

AUDUBON PARK BIRD COUNTS – AUGUST, 2015

Something strange happened this month I ended up with 91 species for the month as against 83 for August, 2014. I even added two species so let the story begin.

There were up to four Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks through the month and two Blue-winged Teal were seen on the 21st with six on the 26th. Swallow-tailed Kites peaked at 40 on the 5th; the last were four on the 19th. There was a light morph Short-tailed Hawk on the 1st with on the 30th single light and dark morphs. With high water levels the only shorebirds flew over there were single Solitary (5th) and Spotted (30th) Sandpipers.

Very unexpectedly a flock of 24 Laughing Gulls were seen on the 7th. This was tern month as single Royal (the 8th) and Black (the 26th) flew to the north; both were new species for the park. Back to more normal species there was a White-winged Dove on the 14th with a Ruby-throated Hummingbird on the 16th. Red-headed Woodpeckers were seen on 24th, 28th and 30th (they are a regular early fall passage migrant). There were Eastern Wood-Pewees on the 12th and 19th. Eastern Kingbirds were seen on passage from the 19th, the highest number was 105 on the 23rd. They traveled south in small flocks; unlike the smaller Barn Swallows their flight is level.

Red-eyed Vireos were seen from the 15th with a high count of four on the 23rd. Purple Martins continued to be seen occasionally all month. Totally out of season there was a Tree Swallow on the 12th; also on the 12th in the same flock I located a single Cliff Swallow. Barn Swallows flew to the south all month with 189 on the 19th. A Brown-headed Nuthatch was seen on the 14th with two European Starlings on the 30th (this was only the fourth record for the park!).

It is early days for warblers but Yellow Warblers were seen on four dates. Prairie Warblers peaked at five on the 23rd. There was also a beautiful Prothonotary Warbler on the 28th. Northern Waterthrushes were seen from the 8th with singles on five dates. In contrast the Louisiana Waterthrushes were seen to the 19th with a new high count of three on the 16th. Hooded Warblers were seen on three dates the 5th, the 16th and the 28th; this has to be the best showing by this species.

Tanagers are rare here so to have a Summer on the 29th and a Scarlet on the 28th was very unexpected. There were two Bobolink on the 23rd hopefully there will be a strong passage in September. Finally there were three House Finches on the 5th. As it gets busier there is little room for the side comments.

Harry Robinson

