

Audubon Park Bird Counts, January 20, 2014

Another month has gone by and I wait with anticipation for warm and sunny weather, January was overall a cold and windy month although the lowest temperature on a count day was only that of 35 degrees. The only good thing was there was no wind chill as the lower ground and the thick vegetation blocked the northerly winds by the impoundments.

On the 2nd as it was getting light I saw a White-tailed Deer feeding in the grass to the south of the impoundments. It saw me and as I was still it was not sure what I was so it started to walk towards me on stiff legs. This was a young male and it was not going to turn and flee instead it turned and walked into the cover. There is a clear track coming out of the wood with other tracks in the marsh.

Later on the 18th I was on the northern side of the impoundments when a Bobcat appeared; it clearly wanted to go along the side where I was so it just sat down to wait. These cats are exceedingly patient and will sit for long periods. This one was out of luck as a jogger came along and it bolted.

As I am now visiting the park three days a week the birds are quite used to me. The pair of Sandhill Cranes pay little attention to me rather one of them walked up to me one day and I was the one to turn away; not sure about that beak. More recently they were exactly where I needed to go and we walked past each other at some four yards distance.

From October to the end of December I saw a total of 102 species whilst in January over 13 visits I saw 97 species. So whilst the poor weather was not good for me it was good for the range of birds that visited the area. There were ten new species for the park and these were: Black-and-white Warbler, White-crowned Sparrow, Forster's Tern, Bonaparte's Gull, Northern Harrier, Baltimore Oriole, Song Sparrow, Painted Bunting, Purple Martin and Eastern Screech-Owl. What will February bring?

I am always interested in higher numbers so a selection of the highest counts that occurred in January are: Anhinga 22 on the 13th, Black Vulture 136 on the 20th, Turkey Vulture 483 on the 11th, Ring-necked Duck 105 on the 25th, Bald Eagle seven on the 18th, Killdeer 19 on the 27th, Tree Swallow 121 on the 13th, Eastern Bluebird 12 on the 11th, Yellow-rumped Warbler 171 on the 30th and Palm Warbler 33 on the 27th. On the 11th there were 72 species and that seems a very high number for such a small area. I am still trying to find out the acreage.

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