Lake St. Clair Metropark – March 24, 2018

One of the first Oakland Owlet field trips this year took place on an extremely cold Saturday morning at Lake St. Clair Metropark. Eight birders ventured to the park to see the resident Great-horned Owl. The GH Owls have a long history at the park. The story behind the owls in the tub started in 1991 when a five-week-old owlet was blown out of the nest during a storm on April 16. The nest was destroyed, but the park staff contacted Tom Heatley, a local bird bander who specializing in banding raptors. Heatley placed an aluminum nesting tub in a tree for a safer and more secure nest option for future years. By the end of 2017, 39 owlets have been fledged from this tub. The nature center staff keeps track of the owls using this nest. The Oakland Audubon group was lucky to meet Tom Heatley at the nest. Heatley regularly visits to monitor the owls and led the group to his favorite viewing stops nearby spotting both parent Great-horned owls, a Screech owl using a Wood Duck nest box and so much more. Young birder, Henry, added to his life list some of the most amazing birds found in Michigan.

Thirty-two species were seen during the trip including some great ducks along the shoreline of Lake St. Clair. The encounter with Tom Heatley enriched the trip exponentially. The group stopped in the fabulous nature center at the park to get out of the cold.



[Image may contain: 4 people, people smiling, people standing, tree, sky, outdoor and nature](https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=774290836103465&set=a.256218251244062.1073741830.100005676661522&type=3&size=960,540)

Photo credit – group photo Kathleen Dougherty & Owl in Tub – from internet - unknown

**Checklist – March 24, 2018**  
  
Canada Goose    
Mute Swan   
Northern Shoveler    
American Wigeon   
Mallard   
American Black Duck   
Ring-necked Duck    
Bufflehead   
Common Merganser   
Bald Eagle    
Red-tailed Hawk   
Sandhill Crane    
Ring-billed Gull    
Herring Gull    
Mourning Dove    
Eastern Screech-Owl    
Great Horned Owl    
Red-bellied Woodpecker    
Downy Woodpecker    
American Crow    
Black-capped Chickadee    
Tufted Titmouse    
American Robin    
European Starling    
American Tree Sparrow    
Song Sparrow    
Northern Cardinal    
Red-winged Blackbird    
Brown-headed Cowbird   
Common Grackle    
House Finch    
House Sparrow 