Merry Lea Birding Expedition
Muscatatuck & Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuges
April 18-20, 2015

What a trip! Our goal was to investigate two of Indiana’s National Wildlife Refuges, Muscatatuck and Big Oaks. They are both impressive places for Indiana. Muscatatuck is much more accessible and we explored it several times in the sun and in the rain. Big Oaks is much larger at over 50,000 acres, but since it is an old bombing range it is not very accessible. We had a guided tour from two local volunteers, George Terlinden and Walt Seeds, who showed us around just a small section of the huge refuge.

On the way down, we stopped at Eagle Creek park to try for two rare species, the Fish Crow and Neotropical Cormorant. The Fish Crows were quite cooperative and showed up shortly after our stop at the airport parking lot and let out their famous “Uh-Uh” calls. The Neotropical Cormorant was elusive and not to be seen. That’s how it goes, you get some and miss others.

All in all it seemed that we did pretty well in the rain and wind with over 100 species for the trip.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Species Guess</th>
<th>Target Bird</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paul McAfee</td>
<td>150  Golden Eagle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Zinn</td>
<td>142  Worm-eating Warbler</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ed Burkholder</td>
<td>97   *Henslow’s Sparrow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bob Guth</td>
<td>105  *Fish Crow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Darci Zolman</td>
<td>123  *Fish Crow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carole Koos</td>
<td>130  Blue Grosbeak</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marie Smith</td>
<td>92   Summer Tanager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patricia Frank</td>
<td>72   Summer Tanager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth Middleton</td>
<td>102  Summer Tanager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Shelly</td>
<td>115  No target</td>
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<tr>
<td>Els Shelly</td>
<td>121  Indigo Bunting</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* = bird was found

**Bird List**
The final tally was 101 species. The winner of the coveted “Total Species Guess” award was Ruth with 102, only off by one, with Bob & Ed tied for second, both being off by only four birds.

- Common Loon
- Pied-billed Grebe
- Double-crested Cormorant
- Great Blue Heron
- Turkey Vulture
- Black Vulture
- Canada Goose
- Mute Swan
Horned Lark
Tree Swallow
Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Barn Swallow
Carolina Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
White-breasted Nuthatch
Carolina Wren
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Eastern Bluebird
Hermit Thrush
Wood Thrush
American Robin
European Starling
Brown Thrasher
American Pipit
Blue-winged Warbler
Northern Parula
Yellow Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Yellow-throated Warbler
Pine Warbler
Prairie Warbler
Palm Warbler
Cerulean Warbler
Worm-eating Warbler
Ovenbird
Louisiana Waterthrush
Common Yellowthroat
Scarlet Tanager
Eastern Towhee
Chipping Sparrow
Field Sparrow
Savannah Sparrow
Henslow's Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Swamp Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Northern Cardinal
Indigo Bunting
Red-winged Blackbird
Eastern Meadowlark
Common Grackle
Brown-headed Cowbird
House Finch
American Goldfinch
House Sparrow