



For my 5<sup>th</sup> annual HMANA raptorthon, I once again decided to go green, get on the bike and go after as many birds as I could find during the better part of one day. All with the goal of raising funds to support Raptors through the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA).



I set out pretty early, 3am in fact, to get night birds along with some tough species to see or hear during the day. The weather couldn't have been any better. Calm winds, cool but manageable temps and no rain in the forecast. While the ride from home began eerily quiet, once in the main first area under the cover of darkness, birds such as **Henslow's Sparrow** and **Yellow-breasted Chat** made the list. From there, night birds such as **Whip-poor-will** were heard in good numbers.

As the sun began to rise, I was happy to begin seeing some birds such as **Indigo Buntings**, **Scarlet Tanagers**, the usual common perching birds and **Hooded Warblers** before making it to a small lake in search of our nesting **Common Loons**. This year, the lake even produced two **Common Ravens** which are quite rare in Southern Michigan. By the time I made it to my 6am spot, I was around 50 species like normal and slowly added more as a few local birds traversed the forest. I was around 90 species for the day by 11am feeling quite satisfied with great (and safe) riding and outstanding birds so far. The new goal became hitting 100 by noon. The 100<sup>th</sup> bird was a Pied-billed Grebe but we missed noon by about 10 minutes. Still, making it to 100 species in my inland county is a good showing so anything more would be the frosting on the cake.





Riding into the heat of the afternoon, I targeted grassland species, open land birds and Raptors with **Bald Eagles, a Cooper's Hawk, Meadowlarks, Bobolinks, Northern Flickers, Sparrows** and more all making the list.

To end my day I rode more gravel in search of anything new before calling it a day. I couldn't have done this without the "sag-wagon" support of my Dad, who always has some tricks up his sleeve for keeping me fed, energized and moving to the next one. His support and assistance along the way was impeccable and make these adventures so much more fun. Thank you to ALL who supported both me and HMANA during what surely are some tough financial times. In the end we raised around \$1100 which is outstanding and very much appreciated by the staff and volunteers working tirelessly to keep HMANA not only up and running, but thriving. Until next year!

