

On Saturday, June 24th, day two of our Breeding Bird Atlas camping weekend, it was a rainy day with a high of 72° F.

We woke up and a group of us (young birders) went on a little birding expedition down the road to see what we could find. It was a pretty short walk since it was before most of us ate breakfast but we got excellent looks at a Blackburnian Warbler up close. We also got to see a female Common Merganser and her babies swimming on the creek which might've been the same family that was seen the day before. Once we finished that walk we went back to our campsites and ate breakfast. Then we all met up and split into groups for the morning.

My family and I went with Wendy and Susan to the Arena NW priority block. Just when we started birding it started to pour but we still got to see a Chestnut-sided Warbler up close and it was carrying food! We also confirmed Black-capped Chickadee and Common Yellowthroat at our second stop followed by a Blue Jay. Then we got to an open field and saw an Eastern Kingbird flying to its nest in a tree just off the road. At that same spot, we saw a Common Grackle carrying food. Then we drove up a winding dirt road to a little trailhead where Ruffed Grouse had been spotted last year. Unfortunately, we didn't see anything and we were completely soaked from the rain so we headed back to the campground. On the way back my car got a flat tire and my dad changed it, but he, my mom, and my sister all had to go to town to get it checked out after we ate lunch at the campsite. When we got back to the campground we were the last ones to return as everyone had returned earlier because of the rain.

Since many birders got back to the campsite earlier than expected because of the rain, they went back out just as we were returning. Once we finished lunch we headed out to the road along the creek on the opposite side of the campsite. It was a surprisingly good birding spot. We saw 19 species and had 5 confirmations! The highlight was a Red-breasted Nuthatch nest with young and the parents kept flying back and forth so you could see the babies stick their heads out for food. We also saw a Brown Creeper feeding its young which was also really cool. Then we saw a Black-capped Chickadee, American Robin, and Dark-eyed Junco all carrying food.

After that we headed back to the cars to drive a bit farther to another spot. As we passed a creek and an electrical power line Peter screamed "Mourning!" and everyone jumped out of the car to find the Mourning Warbler. After a few minutes of pishing it came out of the bush and some of us saw it. At that stop, we also saw a Pileated Woodpecker hole but we weren't sure if it was from this season or last season.

We drove back to the campsite to have dinner. We made burgers but just as we were going to have s'mores it started to pour. I got to roast one but not many others got to. The rain was relentless and flooded the large canopies we were hiding under, but after a while it lightened a little bit and everyone went back to their tents. Everyone went to bed because we had an early morning again the next day.

One last side note, later that night at about 2:00 am I heard a Barred Owl and so did some other people. Thank you, Wendy, Peter, Mark, Susan, and Jim for organizing this amazing field trip. It would've never been possible without your planning, knowledge, and enthusiasm. My favorite part of the whole weekend was when we saw Yellow-bellied Sapsucker parents feeding their young in the tree cavity as well as hearing a Bobwhite and getting amazing views of a Scarlet Tanager, so thank you all for making all of those amazing moments happen!