

TOM RENICK COUNTY PARK – MARCH, 2019 BIRD COUNTS

Here we go again! The weather was very mixed and that was probably responsible for the very high number of species seen. In all 127 species were located as against 117 in 2018 and 95 in 2016; this was during 31 surveys and 140 hours of field work. In all 140 species seen so far this year with a grand total (unchanged) of 253. The most species (54) were seen on the 23rd and the 25th with 5,079 birds on the 3rd.

There were single Red-throated Loons on the 1st, 10th and 29th. Common Loons peaked at four on the 1st and 17th. Northern Gannets were present all month with 273 on the 18th and 205 on the 19th. The only American White Pelican was seen on the 22nd. Brown Pelicans were present in good numbers (most flew to the north) with 446 on the 19th, 652 on the 27th and 626 on the 28th. There was a passage of Double-crested Cormorants to the north all month with 336 on the 30th. Finally for this group there were 123 Anhingas on the 22nd.

Hérons flew to the north all month with 19 Great Blue Herons on the 4th, 204 Great Egrets on the 23rd (this is a new high count), 59 Snowy Egrets on the 23rd, 84 Little Blue Herons on the 26th (another high count), 70 Tricolored Herons on the 26th, a Reddish Egret on the 29th and rather early a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron flew to the north on the 30th. There were also four Roseate Spoonbills on the 23rd.

There were a scattering of wildfowl sightings during the month. There were two Wood Duck on the 12th (they were with Black Scoters) and two Gadwalls flew to the north on the 20th. There were four American Wigeon on the 12th with two on the 18th, ten on the 20th and five on the 24th. Blue-winged Teal were seen from the 5th with 41 on the 18th. There were four Northern Shovelers on the 18th with a Northern Pintail on the 27th. For Green-winged Teal there was one on the 15th with two on the 20th and two on the 22nd. There was a party of four Redheads on the 18th. There were eight Ring-necked Ducks on the 12th with six on the 18th. Scaup (both species) were only seen in low numbers (there were 450 Lesser Scaup on the 3rd). There were eight Surf Scoters on the 1st with singles on the 15th and 16th. The only White-winged Scoter flew to the north on the 25th. During the month 848 Black Scoters were seen with 227 on the 16th.

There were two Swallow-tailed Kites on the 12th with a Northern Harrier on the 22nd. There were single Sharp-shinned Hawks on the 4th and 23rd. A light morph Short-tailed Hawk was seen on the 11th. The male American Kestrel that was first seen on October 6, 2018 was last seen on the 26th. During the month 14 Merlins were seen with single Peregrine Falcons on the 12th and 18th.

On the 3rd two Sandhill Cranes flew to the south. There was a Semipalmated Plover on the 29th with an American Avocet on the 24th (this was over the river). On the 21st a flock of three Greater and 12 Lesser Yellowlegs flew to the north. The first Eastern Willet was heard on the 5th. There were single Whimbrel on the 18th and 20th with two on the 27th, then one seen on the 28th; all flew to the north. A Marbled Godwit flew to the north on the 19th. There was a Western Sandpiper on the 20th with seven Least Sandpipers on the 30th. A Purple Sandpiper flew to the north on the 20th. There were six Short-billed Dowitchers on the 22nd with two Long-billed Dowitchers on the 27th.

There was a Pomarine Jaeger on the 4th with two on the 18th. Parasitic Jaegers were quite common 26 were seen during the month. Laughing Gulls present as usual with 2,500 on the 4th and 3,550 on the 24th. Herring Gulls peaked at 435 on the 4th. During the month nine Lesser Black-backed Gulls noted. There were single Gull-billed Terns on the 18th, 20th and 29th. There were two Common Terns on the 6th with singles on the 18th, 24th and 27th. Least Terns have arrived with one on the 20th and two on the 29th. There was a trickle of Black Skimmers flying to the month; 23 in all.

There was a new high count of 68 Rock Pigeons on the 10th. There were single White-winged Doves on the 25th and 27th. There was a Common Ground-Dove on the 11th with two on the 30th. After quite a break there were two Nanday Parakeets on the 29th. A Belted Kingfisher flew to the north out at sea on the 26th. There were single Northern Flickers on the 14th and Pileated Woodpeckers on the 25th. A single Loggerhead Shrike was seen to the 16th. If the wind was in the south Fish Crows might be seen migrating to the north there were 250 on the 4th. Single Purple Martins were seen on three dates with 19 on the 22nd. Generally hirundines were scarce but there were 1,800 Tree Swallows on the 3rd. There was a Northern Rough-winged Swallow on the 16th with two on the 23rd. A single Bank Swallow was seen on the 25th. The House Wren was present all month. There was a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher on the 3rd. The American Robins were last seen on the 13th. There was a Gray Catbird on the 25th. There was a Brown Thrasher on the 7th with two on the 13th. Cedar Waxwings were present all month with 410 on the 1st, 285 on the 2nd, 110 on the 4th and 70 on the 31st. Yellow-rumped Warblers were seen to the 13th whereas the Palm Warbler was still present on the 31st. There were single Common Yellowthroats on the 18th, 20th and 25th. There was an Eastern Towhee on the 3rd (the previous records were for March 30, 2016 and March 3, 2018). There was a Savannah Sparrow on the 26th. Brown-headed Cowbirds were present all month with 225 on the 4th, 120 on the 9th and 45 on the 29th. Finally the House Finches peaked at 11 on the 2nd and eight on the 31st.

Just what will April bring (there were 140 species in April 2018).

Harry Robinson