown Creeper	Field Sparrow
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Carolina Wren	Eastern Towhee
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Yellow-breasted Chat
Downy Woodpecker	Eastern Bluebird	Summer Tanager
Eastern Wood-Pewee	Wood Thrush	Scarlet Tanager
Acadian Flycatcher	American Robin	Northern Cardinal
Great Crested Flycatcher	Northern Mockingbird	Blue Grosbeak
White-eyed Vireo	European Starling	Indigo Bunting
Red-eyed Vireo	Cedar Waxwing	Brown-headed Cowbird
Blue Jay	Ovenbird	Common Grackle
American Crow	Common Yellowthroat	American Goldfinch



Photo Credit: Ann van Sant, Acadian Flycatcher