

Bird Walks near Lyon and McAleer Creeks

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By Douglas Resnick

We began our outing in the parking lot of Town Center at Lake Forest Park. A few of the spaces are specially designated for use by visitors to the Lyon Creek Waterfront Preserve, a short walk away. The trail, south of Highway 522, meanders beside Lyon Creek to the edge of Lake Washington, where the creek's outfall can be seen. The weather at this early hour was mild and partly cloudy, and few swimmers or boaters were in the area. We saw numerous Mallards and some Canada Geese, as well as some immature gulls, which remained unidentified as to species. The gulls took flight as we turned back from the lake, alarmed at the arrival of a Bald Eagle, which were able to study again as we walked back along the trail: it landed in one of the trees.

Continuing our walk along the Burke-Gilman Trail, we reached Blue Heron Park. Per the signs announcing "Salmon Seeson," we looked for fish in McAleer Creek, but found none. At this small park we observed American Crow, Northern Flicker, and Black-capped Chickadee.

Next, we returned to Lyon Creek, this time in Whispering Willow Park, where we paused amidst the greenery to await any passing birds. We were rewarded with Anna's Hummingbird, as well as woodland birds, such as the Red-breasted Nuthatch. After hearing a different sort of call several times, we glimpsed an Osprey overhead. Most numerous were the Bushtits; we counted 16.

After returning to our cars, we drove north to Pfingst Animal Acres Park. The main trail is a loop near the park's perimeter, but a couple of side trails lead to views of McAleer Creek. There were no salmon in the creek, but to our delight we found a Brown Creeper taking a dip in the water.

Our final stop was at Terrace Creek Park in Mountlake Terrace. The sky had cleared by now, and the sun shone warmly, although the park's trees shaded us along most of the trail. Here, the bed of Lyon Creek held water only near the point where the creek left the park, which is near the south end of the trail. Once again, we found no salmon, but this park was the outing's richest source of birding observations. We saw and heard Bewick's Wrens, repeatedly. Up higher in the vegetation, we found two warblers: Black-throated Gray and Orange-crowned. Through our binoculars, we followed a Downy Woodpecker, as it flew from tree to tree. Providing a helpful comparison, a Hairy Woodpecker also showed up in one tree.

We finished our walk around 12:30 PM, having reported 28 species plus one other taxon. Several of us then stopped for lunch at Snohomish Pie Co. before going our separate ways.