



*SOAR Recap: December 6th 2025

It wasn't officially winter as we gathered for the first December walk at Antrim Township Community Park, but it sure felt like it. The temperature was in the mid-twenties as I was joined by Lisa and Ian. Thankfully there was little wind. The first order of business was for Ian and me to make our selections from Lisa's ample supply of homemade jams which filled the back of her car. I went straight for the peach, with a blackberry to take to Sharon. Then it was down the path towards the woods.

I had spotted several juncos at the park entrance and the first bird we saw as we left the parking lot was a pileated woodpecker. An American crow flew overhead as did a flock of Canada geese. It was quiet as we entered the woods but we did see a chickadee and a titmouse that appeared to be headed toward a nearby residence which had a feeder. That was indeed their destination.

A little further along we got a good look at a flicker as well as downy and red-bellied woodpeckers. Ian thought he heard a hermit thrush near the ground but if one was there it was elusive. He did spot a kinglet, which as usual was in constant motion. As we neared the backside of the dog park, there were several bluebirds and a hairy woodpecker. We commented on the hope of finding a sapsucker to round out our woodpecker list, but it wasn't to be. However, we did find the elusive hermit thrush, although in reality it probably was a different one. It was sitting very still in a tree, probably because of the cold.

As we continued, we saw a brown creeper, which as usual was creeping up the trunk of a tree. We added a yellow-rumped warbler and saw and heard several white-breasted nuthatches. Ian spotted some purple finches. Oddly, all the purple finches we have seen in late fall on several of our walks have been females.

Earlier in the walk Ian thought he had heard a tundra swan in the distance, but he wasn't certain. He must have been correct, because a flock appeared overhead, flying in a neat "V" formation. Lisa counted one side and Ian the other. They got a total of 61. Since I assume they both counted the lead bird, the number was probably 60. They were headed in a southeasterly direction, which made sense as they winter along the mid-Atlantic coast. They were our bird(s) of the day.

As often happens at this location, we spotted a hawk in the distance sitting in a tree across the road from the park. The distance made an ID impossible, so it was back to the parking lot for Ian's scope, then a long walk to a good viewing angle. It was a Cooper's hawk, our only raptor of the day, because of the aforementioned lack of wind.

One oddity we have noticed over the years at this park is the existence of several environmental areas, as identified by the signs that are present asking people not to enter. For reasons we don't understand, every year they have all had the vegetation mowed to the ground. This seems to deprive birds and small mammals of an ideal winter habitat. Every year I contemplate writing to the township asking that they delay the mowing to late spring. Maybe this year I will actually do it.

Next SOAR Walk: December 20th at Antrim
Township Community Park

Species List

American crow
American goldfinch
American robin
Blue jay
Brown creeper
Brown-headed cowbird
C/BC chickadee
Canada goose
Carolina wren
Cooper's hawk
Dark-eyed junco
Downy woodpecker
Eastern bluebird
European starling
Golden-crowned kinglet
Hairy woodpecker
Hermit thrush
House finch
Mourning dove
Northern cardinal
Northern flicker
Northern mockingbird
Pileated woodpecker
Purple finch
Red-bellied woodpecker
Tufted titmouse
Tundra swan
White-breasted nuthatch
White-throated sparrow
Yellow-rumped warbler



Dark-eyed junco



Hermit thrush



Tundra swan