

Lower Chippewa River Titmouseketeers

By Steve Betchkal

Rory C, Anne G, Bill H and I braved the near-constant mist and cold, and water-logged roads to chase down birds this past Sunday, a part of the NRF's Great Wisconsin Birdathon.

We birded the Lower Chippewa IBA from Dunnville around to Pepin and Durand, the many shorebird ponds between Durand and the B Pond, and also sampled the Chippewa County Forest and the City of Eau Claire.

We tallied 144 species -- a record high for the five years we've been doing this -- especially remarkable because we were prohibited from exploring the best of the Dunnville Bottoms due to high water levels (no Bell's Vireo or Willow Flycatcher, for eg)

Highlights include:

18 warbler species -- including Mourning, Golden-winged, Blue-winged, Blackpoll, Canada, Wilson's, and Northern Parula, but **NO** Prothonotary, Cerulean, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Cape May, Pine, Orange-crowned, or Bay-breasted.

12 spp of shorebirds -- including Stilt, Semipalmated and White-rumped Sandpiper (8 total), Wilson's Phalarope.

American Bittern, Virginia Rail, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Caspian & Common Tern, E Collared-Dove, Sedge & Marsh Wren,

Olive-sided & Acadian Flycatcher,

Lark, Clay-colored, and Grasshopper Sparrow, but no Henslow's,

And 4 "slams" ...

Woodpeckers (7 spp)

Swallows (6 spp)

Falcons (3 spp)

Icterids (10 spp)

Other significant misses include:

Whip-poor-will, Barred Owl, Broad-winged Hawk, N Harrier, Red-shouldered Hawk, Cooper's Hawk (NOT a good hawk day!), Great Egret, C Raven, B Creeper, R-B Nuthatch, C Waxwing, R-C Kinglet, Lincoln's, White-throated, and White-crowned Sparrow.