

Minnesota: Winter Owling Species List | January 25-30, 2026 with Naturalist Journeys



Compiled by guide Bryan Calk with co-guide Mollie Brown. Our clients included Caia, Andree, Jenny, Betsy, Dragos, Antonela, Nancy, Carolyn, and Vince

A winter week along the North Shore and into the peatlands of northern Minnesota offered a deep immersion into quiet landscapes shaped by ice, fire, and water. From frozen lakes and fractured shoreline ice at sunset, to winding back roads through spruce and birch, the trip balanced active searching with moments of stillness and wandering. Time in Sax-Zim Bog and the surrounding forests revealed not just wildlife, but the beats of winter itself, tracks in fresh snow, action at feeders, and long stretches of calm in spectacular landscapes. Shared meals, warm cafés, and evening checklists anchored each day, creating space for connection and conversation. In the end, exploring this region in winter is always less about any particular sighting (even though we had many exceptional ones) and more about fully inhabiting a stark, beautiful season in a landscape that rewards patience, attention, and time outdoors.

BIRDS (37):

During the trip, thirty-seven species were recorded of which three were introduced. Details are included below.

The eBird link below details the birds our group observed during the tour. If you're new to eBird, be sure to click "Show All Details" on the right side of the list to expand the report and reveal where and when each of the birds were seen and how many.

[Minnesota: Winter Owling | January 25-30, 2026 | eBird Trip Report](#)

MAMMALS (6):

Eastern Cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) – observed on the hotel grounds, moving through the parking lot and along the sidewalks.

Eastern Gray Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) – seen on the hotel grounds around landscaped areas and near buildings.

American Red Squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*) – abundant throughout the trip, especially active around feeder setups in Sax-Zim Bog.

Southern Red-backed Vole (*Myodes gapperi*) – repeatedly emerged from snow tunnels at the Admiral Road feeder to collect fallen seed.

North American River Otter (*Lontra canadensis*) – a group of three bounded across Highway 2 directly in front of the van, a fast and memorable roadside encounter.

White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) – observed in multiple locations in the Sax-Zim Bog area, standing in open snow and moving along packed tracks, also distant in the Sax area field.