

TOM RENICK COUNTY PARK MARCH, 2018 BIRD COUNTS

Well this month was very different there were a flood of sightings when compared to February. During March there were a series of fronts which created a wide variety of weather conditions. I carried out 31 surveys over 156 hours there were 117 species; the highest counts were on the 25th with 59 species (the record is 61) and 5,279 birds. I have now recorded 137 species for the year and 239 since the survey started. This was only the second month with no additions to the list (January 2017 being the other month).

To the birds there were single Red-throated Loons on the 3rd and 6th with a Horned Grebe on the 3rd. There were single Brown Boobies on the 2nd and 12th. Northern Gannets peaked at 826 on the 26th and Brown Pelicans at 2,536 on the same date (the latter is a new high count for the park). Double-crested Cormorants had a strong passage with 411 on the 25th and 980 on the 28th. Not to be out done there were 143 Anhingas on the 25th another high count.

There were on the 12th 100 Snowy Egrets, 21 Little Blue Herons and 29 Tricolored Herons all were flying to the north. There was also a Reddish Egret on the 5th. Whilst there were a scattering of duck sightings the only interesting ones were: a Wood Duck on the 23rd, two Surf Scoters on the 7th, two White-winged Scoters on the 19th, a Bufflehead on the 7th and three Hooded Mergansers on the 8th. Finally for this group Red-breasted Mergansers peaked at 44 on the 31st.

There were single Swallow-tailed Kites on the 19th and 25th. There were two Northern Harriers on the 8th with one on the 18th. On the 20th there were five Sharp-shinned Hawks this was a new high count. There was a light morph Short-tailed Hawk on the 20th. The wintering American Kestrel was last seen on the 17th there were single migrants later on the 25th and the 30th. During the month a total of nine Merlins were seen with six on the 25th. There were seven Peregrine Falcons during the month with three on the 21st.

There was a Piping Plover on the 16th and five American Oystercatchers flew to the north on the 31st another new high count. There were also new high counts of 16 Greater Yellowlegs on the 7th and three Lesser Yellowlegs on the 3rd. For the latter species there were also two on the 7th and one on the 23rd. Willets peaked at 77 on the 31st. On the 31st 15 Red Knots flew to the north the first sighting for this year! Finally for the shorebirds three Wilson's Snipes came in off the sea on the 14th.

Just three Pomarine Jaegers were seen the last on the 26th. There were 15 Parasitic Jaegers to the 30th with seven on the 26th. Herring Gulls peaked at 412 on

the 12th and 546 on the 19th can anyone tell me why they have continued to fly to the south all month? During the month eight Lesser Black-back Gulls noted with single Glaucous Gulls on the 7th and 11th. There were single Gull-billed Terns on the 28th and 31st and Common Terns were seen sparingly from the 3rd. Very early were single Least Terns were noted on the 8th and 20th.

There was a Ruby-throated Hummingbird on the 18th with a Belted Kingfisher on the 25th. Single Downy Woodpeckers were seen on the 5th and the 28th. Eastern Phoebes were seen to the 30th and there was a Gray Kingbird on the 23rd. There was a Loggerhead Shrike on the 28th. Fish Crows have been flying north in low numbers all month but there were a massive 1,607 on the 25th. Tree Swallows peaked at 1,730 on the 18th. There were single Northern Rough-winged Swallows on the 18th and 20th. Barn Swallows were seen from the 8th. There were 12 American Robins on the 6th with 75 on the 20th. Cedar Waxwings were present all month with 115 on the 11th. The last Yellow-rumped Warbler was seen on the 26th. There was an Eastern Towhee on the 3rd the only other record also in March was seen on March 30, 2016. Brown-headed Cowbirds peaked at 320 on the 12th but all but one or two had gone by the end of the month. Finally there were 24 House Finches on the 10th a pair has again taken up residence in the park.

Last year only 113 species were seen in April with 129 species in October perhaps I will try for 130 species this month (on 62 at the time of writing this).

Harry Robinson