

Bird Walk at Mukilteo's Big Gulch

October 5, 2019

By Douglas Resnick

Terry, Sue, Lisa, Michelle, and I met on a cool, cloudy morning at Swamp Creek Park and Ride. From there, we carpooled to Mukilteo's 92nd Street Park. Following a trail to the southeast led us through a torii-like structure and on into the Big Gulch trail system.

Birdsong and calls were present from the outset, and they were very useful, as many of the birds chose to stay hidden in the brush or to forage high in the trees. The gulch is little developed, except for the trails; so, the brush is thick, and some of the trees have grown very tall. We often heard the sounds of Northern Flickers, Pacific Wrens, and Song Sparrows. There were also occasional cries from Downy and Pileated Woodpeckers.

The initial trail is known as the North Fork. After walking down a zigzagging set of stairways, we reached the intersection of the gulch's three main trails and turned onto the West Fork. Along this stretch, paralleling the park's creek, we were fortunate to observe some birds that came down nearly to ground level among the trees. Thus, we obtained a clear view of one of several Golden-crowned Kinglets that we had been hearing for some time as we walked, and we watched two Brown Creepers ply their craft on a stout trunk. We were pleasantly surprised by two more colorful arrivals: a Townsend's Warbler and a Red-breasted Sapsucker.

The West Fork ends at the torii opposite the wastewater treatment plant. We returned the way we had come, still listening to birds, but also paying attention to other elements of the scenery, such as the numerous mushrooms. Between brief rain showers near the end of the walk, we caught sight of a Hermit Thrush, two Spotted Towhees, and two Song Sparrows on a patch of ground near the trail.

We reached our meeting point around noon, after having reported observing 23 species on eBird. We finished the outing with lunch at Indigo Kitchen and Alehouse.