



NORTHUMBERLAND
LAND TRUST

NLT Birding Marathon 2024

Laurie Lawson Outdoor Education Centre - Kurt Appleman - 2024 May 17



I started my day at Laurie Lawson before sunrise on May 17th. I would have preferred an alternate date to maximize migration. However, due to a full schedule, May 17th became the day of my count. I was greeted with bird songs in every direction. An early morning Savannah Sparrow was a nice addition to kick off the day, supported by a ubiquitous cast of Blue Jays, Red-winged Blackbirds and American Robins. Once you listen more carefully, you are able to discern another bird: related to the robin, and equally synonymous with Southern Ontario forests as robins are to backyards, the flute-like call of the Wood Thrush encouraged me to explore further.

Bird song is like a carrot. It gives you incentive to keep searching for something more. The Wood Thrush led to an Ovenbird, and that led to an Indigo Bunting. Hearing the birds became a theme for the day at the Laurie Lawson Outdoor Education Centre (LLOEC); all birders know there are many times when you hear a bird but are unable to see it. This is especially true for a certain LLOEC breeder and my choice as bird of the day, the keeper of the LLOEC, the Northern Waterthrush (right). They can be heard endlessly in various spots in the forest, but seeing them is much more difficult. At least a Red-eyed Vireo came down from its high canopy perch to give me ideal views at eye level. Now remember how I mentioned the sound of birds is like a carrot. This becomes exciting when you hear the noisy raucous sounds of a group of crows. Not an entire murder of crows, just enough to make a lot of noise. When I followed the agitated *cah*'s of the American Crow, I was led to an area of forest that was not accessible on foot, but it was still accessible with binoculars. When I located the crows, I was also able to find the bird that was causing them so much stress: a Great Horned Owl having little success staying concealed and hidden. Follow the sounds to the unknown and discover the beauty of nature.



Time with nature can be compared to a map that has yet to be plotted. When the day begins you may not know the path, but nature will guide you until your day has ended. Then you will be left with your yellow brick road. The Winter Wrens are waiting to be discovered. Allow your ears to guide your eyes and move forward with desire for something great. As you follow your ears, your eyes will see the Trilliums, Shinleaf, Jack-in-the-pulpit, and prehistoric ferns. The River Otters and trout were not present on this day, but my ears did lead me to a social Swamp Sparrow. The sparrow was accompanied by Great Crested Flycatchers, Alder Flycatcher, Common Yellowthroat, and a Sharp-shinned Hawk passing by. The path is not always known but always remember that nature never disappoints. Every day in nature is a cherished moment to be enjoyed each and every time.

The full list:

Wood Duck	Chipping Sparrow
Ring-billed Gull	Savannah Sparrow
Turkey Vulture	Song Sparrow
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Lincoln's Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Swamp Sparrow
Great Horned Owl	Baltimore Oriole
Red-bellied	Red-winged Blackbird
Downy Woodpecker	Common Grackle
Hairy Woodpecker	Ovenbird
Northern Flicker	Northern Waterthrush
Great Crested	Tennessee Warbler
<u>Eastern Wood-</u>	Nashville Warbler
Alder Flycatcher	Mourning Warbler
Red-eyed Vireo	Common Yellowthroat
Blue Jay	American Redstart
American Crow	Bay-breasted Warbler
Black-capped	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Cedar Waxwing	Black-throated Green
White-breasted	Northern Cardinal
Brown Creeper	Indigo Bunting
Winter Wren	
Gray Catbird	
European Starling	
Veery	
<u>Wood Thrush</u> ^{sc}	
American Robin	
American Goldfinch	

[Editor's note: Species At Risk are in **bold and underlined**. Superscripts denote the risk category: E = Endangered; T = Threatened; SC = Special Concern]

