

Audubon Park Bird Counts March, 2014

The weather for the month was very mixed with for most mornings lower than normal temperatures. The rain during the month has helped to create a better habitat in the marsh.

The Wild Turkeys fascinate me; there are four adult males that travel two and two. One day they were on either side of the western fence and the “park” males were dominant. They kept pushing their heads and necks through the mesh as if to get at the other pair of males. They could of course have gone over the fence but everyone liked to play safe. Later I had to go by them and they and the females were not bothered! I walked by them at a distance of some 20 feet.

Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks have been a feature this month which is surprising as this species is otherwise a rarity in the county. There was a high count of 73 on the 10th at this time the birds were flying from possibly Big Lake across Audubon Park to the south-east at first light. From the 18th a flock decided to actually visit the ponds early in the morning and to stay there for perhaps an hour; this flock except for the 18th when 14 seen comprised 13 birds.

The varied weather during the month meant that there was a varied bird list. In all I saw 115 species during the month as against the 104 species of February; for the record at the end of the month the overall list stood at 146 species.

The first Swallow-tailed Kite was seen on the 1st with the first Barn Swallows (three) on the 4th. A party of five Common Loons flew to the north on the 13th with a Northern Rough-winged Swallow likewise on the 15th. Two flocks of Brown-headed Cowbirds totaling 380 flew to the north on the 20th. On that date the first for the year Northern Waterthrush turned up at the marsh. The first Chimney Swifts were seen on the 24th. There were single Peregrine Falcons on the 25th and 29th. The first Black-necked Stilt turned up on the 27th.

Now things got busier as there was an Eastern Kingbird, a Red-eyed Vireo and two Great Crested Flycatchers on the 29th. During the afternoon there was a strong front that moved through. On the 31st the day started with an Orchard Oriole singing before it left to the north. There were four Eastern Kingbirds, a Yellow-throated Vireo, a male Black-throated Blue Warbler and two Prothonotary Warblers. I saw 82 species on that day a record.

If you look at sheet two of the spreadsheet it will give you details of the highest daily count for each species.

Harry Robinson

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