



## USA: 1-DAY NORTHEAST OHIO TRIP REPORT

23 October 2021

By Sarah Preston



*Abundant and adorable Golden-crowned Kinglets were a favorite!*

## Overview

Raptor enthusiasts from Houston, Texas, Becky and Greg were in Cleveland for a conference and wanted to spend a day birding in the area, before it started. It was their first time birding in northeast Ohio, and they were excited to see what fall migration was like here. They say, “bad weather, good birding” and this is a perfect description of the day. Overnight there had been north winds followed by rain in the early hours of the morning that dropped loads of birds on Cleveland! We birded the morning at Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve and Chagrin River Park and the rainy afternoon was spent driving Fairport Nursery Road and along the edge of Mentor Marsh searching for raptors. We ended our day together having seen about 30 species, but hundreds and hundreds of birds, so it wasn't so much about variety, as it was amazing numbers!

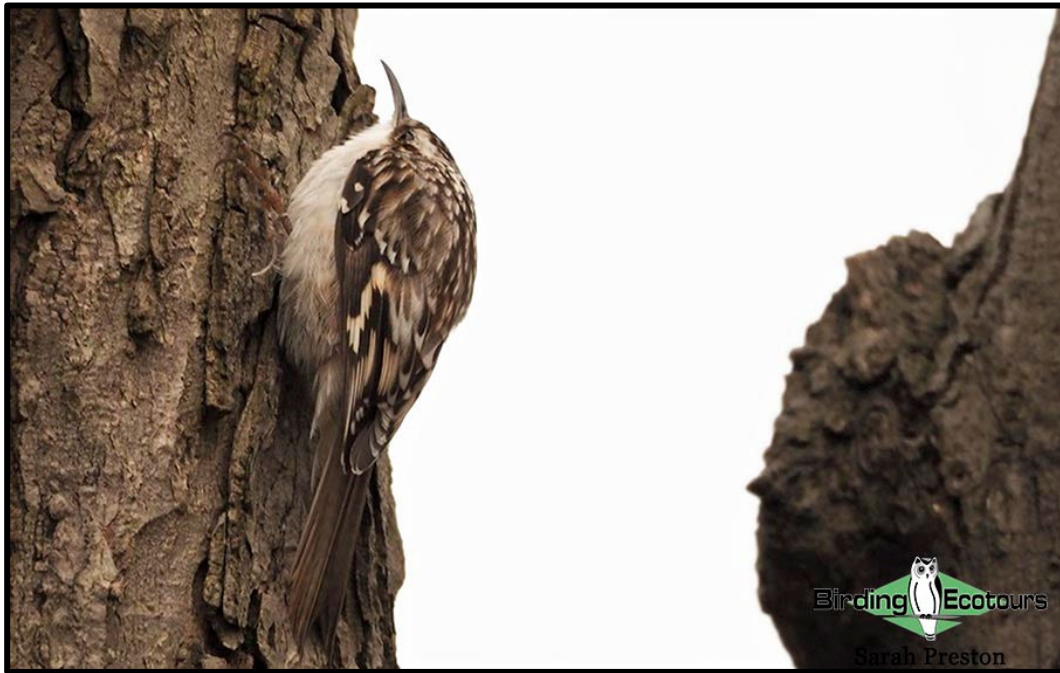


*White-crowned Sparrow* was one of several sparrow species that were seemingly everywhere.

## Detailed Report

After picking up Becky and Greg at 8am, we headed to Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve as our first birding stop of the day. As soon as we exited the vehicle, the thin ‘ti-ti-ti’ of **Golden-crowned Kinglets** was heard all around. While searching for owls in the pines, we found a pair of **Red-breasted Nuthatches**. Inside the preserve, we found many more kinglets, including a **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** trapped in a spiderweb that self-rescued before we could help it. The famed “sparrow field” was alive with **Song, White-throated, White-crowned, Field, and Swamp Sparrows**. Other species seen included **Bald Eagle, Brown Creeper, Nashville Warbler, Black-**

**capped Chickadee, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, and Yellow-rumped Warbler**, but it was the sheer numbers of sparrows and kinglets that was most impressive.



*The **Brown Creeper** blends in beautifully, but we spotted several on the day.*

After a spontaneous stop to pick up some delicious warm beverages in darling downtown Willoughby, we headed to Chagrin River Park, part of the Lake Metroparks system. We were greeted by a small group of the friendly resident **White-tailed Deer**. A fun ear-birding lesson was had when we were able to compare the soft barking call of the **Winter Wren** to the louder, sharper call of a nearby **Song Sparrow**. To our delight, the wren revealed itself. Other species at this location that were new for the day included **Eastern Towhee, American Robin, Hermit Thrush, Red-bellied Woodpecker, and House Finch**.

After a nice lunch at Brennan's Fish House, the rain picked up quite a bit, so most of the afternoon was spent birding from the car. We drove up and down Fairport Nursery Road looking for raptors in flight above the vast grassland or perched on top of telephone poles. We were rewarded with views of a **Merlin** on top of a pole. As we drove past the eastern edge of Mentor Marsh, we saw that one of the resident **Bald Eagles** was sitting on their nest, with one of their offspring from a previous year perched nearby, and a large **Red-tailed Hawk** was taking advantage of open marsh views from a snag. As we drove down Route 2, on our way back to downtown Cleveland, a **Peregrine Falcon** flew alongside the car, matching our speed of 65 mph, the perfect ending to a great day!





*“Day made!” exclaimed Becky as a **Bald Eagle** soared overhead to be joined by a second, after which the two glided together in parallel.*

