

## A Visit to Broadmoor Wildlife Sanctuary.

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On a lovely spring day in April, my friend Sophia and I meet at the Audubon Society's [Broadmoor Wildlife Sanctuary](#) in Natick, Massachusetts. Prior to this outing, the sanctuary's existence was unknown to me, but this little slice of nature near Burlington was a welcome discovery. Everywhere, there are scenic trails weaving through fields, woods, and marshlands and running alongside streams, marshlands, and even the Charles River. We walk only a small portion of the 624 acres, and oh, what an uplifting experience it is!

While far from being a wildlife connoisseur, I do appreciate beauty and serenity when I experience it. From the moment I enter the grounds, I am transported to a magical kingdom – far from the noise and pollution of the city. Walking there, my eyes go to the horizon, with nothing in sight but waterways, a variety of birds, and .... hundreds of turtles! I am keenly aware of the absence of buildings, cellular towers, commercial properties, and malls – just nature in its pristine form, away from books, screens, and other close-range visual sensations.

I wish I knew the names of all the birds we see. I recognize herons and a variety of geese, ducks, and other fowl. I am drawn to the herons, as they stand regally in the water, periodically dipping their beaks under the surface to feed on what lies beneath.

The dozens, perhaps hundreds, of small turtles, sunning themselves on large leaves floating atop the water at first look to me like small rocks. Sophia, who has been to Broadmoor several times before our visit, confirms their turtlehood.

Upon descending from the wooden boardwalk, I find the trails are somewhat challenging, but worth every effort. These are winding paths, strewn with rocks, branches, and leaves– just as nature intended. All these, along with fallen tree trunks, are left as food or shelter for the creatures thriving in this habitat.

Recently, Sophia and I have seen each other only on video-conferencing. This in-person meeting, free from the tethers of electronics and screens, stands in welcome contrast to a video visit. We walk side-by-side, inhale the same unpolluted air, and experience birds chirping while chipmunks scurry about, hiding under the leaves. A small snake freezes me in my place, but within a minute or two, it slithers away, probably more terrified of us than we are of it.

After completing the maze of trails, wanting to linger longer in this enchanted paradise, we spot some picnic tables which beckon to us. While basking in the sun, we carry on our conversation, commenting on how pleasurable it is to be here, remote from civilization, the narrow boardwalk the only human-made structure in sight.

Our conversation eventually drifts to other topics, and only when the sanctuary is about to close do we walk slowly toward the parking lot, savoring nature's wonderland for another moment, before heading back to our everyday lives.

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