

## Field Trip Report: Downriver Ducks Tour

February 2, 2025

Leader: Kayla Niner

It was a cold morning despite Woody the groundhog's prediction of an early spring and the group of 13 birders that met at Elizabeth Park was more inclined to believe Phil's prediction of a long winter. Our first sightings of the day included Downy Woodpeckers, many squirrels, and a Coyote! Everyone enjoyed watching the Coyote chasing the squirrels before he



ran off into woods. The group moved on to the bridge where they surveyed the waterfowl below. We found Canada Goose, Mallards, a handful of American Black Duck and this odd duck that was sitting weird with its feet stuck up. Several birders made



guesses as to what it was. Those who guessed Canvasback were rewarded when the duck stopped it stretching and slid into the water. We were also treated to a Belted Kingfisher that flew over our heads. It then lightened its load. Luckily, no one was hit. Down the river further we received report of a Canada Goose that had been sighted the previous day with apparently illness. All were advised to spray shoe soles and floor mats with alcohol as a precaution from possible bird flu.

Out on the Detroit River, more ducks were present and the group added Common Merganser, a few more Canvasback, Redheads, and Mute

Swans to the list. Also of note were a Great Blue Heron and a Bald Eagle. The group also tallied Blue Jays, American Robins, Dark-eyed Juncos, House Finches at the park.



The second stop of the day was Bishop Park. A stark contrast to last year's open water, this year we had a very frozen section of river. The resident falcon was not to be found, but the group sighted a flock of Redheads, a few Common Goldeneyes, and a Bufflehead. Four Bald Eagles were also out on the ice. We didn't spend a lot of time there as there wasn't much to see and the weather seemed to be coming in sooner than predicted.



We arrived at Dingell Park just as snowflakes were beginning to fly. We spent only 22 minutes watching the birds here as visibility was quickly declining and several members of the group had lengthy drives back home. No new ducks were added as Dingell Park was also largely frozen. The few patches of open water were home to mostly Canada Geese and a few Mallards. One Canvasback was swimming by itself in a patch of open water. The highlights of this park were a raft of about 350 Mute Swans (counted by Don) and eleven Bald Eagles. Total Species count for the day was 25, with nine species of waterfowl.



*Photo credits (all):  
Kayla Niner*

### **Elizabeth, Bishop, and Dingell Parks, Wayne, Michigan, US**

25 species

Canada Goose 100  
Mute Swan 353  
Mallard 27  
American Black Duck 1  
Canvasback 5  
Redhead 38  
Bufflehead 1  
Common Goldeneye 3  
Common Merganser 12  
Mourning Dove 1  
Ring-billed Gull 16

Bald Eagle 16  
Red-tailed Hawk 1  
Belted Kingfisher 1  
Red-bellied Woodpecker 2  
Downy Woodpecker 2  
Blue Jay 2  
American Crow 2  
Black-capped Chickadee 1  
Tufted Titmouse 1  
American Robin 2  
House Sparrow 1  
House Finch 4  
Dark-eyed Junco 3