

## TOM RENICK COUNTY PARK BIRD COUNTS – APRIL, 2020

As you will know the parks were all closed (from the 3<sup>rd</sup>) but I had already spoken to Bill Bramer of the Ormondy Condominiums and he had spoken to the condo president Rick Verstay and he gave me permission to sea watch from their parking lot that abutted the park. There is no shelter from the sun or the rain so on dry days I limited the sea watching to the first two hours of the day. I am very grateful to both gentlemen for their assistance. At the end of the two hours of from first light if it rained I watched from my apartment as I had a wide view towards the Halifax River. This all meant that with minor variations the survey continued uninterrupted.

I conducted 30 surveys over 150 hours and saw 129 species this is the second highest April count as I had 140 species in April, 2018. At last there were additions to the list two in fact so read on. The total list now stands at 265 with 173 species for 2020. The best day was the 24<sup>th</sup> when 1,506 birds seen and 64 species were located. This is a very high count as the best day to date was on April 9, 2018 when 65 species seen so very close...

There were single Red-throated Loons on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> and the last Common Loon was also seen on the 13<sup>th</sup>. There were two immature Brown Boobies on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Northern Gannets continued to be seen all month if in low numbers. Double-crested Cormorants flew to the north all month with a high count of 555 on the 6<sup>th</sup>. Two Magnificent Frigatebirds flew to the south along the Halifax River on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Herons numbers were low with single Reddish Egrets on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. There was a Green Heron on the 18<sup>th</sup> with a Black-crowned Night-Heron on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Up to two Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were seen all month. A total of 104 Glossy Ibis were seen from the 20<sup>th</sup> with 30 on the 21<sup>st</sup>. There were nine Roseate Spoonbills on the 18<sup>th</sup> with one on the 19<sup>th</sup>. There were also 12 on the 26<sup>th</sup> with seven on the 30<sup>th</sup>.

Only limited numbers of ducks seen this month there were two American Wigeon on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Blue-winged Teals were seen to the 24<sup>th</sup>. There was a Northern Shoveler on the 6<sup>th</sup> with two Northern Pintail on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. There were 65 Green-winged Teal on the 3<sup>rd</sup> with five on the 4<sup>th</sup>. There was a flock of 20 Ring-necked Ducks on the 6<sup>th</sup>. Red-breasted Mergansers were seen to the 16<sup>th</sup> with a late individual on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

Swallow-tailed Kites were seen on nine dates from the 6<sup>th</sup>, 14 birds in all. There was a Mississippi Kite on the 27<sup>th</sup>. Bald Eagles were seen all month just one to two a day. There were single Northern Harriers on the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. Sharp-shinned Hawks were seen on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> with three on the 15<sup>th</sup>. I would have expected these species to be seen at the same time. There were four Red-shouldered Hawks on

the 26<sup>th</sup> this is a joint high count. A dark morph Short-tailed Hawk was seen on the 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. There were single Red-tailed Hawks on the 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> this is always a rarity. The wintering American Kestrel was seen to the 5<sup>th</sup>. For the first time there was a visible spring passage there were eight on the 8<sup>th</sup>, three on the 9<sup>th</sup>, three on the 10<sup>th</sup> and two on the 15<sup>th</sup>. The count of eight is a new high count for the park (no more than two a day seen previously). Merlins moved through all month 33 in all. There were two Peregrine Falcons on the 24<sup>th</sup> with one on the 30<sup>th</sup>.

There were single Semipalmated Plovers on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. There was a Black-necked Stilt on the 8<sup>th</sup>. On the 26<sup>th</sup> a flock of 12 Greater Yellowlegs flew to the north. There were two Lesser Yellowlegs on the 3<sup>rd</sup> with another on the 16<sup>th</sup>. There were single Solitary Sandpipers on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. Spotted Sandpipers were more frequent as there were three on the 21<sup>st</sup> with singles on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. There were also eight on the 27<sup>th</sup> a new high count for the park. Whimbrel were very scarce this year only singles seen on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. Semipalmated Sandpipers were seen from the 20<sup>th</sup> when five noted. There were seven on the 22<sup>nd</sup> with eight on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and six on the 25<sup>th</sup>. On the 20<sup>th</sup> there were also three Western Sandpipers and four Least Sandpipers. A Purple Sandpiper flew to the north on the 16<sup>th</sup>. Finally for this group there were single Short-billed Dowitchers on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>.

There was a Bonaparte's Gull on the 6<sup>th</sup>. The last Ring-billed Gull was seen on the 27<sup>th</sup> and the last Herring Gull was seen on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Both species may be seen in early May. A total of eight Lesser Black-backed Gulls were seen through to the 20<sup>th</sup>. The last Great Black-backed Gull was on the 25<sup>th</sup>. There were more Gull-billed Terns than normal as one seen on the 2<sup>nd</sup> with two on the 5<sup>th</sup>, then singles seen on the 6<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. There were two Roseate Terns on the 17<sup>th</sup>. Common Terns were seen from the 16<sup>th</sup> with six on the 17<sup>th</sup>. Forster's Terns were seen to the 14<sup>th</sup> with a late individual on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Least Terns peaked at 17 on the 15<sup>th</sup> the main passage had started on March 28.

There were single White-winged Doves on the 15<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. Single Belted Kingfishers flew to the north out at sea on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. Unexpectedly a Red-headed Woodpecker flew to the south on the 3<sup>rd</sup> (previously there had been one on April 15, 2018). There were five Red-bellied Woodpeckers on the 29<sup>th</sup> a joint high count, there were also five on March 27, 2020. There was a Downy Woodpecker on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Pileated Woodpeckers were seen on six dates as were Great Crested Flycatchers. A total of 47 Eastern Kingbirds were seen from the 2<sup>nd</sup> with 24 on the 20<sup>th</sup>. A Loggerhead Shrike was present all month. Up to three American Crows were seen to the 26<sup>th</sup> but not since. Tree Swallows were seen to the 14<sup>th</sup>. There were single Northern Rough-winged Swallows on the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. Bank Swallows

were seen on nine dates from the 6<sup>th</sup> with seven on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Cliff Swallows are always rare there were singles the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>.

The House Wren that had wintered was last seen on March 27 so the singles seen on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> represents a migrant. There was a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher on the 7<sup>th</sup>. There were single Gray Catbirds on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> with two on the 24<sup>th</sup>; the count of two is a high count for the park. A pair of Brown Thrashers raised one young locally. Cedar Waxwings were seen to the 18<sup>th</sup> with later six on the 25<sup>th</sup>. The 24<sup>th</sup> was warbler day there were single Northern Parula, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Palm Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart and Northern Waterthrush. Although I could not use the telescope from the park I could visit it...The wintering Palm Warbler was seen to the 4<sup>th</sup>. There was also an American Redstart on the 10<sup>th</sup>. So we come to the first of the new species (had you forgotten?) there was a Prothonotary Warbler on the 12<sup>th</sup>. The other new species follows as there was a Swamp Sparrow on the 10<sup>th</sup>. Back to the 24<sup>th</sup> there was a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak on this date. There was a Blue Grosbeak on the 8<sup>th</sup>. There was an Indigo Bunting on the 19<sup>th</sup> with four on the 24<sup>th</sup> a new high count. With the Indigo Buntings there was a female plumaged Painted Bunting. Bobolinks were seen regularly with 262 being counted during the month the high count was that of 150 on the 26<sup>th</sup> - a new high count for the park. Brown-headed Cowbirds were seen to the 8<sup>th</sup> with a late individual on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Finally there were two pairs of House Finches in the area.

May is always a lesser month still I will keep looking.

Harry Robinson