

## AUDUBON PARK JULY, 2014 BIRD COUNTS

Well I did not find 85 species this month the total was 75 which is still better than the total of 71 for June. August should be better as more migrants appear so I will try for 85 again. The list now stands at 173 which is rather close to the 180 I had expected to see by the end of this year; perhaps that figure should be upped to 200. These figures all indicate just how exceptional this site is, it is after all only 60 acres.

The young crane is now totally as one with the adults except for plumage and its voice. It has probably been calling all along but the high trill is only now loud enough for me to hear. There was a sizeable rookery somewhere in Deltona and the Little Blue Herons in particular fed in the impoundments (they preferred the one with the scattered planting of trees). They would perch on these saplings and drop to the water to catch a large tadpole, all appeared to be Pig or Bull Frogs that would have matured next spring. These herons were always chasing each other off a perch calling loudly as they did so. With them were a number of first-summer birds that had to be hanging around the colony. When the young fledged they came to feed and without training behaved in the same way. Most of the adults left when the young fledged and there has been a gradual decline in numbers. The books like to call this dispersal but as they also dispersed from a much larger colony at Lake Apopka just where do they go?

Bird song declined dramatically during the month, the Chuck-will's-widows last sang on the 14<sup>th</sup>. For most species the majority stopped singing in late June with a few individuals continuing through July. Some of the Northern Cardinals are still singing but only for a few minutes at first light. Very soon all we will have is the chip notes until March next year.

I visited the park on 18 dates as I often go four days a week now. So what did I see during the month? A Double-crested Cormorant visited daily from the 14<sup>th</sup>. There was a Least Bittern (new species) on the 28<sup>th</sup>. The Little Blue Herons peaked at 44 on the 11<sup>th</sup> and Cattle Egrets at 40 on the 19<sup>th</sup> the latter flew overhead. There were two Black-crowned Night-Herons calling in the dark on the 15<sup>th</sup>. The highest count for the month of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks was that of nine on the 7<sup>th</sup>. There was a Blue-winged Teal on the 29<sup>th</sup>. The Swallow-tailed Kites peaked at 19 on the 29<sup>th</sup> and Red-shouldered Hawks peaked at eight on the 19<sup>th</sup>. A Short-tailed Hawk was around all month; I say one as I did not see two together.

There was a Eurasian Collared-Dove on the 21<sup>st</sup>; a new species. White-winged Doves were present daily from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup> with a high count of five on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Barn Swallows were seen from the 15<sup>th</sup>. New species were Loggerhead Shrike on the 11<sup>th</sup> and European Starling (three) on the 28<sup>th</sup>. There was a Yellow-throated Warbler on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. An Eastern Meadowlark

flew to the east on the 5<sup>th</sup>; another new species. Finally there were two Orchard Orioles on the 14<sup>th</sup>. In all there were five new species this month. The spreadsheet which covers all visits back to October, 2013 is on our web site and this article will be in our September newsletter.

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