

## TOM RENICK COUNTY PARK BIRD COUNTS – DECEMBER, 2019

So the year comes to an end I had hoped for five additional species so I had 12; two were in December. The list now stands at 263; during the year I noted 224 species a joint high count with 2017. For the month I saw 121 species the highest count by far. The weather was very mixed during the month which led to the high number of species. I carried out surveys on every day in 2019 this was over 1,624 hours. For the month I spent 159 hours on the 31 surveys. The best days were the 12<sup>th</sup> with 19,817 birds and the Christmas Bird Count on the 27<sup>th</sup> with 61 species. For the count week I added another 12 species making 73 species for the week.

Now to the birds there were single Red-throated Loons on the 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. Unexpectedly there were shearwaters with a Cory's on the 13<sup>th</sup> and a Great on the 27<sup>th</sup>. There was also a Brown Booby on the 17<sup>th</sup>. Northern Gannets peaked at 1,548 on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 1,100 on the 12<sup>th</sup>. There were eight American White Pelicans on the 4<sup>th</sup> with three on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Brown Pelicans peaked at 1,220 on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 1,295 on the 13<sup>th</sup>. There were single Magnificent Frigatebirds on the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> (different birds). There was a Reddish Egret on the 5<sup>th</sup> with a Black-crowned Night-Heron on the 27<sup>th</sup>. There was a Roseate Spoonbill on the 27<sup>th</sup> with a party of seven on the 31<sup>st</sup> - all were adults. Wood Storks peaked at 22 on the 31<sup>st</sup>.

A Muscovy Duck flew north up the river on the 27<sup>th</sup>. There were 15 Gadwall on the 6<sup>th</sup> with six American Wigeon on the 7<sup>th</sup> and seven on the 12<sup>th</sup>. There were four Northern Shoveler on the 2<sup>nd</sup> with a single Northern Pintail on the 10<sup>th</sup>. A flock of 14 Canvasbacks flew to the south on the 10<sup>th</sup>. There were 35 Redheads on the 4<sup>th</sup> with 40 on the 12<sup>th</sup>. There was a Ring-necked Duck on the 8<sup>th</sup> with 30 on the 19<sup>th</sup>. Greater Scaup peaked at 110 on the 19<sup>th</sup> and Lesser Scaup peaked at 410 on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 335 on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Single female/immature Common Eider flew to the south on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. During the month 16 Surf Scoters were seen with five on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. There were two White-winged Scoter on the 6<sup>th</sup> with one on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Compared to last year the Black Scoters were all but absent just 1,768 noted with 650 on the 18<sup>th</sup>. There were single Buffleheads on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> with two on the 19<sup>th</sup>. There was a Common Goldeneye on the 19<sup>th</sup>. There were four Hooded Mergansers on the 2<sup>nd</sup> with singles on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. For just the second sighting an adult male Common Merganser flew to the north on the 14<sup>th</sup>. Red-breasted Mergansers peaked at 84 on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 79 on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Finally for this group there was a Ruddy Duck on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

An adult Swainson's Hawk flew to the south on the 4<sup>th</sup>. There were single Merlins on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. An adult Peregrine Falcon again visited the roof

of the condo next door on the 20<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup>. Two Sandhill Cranes flew to the south on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

There were three American Oystercatchers on the 7<sup>th</sup> with two on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Red Knots peaked at 36 on the 15<sup>th</sup>, 66 on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 37 on the 24<sup>th</sup>. There were 13 Western Sandpipers on the 11<sup>th</sup>. Purple Sandpipers again put in an appearance with one on the 1<sup>st</sup> and two on the 14<sup>th</sup>. During the month 199 Pomarine Jaegers counted with 135 on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Parasitic Jaegers had a secondary role there were 41 seen with five on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. A real rarity was a juvenile light morph Long-tailed Jaeger on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Laughing Gulls peaked at 18,000 on the 12<sup>th</sup>. On the 21<sup>st</sup> there was an adult Franklin's Gull with another in first-winter plumage. The rare gulls continued with an adult Black-headed Gull on the 7<sup>th</sup>. Herring Gulls peaked at 204 on the 12<sup>th</sup>. There was a white first-winter Iceland Gull on the 6<sup>th</sup>. There was a heavy passage of Lesser Black-backed Gulls with 107 for the month and a new high count of 63 on the 13<sup>th</sup> (they seem to like to travel in the warm sector of a front). There was a first-winter Black-legged Kittiwake on the 12<sup>th</sup> with an adult on the 19<sup>th</sup>. Royal Terns peaked at 269 on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 274 on the 21<sup>st</sup>. There was a first-winter Common Tern on the 19<sup>th</sup>. Forster's Terns peaked at 54 on the 27<sup>th</sup>. Now to the first of the new birds a Dovekie this flew to the south on 12<sup>th</sup> (NE wind at 17).

There were single White-winged Doves on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. The other new bird was a Barred Owl that was heard calling on the 27<sup>th</sup>. There was a Ruby-throated Hummingbird on the 13<sup>th</sup>. There was also a Belted Kingfisher on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. For only the second time this year there was a Northern Flicker on the 27<sup>th</sup>. Up to three Eastern Phoebe were seen all month with single Loggerhead Shrikes on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. American Crows were heard on five dates. House Wrens were present all month with three on the 1<sup>st</sup> a high count. There were eight American Robins on the 3<sup>rd</sup> with peak counts of 650 on the 17<sup>th</sup>, 1,090 on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 1,310 on the 30<sup>th</sup>. For Cedar Waxwing there were counts of 120 on the 17<sup>th</sup>, 20 on the 29<sup>th</sup>, 30 on the 30<sup>th</sup> and 85 on the 31<sup>st</sup> (back to 30 on the 1<sup>st</sup>). Brown-headed Cowbirds peaked at 550 on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 420 on the 9<sup>th</sup>, 290 on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 260 on the 31<sup>st</sup>. There were also four House Finches on the 2<sup>nd</sup> with two on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Also of note an adult Virginia Opossum waddled across in front of me on the 13<sup>th</sup> just where did that come from?

Last year I tried for five new species and got 12 dare I try for five again for 2020?

Harry Robinson

