TOM RENICK COUNTY PARK BIRD COUNTS – SEPTEMBER, 2017

This proved to be the best month of the survey it was also the first month of my retirement! Just to be different I am starting off with a photograph can you identify the species? Later on I will tell you about it.

So to the birds there were single Greater Shearwaters on the 23rd and 24th with an unexpected Manx Shearwater on the 24th; the latter being a new species for the park. An immature Brown Booby flew to the south on the 29th. With new high counts there were 60 Tricolored Herons on the 4th and 55 Glossy Ibis on the 3rd. Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were seen to the 21st. There were single Roseate Spoonbills on the 2nd, 8th, 9th and 13th.

On the 29th a flock of four Great Blue Herons flew to the south the second bird in the flock was a Mottled Duck! That is another addition to the list. Blue-winged Teals peaked at 905 on the 6th with two Northern Shovelers on the 19th. The first Green-winged Teal were seen on the 23rd. The next addition was a juvenile Broad-winged
Hawk that drifted to the north on the 7th. Not to be out done a light morph Short-tailed Hawk was seen on the 4th. American Kestrels were seen from the 23rd and the Peregrine Falcons were seen from the 9th (there were five on the 27th). Merlins were seen from the 24th. On the 30th a Peregrine tried to catch a Merlin!

There was an American Oystercatcher on the 21st and seven American Avocets flew to the south on the 1st. There was a Solitary Sandpiper on the 13th with a Spotted Sandpiper on the 1st. The only Whimbrel flew to the south on the 9th. There were two Marbled Godwits on the 7th and 8th with one on the 11th. There was a Pomarine Jaeger on the 7th and Parasitic Jaegers were seen from the 3rd with four on the 18th. For the gulls there were two adult Lesser Black-backed Gulls on the 30th. There were high counts on the 23rd of 490 Sandwich Terns and 1,030 Common Terns. Least Terns were last seen on the 19th. Black Terns peaked at 773 on the 3rd and the last were seen on the 24th.

Surprisingly there was a White-winged Dove on the 29th - perhaps this was a western bird. On the 12th at dusk 11 Common Nighthawks flew to the south. There was a Gray Kingbird on the 14th. Another surprise was a flock of five American Crows on the 20th. There were three Cliff Swallows on the 11th with singles on the 26th and 27th. There were also single Gray Catbirds on the 20th and 27th.

For the warblers there was a Tennessee Warbler on the 22nd, a Yellow-throated Warbler on the 26th, a Pine Warbler on the 30th (new species), a Palm Warbler on the 19th (very early) and an American Redstart on the 20th. Finally there were 12 Bobolinks on the 1st with two on the 20th and one on the 29th. Now that all makes for a very good month.

There is just one problem there was a minor event called Hurricane Irma. On the 10th I was in the park for four hours until the police closed it. On the 11th there was a curfew until midday so I took my telescope up to my apartment (next to A1A) and carried out a sea watch for four hours looking towards the Halifax River which I followed with another four hours from the park. This event continued but more of that later.

There were single Greater Shearwaters on the 8th and 9th with two Wilson’s Petrels on the 10th. There were also single Brown Boobies on the 9th and 11th. I saw two Red-necked Phalarope on the 9th with a Red Phalarope (new species) on the 10th. Another new species was Long-tailed Jaeger three flew to the south on the 10th with another three on the 30th, same birds? An adult Sabine’s Gull flew to the south on the 10th yes another new species. There were two Roseate Terns on the 8th with one on the 16th. There were single Arctic Terns on the 11th and 23rd. There was a Bridled Tern (new species) on the 10th with three on the 11th (two were from the flat!). Later with
calm seas there was one on the 15th with four on the 16th. The photograph provided earlier was of a juvenile Bridled Tern seen on the 16th that sat for a time on the railings of the walkway from the condo to the south. Sooty Terns came next (new species), there was one on the 9th with 24 on the 10th, 31 on the 11th and one on the 12th. Again during the calm weather one glided to the north using the condo’s to give it lift on the 16th! Finally there were the Brown Noddies (new species) there were three on the 10th with two on the 11th. To my surprise one also flew to the south close to the shore on the 30th a Laughing Gull was harrying it a bit it must have thought it was a jaeger. That really is it for the month.

The best day for species was the 11th when 44 located the best day for numbers was the 3rd when 2,391 counted. So far this year I have found 193 species as against 188 for the whole of 2016. In September I saw 119 species by far the best month this was over 30 days and 142 hours. The list now stands at 218 species.

Whist I can manage to put this text together such as it is adding pictures is beyond me. Judy Morrison came to my rescue and added the Bridled Tern picture, thanks Judy.

Harry Robinson