

TOM RENICK COUNTY PARK BIRD COUNTS – FEBRUARY, 2020

A cold month with six mornings below 50 degrees to start while I know that is not cold but...The weather was again very varied which led to a very high species count (there were 106 species this month as against the next best February when 94 species seen in 2019). On the 4th there were 4,598 birds and on the 5th there were 56 species the latter being a very high count for any month. Still there were no additions to the list. So far this year I have recorded 123 species over in February 29 days and 145 hours of searching.

There were single Red-throated Loons on the 5th, 20th and 26th. Northern Gannets peaked at 438 on the 10th. There were four American White Pelicans on the 2nd with three on the 11th and eight on the 27th. To my surprise a sub-adult Great Cormorant flew north along the shore on the 28th the second one this year. On the 29th a Tricolored Heron flew to the north out at sea the first sign of heron migration. There was a Green Heron on the 16th. There were single Black-crowned Night-Herons on the 9th and 23rd. Wood Storks were present all month with a peak count of 33 on the 13th.

There was a single Blue-winged Teal on the 19th with four Canvasbacks flying to the south on the 6th. Greater Scaup peaked at 50 on the 1st and ten on the 6th whilst Lesser Scaup peaked at 145 on the 1st. There were single Surf Scoter on the 7th, 10th and 17th with three on the 22nd. There were four White-winged Scoter on the 9th. However Black Scoters were rare only 37 seen all month. A Long-tailed Duck flew to the north on the 7th whilst four Buffleheads flew to the south on the same day go figure! Finally for this group a male Common Goldeneye flew to the north on the 22nd.

There was a Northern Harrier on the 27th with single Sharp-shinned Hawks on the 4th and 24th (the Coopers are already displaying). There were single Red-tailed Hawks on the 2nd, 22nd and 28th. A male American Kestrel has been present all month. There were single Merlins on the 22nd and 29th and single Peregrine Falcons were seen on the 8th, 9th and 29th.

An American Golden-Plover flew to the north on the 19th it was still in winter plumage. There was a Semipalmated Plover on the 14th with a Lesser Yellowlegs on the 4th. Red Knot peaked at 135 on the 1st and 60 on the 7th. A flock of 12 Dunlin flew to the south on the 27th. Single Pomarine Jaegers were seen on the 6th and 11th. During the month 22 Parasitic Jaegers were counted with five on the 14th. This has been an exceptional year for Bonaparte's Gulls there were 28 on the 4th, 24 on the 16th and 70 on the 22nd. There was a "white" first winter Iceland Gull on the 10th. During the month seven Lesser Black-backed Gulls were seen. Royal Terns kept moving to the north with high counts of 533 on the 9th and 506 on the 16th. Forster's Tern also

moved to the north with 176 on the 1st, 467 on the 2nd, 122 on the 6th and 151 on the 23rd. Black Skimmers were seen most days with 43 on the 1st, 43 on the 9th, 59 on the 22nd and 112 on the 24th.

There was a White-winged Dove on the 13th. There was a Downy Woodpecker on the 14th with single Pileated Woodpeckers on the 8th, 18th, 19th and 24th. This species is always a surprise as there are no areas of woodland large or small. There were single Eastern Phoebe all month with three on the 18th. There was another Florida Scrub-Jay on the 1st. American Crows were present all month. There was a Purple Martin on the 6th with two on the 29th. There was a single Northern Rough-winged Swallow on the 25th. The House Wren was still resident through the month. There was a Ruby-crowned Kinglet on the 11th and two Eastern Bluebirds were seen on the 5th a high count. Only low numbers of American Robins were seen this year with a high count of 445 on the 4th. There was a Gray Catbird on the 27^t and a Brown Thrasher was seen on the 18th and 26th. Cedar Waxwings have been common there were 670 on the 4th, 300 on the 18th, 495 on the 25th, 620 on the 27th and a very high 1,380 flying to the south on the 28th (the high count is actually that of 1,460 on January 12, 2018). There was a Louisiana Waterthrush on the 27th (with the Gray Catbird) after the passage of a front. There was a Savannah Sparrow present to at least the 12th. Brown-headed Cowbirds peaked at 90 on the 3rd, 260 on the 25th and 165 on the 27th. House Finches were seen regularly with five on the 11th and four on the 19th. It was a good month for American Goldfinch with 29 on the 14th, 45 on the 23rd and 45 again on the 27th. Isn't it time for a new bird for the park?

For the record a Right Whale swam to the south on the 18th.

Harry Robinson