

FIELD TRIP REPORT

LOCATION: *Joyce Kilmer and Stecoah Gap*

DATE: *04/18/2010 & 04/19/2010*

WEATHER: *typical spring day in the mountains .*

LEADER(S): *Jesse Pope* .

Sightings and Notes:

We had a fantastic two days of birding at Joyce Kilmer and Stecoah Gap! We started the trip birding around Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest south of Robbinsville, NC. In addition to the great birds and wonderful wildflowers was the towering virgin stands of Tulip Poplars, Hemlocks, Silverbells, and much more! It was really amazing to see a mature forest in Western NC. If you haven't been there before it is most certainly worth the drive just to see the huge trees. I couldn't help but wonder what these trees have witnessed in their lifetimes! Some of these trees are over 450 years old. Many warbler species were found there as well, please see the list below.

That night most of the group stayed at Fontana Village, a very nice lodge with affordable accommodations and excellent food and beverage. So I hear at least!! Bob Cherry and I hiked a mile or so up from Stecoah Gap and camped out on a knife edge ridge top along the Appalachian Trail at simp gap. We were greeted first thing the next morning with a Ruffed Grouse drumming nearby. We met up with the rest of the group at Stecoah Gap on the forest service road that leads from the parking lot along the side of the mountain. We had some great looks at many warblers including close looks at a Blackburnian Warbler, Black-throated Blues, Black-and-Whites, Blue-headed Vireos, Red-eyed Vireos, an Ovenbird and much more. We had many first of the year birds for this group over the course of the trip.

On the way back home on Monday afternoon Bob and I stopped at Nantahala bridge on Highway 28, to check out some swallows we spotted on the way to Joyce Kilmer the day before. After several minutes of observation we noticed Cliff Swallows flying around the bridge. We got some excellent looks at them as they flew to and from the bridge structures. Among them, we also saw Barn Swallows, and Northern Rough-winged Swallows. We also took the scenic route home through Cherokee to check out a few of the other Birding Trail sites along the way, but didn't come up with many more birds of interest. I guess we were a little too late in the day.



This was a wonderful trip. The weather was great, the birds were pretty cooperative, and the company of the fellow birders was outstanding! Below is the list of birds and wildflowers seen on the trip. We also saw some neat butterflies as well, including Comma, West Virginia White, Tiger Swallowtails, Spring Azure, a species of duskywing, and probably a few others I've forgotten.

Key:

Joyce Kilmer= JK

Stecoah Gap= SG

Fontana Lake=FL

Along Highways in route= AH

Bird List:

American Crow JK, SG, FL

Common Raven SG (along the AT)

Black-throated Green Warbler JK, SG, FL

Northern Parula JK, SG

Black and White Warbler JK, SG

Hooded Warbler JK

Pileated Woodpecker JK

Eastern Pheobe JK

Carolina Wren JK, SG

American Redstart JK

Red-eyed Vireo JK, SG

Ovenbird JK, SG

White-breasted Nuthatch JK

Tufted Titmouse JK, SG, FL

Visit us at our website: www.highcountryaudubon.org



Carolina Chickadee JK, SG

White-throated Sparrow JK

Wood Thrush FL

Blackburnian Warbler JK, SG

Tree Swallow JK, FL

Black-throated Blue Warbler SG

Dark-eyed Junco SG

Downy Woodpecker SG

Ruffed Grouse SG

Song Sparrow SG, FL

Eastern Towhee JK, SG

Northern Flicker FL

American Robin SG, FL

American Goldfinch SG

Blue Jay SG

Wild Turkey SG

Northern Cardinal SG

Chestnut-sided Warbler SG (seen by Janet Palmer on the way out)

Osprey FL

Cooper's Hawk FL

Northern Rough-winged Swallow FL

Barn Swallow FL

Cliff Swallow FL

Mallard AH

Canada Goose AH

Eastern Bluebird AH

Visit us at our website: www.highcountryaudubon.org



Mourning Dove AH

European Starling AH

Common Grackle AH

Red-winged Blackbird AH, FL

Total: 44 species

Wildflower list (this list may not be complete):

Jack-in-the-pulpit

Foam Flower

Toad Trillium

Sweet White Violet

Painted Trillium

Indian Cucumber Root

Wake Robin Trillium

Silverbells (tree)

Wood Sorrel

Wild Ginger

Cut-leaved Toothwort

Another species of Toothwort

Star Chickweed

Mitterwort

Blue Cohosh

Wind Flower

Canada Violet

Panzy Violet

Round-lobed Hepatica

Visit us at our website: www.highcountryaudubon.org



Black Cohosh

Doll's Eyes

Spring Beauty

Squirrel Corn

Large-flowered Trillium

Yellow Mandarin

False Solomon's Seal

Wild Yam

Virginia Waterleaf

Halbred-leaved Violet

dwarf Ginseng

Wild Oats

Wild Geranium

Bellflower

Solomon's Seal

Large Solomon's Seal

Yellow Buckeye (in bloom)

Red Bud (in bloom)

Wood Anemone

Crowsfoot

Daisy Fleabane