

From: Alice Horst ahorst@comcast.net  
Subject: - Ocala National Forest, Umatilla US-FL (28.9959,-81.8331), Dec 13, 2023
Date: December 14, 2023 at 8:24 AM
To: VILLAGE BIRDERS the-village-birders@googlegroups.com

AH

Great morning in the Ocala National Forest today.

A small group of birders drove through Ocala National Forest looking for our target bird the Florida Scrub Jay. Dirt road was in excellent shape but the forest was very, very quiet. I began to worry. Not a sound for a while. Then I saw a bird perched atop a snag not far from the road. My thought was Scrub Jay. We quickly got out of the cars and this bird did not move, A beautiful Merlin was looking for breakfast! No wonder the birds were silent. We took dozens of pictures, returned to our cars and moved on.

A little farther on there were birds! We watched flocks of small birds flitting in pine trees, shrubs. Many Ruby-crowned Kinglets, etc. We exited the cars 2 or 3 more times along the road, hearing and seeing more. BUT no Scrub Jay yet! When we got to where I had seen them 2 days ago we waited and sure enough! The "scout" was suddenly visible on the top of one of the shrubs. Lighting was not very good for pictures but I took a few.

We had gotten our target bird plus many other little guys along the way.
It was a successful day!







Ocala National Forest, Umatilla US-FL (28.9959,-81.8331), Marion, Florida, US
Dec 13, 2023 9:38 AM - 11:59 AM
Protocol: Traveling
11,866 miles (-)

11.200 miles)

Checklist Comments: Saw flocks of little birds in the fields on the way out but couldn't identify

32 species (+2 other taxa)

Black Vulture 2

Turkey Vulture 3

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 1

Red-headed Woodpecker 3

Red-bellied Woodpecker 3

Downy Woodpecker 2

Merlin 1

Eastern Phoebe 2

White-eyed Vireo 2

Blue Jay 2

Florida Scrub-Jay 2

American Crow 3

Carolina Chickadee 2

Tufted Titmouse 4

Ruby-crowned Kinglet 8 Have never seen so many Ruby-crowned Kinglets together

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 5

House Wren 1

Carolina Wren 1

Gray Catbird 1

Northern Mockingbird 1

Eastern Bluebird 1

Chipping Sparrow 3

Savannah Sparrow 5

Eastern Towhee 2

new world sparrow sp. 10

Orange-crowned Warbler 1

Common Yellowthroat 2

Palm Warbler 4

Pine Warbler 10

Yellow-rumped Warbler 8

Yellow-throated Warbler 2

Prairie Warbler 1

Northern Cardinal 4

bird sp. 10

View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S156257513>

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Thank you everyone for coming out and sharing the morning with the birds.

thank you, Wendy for doing our list.

I have 2 rules when I bird in the Forest:

ALWAYS CHECK SCHEDULE FOR HUNT DAYS prior to going into the forest.

AND, I do not leave the road and wander into the forest.

Every day is a GREAT day to go birding.

Alice Horst, The Village Birders
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