

TOM RENICK COUNTY PARK BIRD COUNTS – JULY, 2017

During July the weather until the 30th seemed unchanging with calm seas early in the day and a light breeze later normally there were no clouds until midday none of this made for good birding. There were 21 surveys during the month over 103 hours a total of 81 species were seen as against the 76 seen in July, 2016. There were 45 species on the 28th with 1,601 birds on the 29th. So far this year 175 species were seen as against the 188 seen in the whole of 2016. The list now stands at 208 with one new species this month. Now to the birds.

There were two Greater Shearwaters on the 2nd (calm seas!) with a Magnificent Frigatebird (Halifax River) on the 11th. There was a Reddish Egret on the 12th it flew to the north up the Halifax River. A major rarity was the Black-crowned Night-Heron a juvenile flew to the north up the Halifax River on the 4th and an adult did likewise on the 14th. Up to three Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were seen daily with four on the 19th. A total of 94 Swallow-tailed Kites flew to the south this month with 21 (a new high count) on the 22nd. There was a light morph Short-tailed Hawk on the 5th with two (a first) on the 29th.

Shorebirds have been on the move this month the highlights were a total of 32 Black-necked Stilts with 14 on the 12th. Two American Oystercatchers flew to the south on the 29th. There were six Greater Yellowlegs on the 7th (a high count) with one on the 30th. Spotted Sandpipers were seen from the 26th with two on the 30th. There was a solitary Whimbrel on the 2nd. A Marbled Godwit flew to the south on the 28th. Sanderling peaked at 301 on the 30th. Finally for this group there was a Long-billed Dowitcher in breeding plumage on the beach on the 12th. Surprisingly a second-summer Great Black-backed Gull flew to the north on the 30th. Very low numbers of Common Terns were seen from the 15th with Forster's Terns from the 14th. Least Terns peaked at 46 on the 25th all flying to the south.

There were 59 Rock Pigeons on the 8th a high count. There was also a new high count for Mourning Doves there were 32 on the 21st. There was a Downy Woodpecker on the 7th. Loggerhead Shrikes were seen on most days with three on the 26th. Single Tree Swallows and Northern Rough-winged Swallows were seen on both the 28th and 29th. There was a Bank Swallow on the 23rd with two on the 28th and six on the 29th. A total of four Cliff Swallows flew to the south on the 29th. Barn Swallows flew to the south from the 5th with peak counts of 287 on the 28th and 825 on the 29th. A local rarity was a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher seen on the 7th. The only warbler was a Yellow Warbler on the 16th.

Did I mention that there was an addition to the list? There was a male Shiny Cowbird on the 19th a day when six Brown-headed Cowbirds seen. House Finches continued to be seen to the 25th with 18 on the 21st. Finally the House Sparrows have been swarming there were 49 on the 26th. So what will August bring?

Harry Robinson