

AUDUBON PARK, AUGUST, 2014 BIRD COUNTS

This was another very hot month with little if any rain during the last two weeks. The City of Deltona lowered the water level in the western impoundment during the month. Perhaps because of the heat mammals were hard to find the White-tailed Deer were represented by two stags and separately by a mother and her offspring. It is interesting to see just how tame some creatures become if they are not hunted. On my early morning walk by the impoundments there is an Eastern Cottontail that just does not want to move out of my way. As I advance it will take a few hops then a few more before turning into cover where it sits in view as I go by. It is I suspect a good thing but I have yet to see a Virginia Opossum.

Well this is meant to be about birds so during the month it was time to say goodbye to some of the summer visitors. The last Purple Martin a male was on the 19th. I heard my last Chuck-will's-widow on the 21st; not the song but rather the guttural call they use outside of the breeding season. The third species was the Swallow-tailed Kite I saw the last one on the 25th.

Bird song excepting the Carolina Wren has ceased and we have the varied chip notes until the spring. Here are some of the more interesting sightings during the month. A male Northern Harrier flew to the south on the 18th. There were three Eastern Wood-Pewees on the 2nd with two on the 4th. On the 4th there was also an Acadian Flycatcher. That was a great start to the month but it did not continue at that pace. On the 19th there was a Northern Rough-winged Swallow, eight Bank Swallows and four Cliff Swallows. Bank Swallows were seen on four dates during the month and Cliff Swallows on five. Single Yellow Warblers were seen on five dates. There were single Yellow-throated Warblers on the 25th and 30th. There was a male Cerulean Warbler on the 14th and a party of five Bobolinks flew to the south on the 30th.

With the lowered water level that I mentioned earlier there were 19 Snowy Egrets feeding there on the 19th, a new high count. A total of 65 Anhinga flew overhead on the 16th. Eastern Kingbirds migrate during the day and there has been passage daily from the 14th with a high count of 138 on the 25th. To complete this grouping there were 12 Red-eyed Vireos on the 30th; these are all new high counts.

Finally on the 30th a pair of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks was observed copulating; perhaps they will breed after all.

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