

Weymouth Woods-Sandhills Nature Preserve

April 13, 2019

Submitted by: Matt Wangerin, Trip Leader

Under infrequent light showers, ten members of the Piedmont Bird Club explored the trails of Weymouth Woods. The targets of a spring trip to this great preserve are nesting Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and singing Bachman's Sparrows, as well as the other early migrants and resident birds.

A couple of our own "early birds" got great looks at the resident Red-cockaded Woodpeckers along the entrance drive, so the assembled group started out right in the parking lot in front of the Visitor's Center. There we were able to spot a pair of hummingbirds at the feeders and hear the first melodious whistle and trill song of the Bachman's Sparrow. However, unable to spot that singing bird, nor the woodpeckers, we started off a trail beneath the iconic longleaf pines.



Photo Credit: Matt Wangerin, Bachman's Sparrow



Photo Credit: Ann Van Sant, Red-cockaded Woodpecker

It didn't take long to hear another singing male Bachman's Sparrow. The loud, clear song carries well in the rather bare understory, but it is often difficult to locate the small bird. After some searching, everyone was able to see this individual. Success! Soon thereafter we located another couple of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers foraging and bickering with a pair of Downy Woodpeckers.

Ambling beneath the pines we could also hear many Eastern Towhees and Brown-headed Nuthatches. A stunning pair of Red-headed Woodpeckers flashed by, and some Pileated Woodpeckers offered their loud calls. Pine Warblers and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were working on nests.



Photo Credit: Ann Van Sant, *Brown-headed Nuthatch*



Photo Credit: Ann Van Sant, *Black-and-White Warbler*

Farther downgrade, the pines give way to a deciduous forest and some swampy habitat. There we found some singing Northern Parulas and Black-and-White Warblers, along with more cardinals and chickadees and the like. Completing the loop, we ended up walking a bit more than anticipated, but added Pine Siskin, which seemed very *apropos* for the piney locale.

Bird List, 32 Species

Mourning Dove	3	White-breasted Nuthatch	4
Chimney Swift	2	Brown-headed Nuthatch	15
Ruby-thr. Hummingbird	2	Carolina Wren	5
Turkey Vulture	4	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	19
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	Eastern Bluebird	4
Red-headed Woodpecker	2	Pine Siskin	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	7	American Goldfinch	8
Downy Woodpecker	4	Bachman's Sparrow	4
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	3	Chipping Sparrow	14
Pileated Woodpecker	3	White-throated Sparrow	5
Northern Flicker	1	Eastern Towhee	12
Blue Jay	5	Brown-headed Cowbird	4
American Crow	4	Black-and-White Warbler	3
Fish Crow	1	Northern Parula	5
Carolina Chickadee	8	Pine Warbler	24
Tufted Titmouse	12	Northern Cardinal	11