

AUDUBON PARK BIRD COUNTS – JANUARY, 2015

It took some time but the list has reached 200; the 200th being a Pine Siskin that was with a flock of 50 American Goldfinch on the 17th. I am hoping that the list will reach 230 by the end of the year. In January 2014 I saw 97 species and I wanted to do better this year; well I did but not by much (I saw 99 species, where was the 100th?).

This has been a cold month with the temperature dropping into the upper 30's and low 40's at night. At least any rain was at night so the survey was not interrupted. Four days the 1st, 5th, 15th and 20th were cloudy and the 24th and 25th were very windy. There were very few nice days this month but I carried out a total of 18 surveys.

With the poorer weather the deer kept out of sight and most of the birds kept a low profile as their energy went into finding food. In the early morning some of the Carolina Wrens and Northern Cardinals were singing. That being said there were as always some interesting birds.

There were eight American White Pelicans on the 10th with six on the 17th. More surprisingly there was an American Bittern at the marsh on the 16th, 17th and 20th; it could still be there. On the 15th and 16th a flock of 28 Northern Pintail flew to the south in the early morning. A Northern Harrier flew to the north on the 27th. One of the two Short-tailed Hawks returned on the 22nd; it flew over the ponds on the 29th. A Limpkin was heard again on the 3rd. There was an American Woodcock on the 12th and 13th. There was an Eastern Whip-poor-will and two Purple Martins on the 27th. The harrier was also on the 27th so perhaps there was a northward passage on that day. Finally the Pine Siskin was on the 17th.

This month was important for the number of highest counts the more significant were: 868 Turkey Vultures on the 22nd, 35 Gadwall on the 8th, 610 Laughing Gulls on the 1st, 3380 Fish Crows on the 10th, 1550 Tree Swallows on the 22nd, 8420 American Robins on the 20th, nine Savannah Sparrows on the 13th, 585 Common Grackles on the 13th and 113 American Goldfinch on the 22nd. On the 26th I saw 9304 birds a new high count.

So what will February bring? With luck there will be an addition to the list but there will also be some surprises. I am awaiting the return of the Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks a species that I failed to locate in January.

Harry Robinson