



## SOAR Recap March 21 2026

As our group gathered for the second March walk at the Emmanuel Harman Farm on the Gettysburg Battlefield, we overflowed the small parking area. Sharon and I were joined by Lisa, Ian, Becky, MJ and Ed, Sandy and Buttonwood's own Mary Claire accompanied by Connor. It was a pleasant day with good visibility.

We nearly filled the first page of my notebook from the parking area. There were numerous noisy blue jays, a flicker, some red-bellied woodpeckers, a distant raven, a killdeer and several other species. Most interesting were the cedar waxwings. Lisa estimated there were close to 100 in the woods across the road. From there they took turns flying to our side to attack the berries in the juniper trees. They were very visible in the top of the deciduous trees, but almost invisible in the dense junipers.

As we started down the path, there were white-throated sparrows and a singing song sparrow perched low and in the open. A kestrel did a flyover, and we heard a field sparrow. Sharon, MJ and Ed were walking behind everyone else and heard a great-horned owl in the woods across the road from our cars. Both vulture species appeared overhead, and a towhee could be heard and finally seen.

In the trees at the edge of the property we saw numerous bluebirds and Ian spotted a golden-crowned kinglet. We also spotted a yellow-rumped warbler. As we approached the pond, there was little activity beyond some geese and mallards, but after watching for a bit, a pair of hooded mergansers flew in. Someone spotted a golf ball in the shallow water near the dam. Since it was unlikely to have belonged to Dwight Eisenhower, even though he frequently played here when the site was a golf course, no one opted to wade in to retrieve it.

As we completed our circuit of the property we added a white-breasted nuthatch and a red-winged blackbird. Then we noticed a disturbance on the small pond. A male mallard was chasing another male. This went on for a minute until the chased duck headed for the large pond. Undeterred, the chaser followed and began chasing again, whereupon the chased duck flew back to the small pond, as did the chaser, and the process continued. We tired of watching and moved on.

The final species we saw was a red-tailed hawk overhead. We did get a nice view of a singing field sparrow sitting in a conspicuous spot. That was not the last sighting of the day, however. The same gray and white cat we had seen two weeks earlier was again patrolling the property. He seemed unconcerned by our presence. From his appearance (he seemed well groomed and well fed) we speculated that he lived at one of the houses that backed to the property.

Next SOAR Walk: April 4 at  
Buttonwood Nature Center





## Species List



*American kestrel*



*Hooded merganser*



*Northern mockingbird*



*Cedar waxwing*



*Great horned owl*



*Red-winged blackbird*

American crow  
American goldfinch  
American kestrel  
American robin  
Black vulture  
Blue jay  
Brown-headed cowbird  
C/BC chickadee  
Canada goose  
Carolina wren  
Cedar waxwing  
Common grackle  
Common raven  
Dark-eyed junco  
Downy woodpecker  
Eastern bluebird  
Eastern towhee  
European starling  
Field sparrow  
Golden-crowned kinglet  
Great-horned owl  
Hooded merganser  
House finch  
Killdeer  
Mallard  
Mourning dove  
Northern cardinal  
Northern flicker  
Northern mockingbird  
Red-bellied woodpecker  
Red-tailed hawk  
Red-winged blackbird  
Song sparrow  
Tufted titmouse  
Turkey vulture  
White-breasted nuthatch  
White-throated sparrow  
Yellow-rumped warbler