

**Trip Report**  
**Kituwah and Lake Junaluska**  
**February 28, 2021**

It was a surprisingly warm February day when we met at Kituwah. The prediction was for rain but that is completely random in the Mountains and we ended up barely seeing a drop all day. Kituwah is one of those places where it's good to just walk and we did, walking at least 2 miles before returning to our cars. A small flock of Tree Swallows had arrived and were already investigating the birdhouses; the sun reflecting off the burnished green-blue backs was beautiful. A small number of Rusty Blackbirds mixed in with Red-wings was a nice surprise, as were the number of singing Field Sparrows. A brief stop along Ocanaluftee Lake brought us Wood Duck and a sleeping Hooded Merganser- a few early ducks before we got to Lake Junaluska. Lots of people were out and about enjoying the warm day and walking around the lake; often often asking us whether we had seen the eagles. We hadn't yet! Thankfully there was still a lot of waterfowl on the lake including Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, and best of all, a pair of the uncommon Common Merganser. We continued working around the lake and with the help of Clifton, we did find the eagles, well one of them anyway, brooding her eggs high in a pine tree. A great end to a very nice late winter day of birding.

Simon Thompson

**Birds 53 Species**

Canada Goose	Bald Eagle	European Starling
Mute Swan	Red-tailed Hawk	Northern Mockingbird
Wood Duck	Belted Kingfisher	Eastern Bluebird
Mallard	Red-bellied	American Robin
Hooded Merganser	Woodpecker	House Finch
Ring-necked Duck	Downy Woodpecker	American Pipit
Lesser Scaup	Pileated Woodpecker	Field Sparrow
Common Merganser	Eastern Phoebe	White-throated Sparrow
Bufflehead	Blue Jay	Savannah Sparrow
Ruddy Duck	American Crow	Song Sparrow
Pied-billed Grebe	Carolina Chickadee	Swamp Sparrow
Rock Pigeon	Tufted Titmouse	Eastern Towhee
Mourning Dove	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Eastern meadowlark
American Coot	Tree Swallow	Red-winged Blackbird
Killdeer	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Rusty Blackbird
Ring-billed Gull	White-breasted	Common Grackle
Turkey Vulture	Nuthatch	Pine Warbler
Bald Eagle	Carolina Wren	Northern Cardinal