

With a grand total of 78 species documented, the birding portion of this year's BioBlitz was a tremendous success. Areas explored at length include Dobby's, a newly acquired property just north of the River House, and several trails extending south from the Bur Oak Visitor's Center.

In the way of raptors, only a few species were counted. As was expected, Turkey Vultures were by far the commonest. The Red-tailed Hawk came in second. A single Cooper's Hawk was seen darting into a dense stand of trees near Dobby's. At night, Barred Owls called loudly.

In the manner of waterfowl (a term I may be using somewhat loosely here), the pickings weren't quite as slim. A total of seven species were documented. The most notable of the lot include Great Egret, Green Heron, and Double-crested Cormorant.

In a near-sweep, six of Iowa's seven woodpeckers were spotted. The Downy, Hairy, and Red-bellied Woodpeckers, all year-round residents, were out in high numbers. Northern Flickers and Red-headed Woodpeckers were much fewer, and only a single Pileated Woodpecker was reported. With spring migration in the rear-view mirror, it came as little surprise that the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker would be the lone absentee.

In a grand-slam, all six of Iowa's swallows were documented. Northern Rough-winged and Cliff were easily the most abundant. The Purple Martin landed in last place, with only a single female observed.

As far as flycatchers go, the usual suspects abounded. Eastern Kingbirds were the most numerous. The Great-crested Flycatcher and the Eastern Wood-Pewee trailed closely behind (in numbers, of course!), and the Eastern Phoebe came in last with only a handful of sightings.

Three of Iowa's seven vireos were seen/heard. The Warbling Vireo was the most common. Red-eyed and Yellow-throated Vireos, both of whom are more abundant in the eastern half of the state, were heard, but with much less frequency than the Warbling.

Only four warbler species were noted. By far, the most preponderant were the Common Yellowthroat and the American Redstart. At least two Yellow Warblers were observed, as was a single Northern Parula.

In open fields, Dickcissels were nothing short of ubiquitous and the occasional Western Meadowlark could be heard. Atop thistles, American Goldfinches were seen with regularity. Though less common, a handful of Bobolinks were also observed.

Baltimore Orioles were heard and seen at just about every turn. In fact, many of their nests were located in tall trees throughout the property (at least two of these were in the main campground). Orchard Orioles were much fewer in number than their brighter-colored counterparts. However, several were spotted along the edge of open fields far away from centers of activity.

As for sparrows, only six species were documented. The invasive House Sparrow was the least delightful of the bunch. Song, Field, and Chipping Sparrows weren't shy about making their presence known. The rarest of the group were the Lark and Grasshopper Sparrows.

Other noteworthy sightings include American Woodcock, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Whip-poor-will, Belted Kingfisher, Wood Thrush, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Scarlet Tanager.

Two sightings remain unconfirmed: Northern Mockingbird and Loggerhead Shrike. Because of the uncertainty, neither of these species is included in the final list.

With its diverse array of habitats and with the number and variety of species the property hosts, Whiterock Conservancy is nothing short of a birding hotspot. In my opinion, it is a stellar destination for both the novice and the experienced birder!

Thanks to all who contributed sightings and to all others who partook in the birding portion of BioBlitz 2012-it wouldn't have been anywhere near as enjoyable or as successful without your participation!

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Below is the complete list of all species observed.

- Wood Duck
- Canada Goose
- Double-crested Cormorant
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Turkey Vulture
- Cooper's Hawk
- Barred Owl
- Ring-necked Pheasant
- Great Blue Heron
- Great Egret
- Green Heron
- Killdeer
- American Woodcock
- Mourning Dove
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo
- Common Nighthawk
- Whip-poor-will
- Belted Kingfisher
- Red-headed Woodpecker
- Red-bellied Woodpecker

- Downy Woodpecker
- Hairy Woodpecker
- Northern Flicker
- Pileated Woodpecker
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird
- Chimney Swift
- Purple Martin
- Tree Swallow
- Barn Swallow
- Cliff Swallow
- Bank Swallow
- Northern Rough-Winged Swallow
- Eastern Kingbird
- Eastern Wood-Pewee
- Eastern Phoebe
- Great-crested Flycatcher
- American Robin
- Eastern Bluebird
- Wood Thrush
- Brown Thrasher
- Gray Catbird
- Cedar Waxwing
- Blue Jay
- American Crow
- Black-capped Chickadee
- White-breasted Nuthatch
- House Wren
- Sedge Wren
- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
- Yellow-throated Vireo
- Warbling Vireo
- Red-eyed Vireo
- Yellow Warbler
- Northern Parula
- Common Yellowthroat
- American Redstart
- Scarlet Tanager
- European Starling
- Red-winged Blackbird
- Western Meadowlark
- Bobolink
- Dickcissel

- Common Grackle
- Brown-headed Cowbird
- Baltimore Oriole
- Orchard Oriole
- House Sparrow
- Song Sparrow
- Chipping Sparrow
- Field Sparrow
- Lark Sparrow
- Grasshopper Sparrow
- House Finch
- American Goldfinch
- Northern Cardinal
- Indigo Bunting
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak
- Eastern Towhee