

## TOM RENICK COUNTY PARK BIRD COUNTS – MARCH, 2017

March was a surprisingly good month it ended up being the third best month for number of species seen (only April and November had a higher number of species in 2016). For this month I saw 101 species as against 95 for this month in 2016. I carried out 22 surveys over 115 hours. On the 21<sup>st</sup> I saw 54 species and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> I saw 3,244 birds. For the year as a whole I have seen 124 species and the overall list stands at 193 species. Now to the interesting bit, the birds!

There was a Red-throated Loon on the 3<sup>rd</sup> with a sub-adult Brown Booby on the 31<sup>st</sup>. The only American White Pelicans were 15 on the 10<sup>th</sup>. Herons migrated to the north all month most passing offshore. There were 103 Great Blue Herons on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and all the other high counts were on that date. There being 30 Great Egrets, 55 Snowy Egrets, 74 Little Blue Herons and 20 Tricolored Herons. For Roseate Spoonbill there was one on the 4<sup>th</sup> with 30 on the 8<sup>th</sup> and three on the 31<sup>st</sup>. There were five Gadwall on the 13<sup>th</sup> with a Northern Shoveler on the 10<sup>th</sup> and a White-winged Scoter on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

There were single Swallow-tailed Kites on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> with single Northern Harriers on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. The wintering male American Kestrel was last seen on the 25<sup>th</sup>. There were single Merlins on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> with two on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, then singles seen on the 26<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. There were single Peregrine Falcons on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. There was an American Oystercatcher on the 22<sup>nd</sup> with a Black-necked Stilt (flying to the south) on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Sanderling peaked at 183 on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 290 on the 15<sup>th</sup>. There were also six Short-billed Dowitchers on the 19<sup>th</sup>. The jaegers only just made it into March there were single Pomarine on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and Parasitic on the 4<sup>th</sup>. Royal Terns have been moving north all month and most were in first winter plumage. There was a new high count of 2,284 on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Sandwich Terns peaked at 145 on the 10<sup>th</sup>. There was a Common Tern on the 25<sup>th</sup> with two on the 31<sup>st</sup>.

There was a White-winged Dove on the 26<sup>th</sup> and a flock of 11 Nanday Parakeets flew to the north up A1A on the 4<sup>th</sup>. An Eastern Phoebe flew in off the sea on the 31<sup>st</sup> - it just made it. Fish Crows have been migrating to the north there was a new high count of 384 on the 8<sup>th</sup>. There were 41 Purple Martins on the 19<sup>th</sup> a high count with two Northern Rough-winged Swallows on the 19<sup>th</sup> and a Bank Swallow on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Finally in this group two more new high counts there were 850 Brown-headed Cowbirds on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 45 House Finches on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

This just leaves one very unexpected bird. On the 31<sup>st</sup> I picked out this bird flying towards the shore at 11.43 am. For a moment I thought Merlin but the flight was wrong. So was it a Peregrine Falcon? Again the flight was not right. As it got closer it was an all over

brown color and it had a longish tail so what was it? The size and head shape gave it away it was a Chuck-will's-widow! That is the 193<sup>rd</sup> species for the park.

Harry Robinson