

ZVAS Sax-Zim Bog Field Trip - February 6, 2016

Eleven excited participants met at the Walmart North parking lot at 6 a.m. Saturday, February 6 for an all-day field trip to the Sax-Zim Bog in northern Minnesota. Participant ages ranged from ten to 84.

We made good time driving and reached the southeast corner of the area we planned to explore around 10 a.m. We picked up one additional participant on the way in Inver Grove Heights.

The Friends of Sax-Zim Bog have published a map of the bog with a suggested winter driving route, and we followed this for the most part. The most active areas were several feeding stations with multiple well-stocked bird feeders. Here we were treated to good looks at black-capped chickadee, common redpoll, pine siskin, downy and hairy woodpeckers, red-breasted nuthatch, and evening grosbeak. We stopped for lunch at the Welcome Center the Friends of Sax-Zim Bog constructed two years ago, and had good looks at gray jays and pine grosbeaks. In the afternoon we drove Admiral and McDavitt roads and were treated to a good look at boreal chickadee at the Admiral Road feeders.

Away from the feeding stations, birds were scarce. We did spot three ruffed grouse feeding by the side

of the road that later flew into some low trees. We also found a flock of 40 to 50 snow buntings that flew up from the side of the road and returned several times. (From photos checked later, it looks like there was one lapland longspur mixed in the flock.) We spotted a few bald eagles, common ravens, and crows of course, and one large porcupine, curled into a ball and apparently sleeping far out on a skinny branch, very exposed, high up in a tree. Not a place I would have chosen for a nap! We found two northern shrike during the day.



Pine Grosbeak photo by Brendan Lanpher

We unfortunately did not come across any owls. This has not been a notable year for owls at Sax-Zim bog. Great gray owls have been spotted, but generally at dawn or dusk. We also missed black-billed magpies that were seen at the Welcome Center later in the day. In spite of that, many trip participants claimed multiple "life birds".

Total species count for the trip: 20. (Besides those mentioned above, we saw blue jay, white-breasted nuthatch, and ring-necked duck.)

Thanks for the great trip everyone!

Clifford Hansen



Boreal Chickadee photo by Sandy Hokanson



Boreal Chickadee photo by Sandy Hokanson

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Evening Grosbeak - male photo by Brendan Lanpher



Evening Grosbeak - female photo by Sandy Hokanson



Gray Jay photo by Sandy Hokanson



Gray Jay feeding on deer carcass photo by Sandy Hokanson



Northern Shrike photo by Dave Gross



Porcupine photo by Dave Gross

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Northern Shrike photo by Brendan Lanpher



Pine Siskin photo by Sandy Hokanson



Pine Grosbeak photo by Sandy Hokanson



Pine Grosbeak photo by Brendan Lanpher



1 male & 2 female Pine Grosbeaks photo by Sandy Hokanson



Redpolls photo by Brendan Lanpher

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Ruffed Grouse photo by Sandy Hokanson



Ring-necked Duck photo by Sandy Hokanson



Snow Buntings photo by photo by Brendan Lanpher



Snow Buntings & 1 Lapland Longspur photo by Brendan Lanpher



Birders photo by Sandy Hokanson



Birders photo by Sandy Hokanson