



## NLT Birding Marathon 2024

de Kleer Nature Reserve - Paulette Hebert - 2024 May 23



As the DeKleer property steward, this was my second year in a row doing the NLT Birding Marathon at the de Kleer Nature Reserve. I got an early start on a beautiful May 23<sup>rd</sup> morning. Thanks to my early start, it was still dark, and a Whip-poor-will was singing to the west. It was late night for the Whip-poor-will, but it was time to get up for the early risers.

A reliable Northern Cardinal was in its usual place loudly singing the wake-up call. A Winter Wren, my favorite little songster, was also up and at it. That little guy kept me company all day! At the pond that feeds Piper Creek a couple of Northern Waterthrushes surprised me with their loud, emphatic song... but not as loud as the Great Crested Flycatcher, who takes first place for volume. I startled a Wild Turkey from its perch in the NW corner of the property and it flew off over adjacent fields like a flying sack of potatoes which made me giggle. Then, a Pileated Woodpecker cackled in the woods. Did it find flying turkeys funny also?

Along the north road allowance, I wavered between a Chestnut-sided Warbler and a Yellow Warbler - sometimes, I just can't tell their songs apart. Fortunately, the bird wasn't trying to hide, I found it easily and confirmed Chestnut-sided. Then I wondered how I could have questioned it... it seemed so obvious now.

After wading through poison ivy up to my hips I decided it was time to head creek-side, to the hemlock stand where I hoped to find some woodpeckers. I went downhill into carpets of blooming Canada mayflower, dwarf scouring rush, and ferns (oak, sensitive, cinnamon and ostrich) and stood in the dense forest listening so intently I had my eyes closed. Then I remembered to watch for birds! I opened my eyes and gazed up. A barred owl sat staring at me, still and quiet as a statue. After a moment, it flew away just as quietly. Then a Brown Creeper called, and I had 28 species before 6:00 a.m. I was having a good day.

I found the woodpeckers as I wandered southward: Yellow-bellied Sap-sucker, Northern Flicker, Hairy Woodpecker and Red-bellied. With fields and hedgerows on three sides I also found various edge and grassland species throughout the day. A House Wren occupied one of the two bluebird boxes I had installed last fall. In the hedgerow, I watched a Red-eyed Vireo (right) tearing apart a large caterpillar with its beak. It kept right on singing throughout the whole ordeal. Trust a Red-eyed Vireo to never miss a beat!



I finally found a Blue Jay at species 39, which signalled time for a break. I found six more species when I came back later in the day including a Ruby-throated Hummingbird, so small I am always surprised to find one in the wild. And I do love to end my day with a nice surprise. I am already looking forward to next year.

### The full list:

Wild Turkey

Ruffed Grouse

Mourning Dove

Eastern Whip-poor-will<sup>sc</sup>

Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Ring-billed Gull

Barred Owl

Red-bellied Woodpecker

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

Hairy Woodpecker

Northern Flicker

Pileated Woodpecker

Great Crested Flycatcher

Eastern Kingbird

Alder Flycatcher

Warbling Vireo

Red-eyed Vireo

Blue Jay

American Crow

Common Raven

Black-capped Chickadee

Ruby-crowned Kinglet

Brown Creeper

House Wren

Winter Wren

Brown Thrasher

Veery

American Robin

American Goldfinch

Chipping Sparrow

Savannah Sparrow

Song Sparrow

**Eastern Meadowlark<sup>T</sup>**

Baltimore Oriole

Red-winged Blackbird

Ovenbird

Northern Waterthrush

Mourning Warbler

Common Yellowthroat

Chestnut-sided Warbler

Black-throated Green Warbler

Scarlet Tanager

Northern Cardinal

Rose-breasted Grosbeak

Indigo Bunting

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