



Field Trip: A&T Farm, March 7, 2020

submitted by Roberta Newton, trip leader
photos by Lynn Allison

Twenty adventuresome folk braved the crisp, yet sunny day to bird the various habitats at A&T Farm. In the parking lot, we were greeted by a Carolina Wren, Red-bellied Woodpecker, and Eastern Bluebird. Our first stop was the pond and fields near the cattle barn. We encountered the usual flocks of Rock Pigeon, European Starling, and Canada Goose, but also saw Buffleheads, a Great Blue Heron, Eastern Meadowlarks, and several Killdeer. A newborn Black Angus was in the field.

The second stop was the pond and field by a greenhouse on the north side of McConnell Road. Circling Northern Shovelers were funneling the water to raise food from the bottom of the pond. This was a life species for many of the new birders. Canada Geese, Ring-billed Gulls, Ruddy Ducks, and several Eastern Meadowlarks were also spotted, along with a Northern Mockingbird. A tabby cat, part of the integrated pest management system (mouse catcher) for A&T Farm, was also present.



Northern Shovelers and Canada Geese



Killdeer

Although the number of species was a bit low, we set forth to another pond and farmland area in hopes of locating additional species. Fortunately, we were able to locate several Brown-headed Nuthatches, a Pine Warbler, and Red-winged Blackbirds in the pine trees. The ponds yielded Canada Geese and Ruddy Ducks. We attributed the low number of observed species to cool and windy conditions. However, our group was hopeful.

The last part of A&T Farm we visited was the Hog Unit. The drive to the parking area brought flocks of American Robin. By now the temperature was a little warmer and the thermals yielded many species including Turkey and Black Vulture, a Red-shouldered Hawk, three Red-tailed Hawks, American Kestrel, and Merlin (confirmed by a photograph). The number of woodland birds was low, but we were able to hear a Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, the loud song of the Carolina Wren, and at last, several Cardinals and Sparrows (Song and White-throated). A short walk to the lagoons yielded several Song and Swamp Sparrows and the highlight of the trek—a Sora whose call was simultaneously confirmed by three birders.

Although we had a slow start, the total number of species was 38. The entire group enjoyed the trek and the new birders appreciated the sharing of birding identification

Species List

Canada Goose
Northern Shoveler
Bufflehead
Ruddy Duck
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)
Mourning Dove
Sora
Killdeer
Ring-billed Gull
Great Blue Heron
Black Vulture
Turkey Vulture

Red-shouldered Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
American Kestrel
Merlin
American Crow
Fish Crow
Carolina Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
Brown-headed Nuthatch
Carolina Wren
European Starling

Northern Mockingbird
Eastern Bluebird
American Robin
White-throated Sparrow
Swamp Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Eastern Towhee
Eastern Meadowlark
Red-winged Blackbird
Common Grackle
Pine Warbler
Northern Cardinal