

AUDUBON PARK BIRD COUNTS – MAY, 2014

May is a transition month as for the first few days the spring migration continues after which we move into the summer. By the end of the month bird song has dropped significantly as the birds concentrate on feeding their young. In late May a good day produces 45 or more species whereas in January I should have seen 45 species by 8.00 am. This month I saw 92 species a big drop from the 129 of April. A figure of 65 may be all that June will produce.

Occasionally it is a none bird event that makes the day for instance one morning I saw two White-tailed Deer come out of the woods and enter one of the vegetated impoundments to feed. Suddenly they raced out at full tilt doing circuits around the impoundment. This had all the appearance of fun! As suddenly as they started they stopped and resumed feeding as if nothing had happened.

The Sandhill Crane male has stopped chasing all and sundry now that the chick is growing; I suspect the whistling-ducks in particular are pleased. These ducks intrigue me as they appear to fly in at first light often in pairs to have what appears to be a social get together and then most depart. Perhaps they will nest this year.

I had thought that the Common Nighthawk would be nesting in the area but the only sighting so far was of one on the 1st. On that date there were also four American Redstarts, a Black-and-white Warbler, a Tennessee Warbler, a Northern Waterthrush and a Magnolia Warbler. On the 3rd there was a Black-throated Blue Warbler and three White-winged Doves flew overhead. It was warbler day on the 4th with seven Blackpoll Warblers, seven American Redstarts, one Black-throated Blue Warbler, an Ovenbird, the Magnolia and a Cape May Warbler.

There were 48 Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks on the 8th that was the highest count for the month. Also on the 8th a Crested Caracara flew over and two Black-necked Stilts paid a visit. Single Bobolinks and Solitary Sandpipers flew over on the 10th. I saw a Crested Caracara again on the 13th and on that date a Bank Swallow flew to the north. There was a female Indigo Bunting on the 17th with a flock of 12 Bobolinks flying to the north on the 19th. On the 27th two Yellow-crowned Night-Herons circled the impoundments and on the 29th there was a very late American Redstart.

Through the month the Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks entertained, the Swallow-tailed Kites flew overhead and if I was lucky I saw one of the Short-tailed Hawks.

Harry Robinson