

TOM RENICK COUNTY PARK – BIRD COUNTS: OCTOBER, 2016

I had expected October to be a special month well it was for all the wrong reasons. Hurricane Matthew paid a visit on the 7th and the hurricane appears to have pushed all the pelagic birds out ahead of it. After the hurricane there have been strong easterly winds and these produced a Magnificent Frigatebird that was it.

Just 80 species noted this month on 17 surveys and 84 hours of watching. So far this year I have done 185 surveys over 936 hours. The highest number of species (45) was on the 25th and the highest number of birds (1,730) was on the 28th. I have seen 178 species this year with an overall total of 181.

Common Loons were seen from the 28th with 3 on the 28th and 30th most were in breeding plumage. A new species was a Pied-billed Grebe that I saw on the 23rd and 25th. There was a Brown Booby on the 5th. Northern Gannets were seen from the 28th with 5 on the 30th all but one were adults. Over the Halifax River there were 7 American White Pelicans on the 26th. That was the day of the Magnificent Frigatebird. There were 6 Roseate Spoonbills on the 1st with 21 on the 22nd the latter were all adults. On the 30th there were single Ring-necked Duck and Surf Scoter together with a flock of 7 Black Scoter.

There were 12 Peregrine Falcons on the 12th and unexpectedly there were two Sandhill Cranes over the river on the 2nd. Red Knots were seen from the 23rd with 42 on the 25th. Another new bird was a Wilson's Snipe that flew to the south on the 11th. Single Parasitic Jaegers were seen on four dates. There were 720 Royal Terns on the 28th with 111 Sandwich Terns on the 30th. The last Common Tern was seen on the 29th. There was an Eastern Phoebe on the 25th. On the 25th a party of three American Crows flew to the south calling. Finally another new bird was a Sedge Wren seen on the 22nd.

There were a number of high counts: there were 165 Great Blue Herons on the 1st, 33 Great Egrets on the 2nd, 127 Cattle Egrets on the 1st, 354 White Ibis on the 1st and 357 Black Vultures all were flying to the south. There were also 8 Ospreys on the 29th, 4 Northern Harriers on the 1st and five Merlins on the 12th. Even a very poor month had some interesting birds.

Harry Robinson