

**Summer Birds and Wildflowers**  
**Trip report- August 18, 2020**

August can be hot even in the mountains, but today was one of the best as I believe the temperature never made it to 70F. We began along the Parkway with several stops along the way. The Mills River Valley Overlook (where the hawkwatching takes place) produced a very obliging warbler flock feeding in a Sourwood tree. Despite the chasing going on between the birds, we ended up with great views of Blackburnian, Black-throated Green and Black-and-white Warblers. A Yellow-billed Cuckoo was calling in the high trees but never showed himself. The birds were obvious, but we were also looking down to enjoy some late summer wildflowers. Virgin's Bower was in bloom and many of the goldenrods and asters were just beginning to break. It was always a challenge to know whether to look down or look up or glance at the butterflies nectaring on the abundant blossoms. We climbed higher in the Balsams, where we spend time figuring out some of the notoriously-difficult asters before enjoying the seepages along the Parkway. The rock faces are a watery garden of plants all finding their niche in the cracks and fissures of the granite. Big cushions of Sphagnum moss hosted Mountain Dandelion and Michaux's Saxifrage and the best of all, the exquisite Grass of Parnassus. We eventually found Round-leaved Sundew in bloom nestled in the seepage and did our best trying to identify the St John's Worts along the rock face. It was a spectacular day in one of the most beautiful places in our area.

Simon Thompson

**Birds: Species encountered: 24 species**

Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Common Raven	Eastern Towhee
Chimney Swift	Carolina Chickadee	Canada Warbler
Ruby-throated	White-breasted Nuthatch	Blackburnian Warbler
Hummingbird	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Black-and-white Warbler
Downy Woodpecker	Carolina Wren	Black-and-White Warbler
Eastern Wood-Pewee	Gray Catbird	Ovenbird
Red-eyed Vireo	Cedar Waxwing	Northern Cardinal
Blue-headed Vireo	American Goldfinch	
Blue Jay	Dark-eyed Junco	

**Butterflies**

Eastern Tiger Swallowtail  
Cabbage White  
Silver-spotted Skipper

### Wildflowers

Asiatic Dayflower  
False Hellebore (fruit)  
Rattlesnake Orchid  
Orchid sp  
Dutchman's Pipe (leaves)  
Pink Smartweed  
Pokeweed  
Starry Campion  
Virgin's Bower  
Buttercup  
Black Cohosh (fruit)  
Umbrella Leaf (fruit)  
Round-leaved Sundew  
Michaux's Saxifrage  
Hairy Alumroot  
Grass of Parnassus  
Purple flowering  
Raspberry

White Clover  
Pink Clover  
Large Wood Sorrel  
Spotted Jewel weed  
Pale Jewel Weed  
St John's Wort  
(Appalachian, Dwarf and  
Mountain)  
Evening Primrose  
Water Hemlock  
Filmy Angelica  
Galax (fruit)  
Common Milkweed  
Carolina Phlox  
Bee Balm  
Wild Bergamot  
Wild Basil  
Hoary Mountain Mint

Self-Heal  
Purple Gerardia  
Pink Turtlehead  
Greater Bluets  
Southern Harebell  
Mountain Dandelion  
White Snakeroot  
Joe Pye Weed  
Green-headed Coneflower  
Gray Sunflower (?)  
Greater Coreopsis  
Goldenrod sp  
White Wood Aster  
Aster sp  
Fetterbush  
Rosebay Rhododendron