

Bird Walk at Meadowdale Beach Park

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Meadowdale Beach Park, also known as Meadowdale County Park, is partly in Edmonds and partly in unincorporated Snohomish County. Its main entrance can be reached only via some small streets north of Lynnwood. As a result, there is little ordinary traffic noise to be heard there, but navigating to the entrance requires careful study of a street map.

Our group of birders met in the parking lot at the end of the main entrance. The weather was cool, but no rain fell, a welcome change from the forecasts. We set forth on the park's one and only trail, which slopes downward for about one-half mile before leveling off, then continues to the shore of Puget Sound.

The first part of the trail is surrounded by trees and shrubs, and at some points it offers a view of Lund's Gulch Creek. While we walked among the trees, we heard many birds. A prominent voice was that of the Purple Finch. Some of the birds that called or sang also came out onto the trail from time to time; these included Song Sparrow, Spotted Towhee, and American Robin. Some of the smallest birds were at first elusive, but after continued searching we finally got good views of a Golden-crowned Kinglet and a Brown Creeper. We were also able to observe, at greater distance, a Downy Woodpecker and a Hairy Woodpecker.

As we approached the beach, we were able to see the changes in the contours of the land and in the course of the creek that had resulted from recent improvements in the park. Railroad tracks still mark a separation between the beach and the rest of the park, but, instead of a lawn, there is now a wide, open area around the meandering creek east of the tracks, where we found a Great Blue Heron and a pair of Mallards. Also, there is a new tunnel under the tracks by which one can more comfortably reach the beach.

We did not stay long on the beach due to the wind, which was cold for birders and made for a visibly rough sea. We were there, long enough, however, to observe a large gathering of gulls some distance offshore; a few goldeneyes close to shore, bobbing up and down on the waves; a Bald Eagle overhead; and crows that began gathering on the beach just as we began to turn back.

A Killdeer called out, as we passed back through the developing estuary. When we reached the woods, we again encountered woodland birds, including a beautifully singing Ruby-crowned Kinglet, which displayed its red crown. We also heard the calls of Hutton's Vireo and Red-breasted Nuthatch. Finally, as we ascended the trail just before the parking lot, we saw a Red-tailed Hawk circling overhead.

In all, we spent a little over 3 hours walking a little under 3 miles and recording observations of 29 species plus 1 other taxon. Several of us completed the morning with lunch at Mel and Mia's in Edmonds.