

TOM RENICK COUNTY PARK – BIRD COUNTS AUGUST, 2020

Another exceptional month it started with a tropical storm which is always a good thing and ended with a system that crossed the area from Texas to the Atlantic. There was even an addition to the list which had nothing to do with either event. So far this year there have been 209 species which puts this year some two months ahead of the other years. In all there have now been 268 species with five additions this year. For the month there were 113 species the next best August was in 2019 when 103 species seen. The survey this month covered 31 days and 155 hours. The best days were the 19th with 49 species and the 21st with 1110 birds.

Thanks to the tropical storm we start with shearwaters there was a Cory's Shearwater on the 2nd with two Great Shearwaters on the 2nd and four on the 3rd. There were five Audubon Shearwaters on the 2nd with singles on the 3rd and 4th. Previously only singles seen so the count of five is very exceptional. These are the first records of shearwaters for August. There was a first-summer Masked Booby on the 27th with single Brown Booby on the 4th and 27th on the 27th the two boobies were travelling south together! A Magnificent Frigatebird glided to the south along the Halifax River on the 25th.

There was a Reddish Egret on the 3rd. There was a Green Heron on the 18th with four on the 31st this is a joint high count (there were four on October 17, 2017). There was a Black-crowned Night-Heron on the 4th. The Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were seen to the 23rd. Glossy Ibis were seen occasionally with 11 on the 6th, ten on the 8th and eight on the 16th. There were four Roseate Spoonbills on the 4th with two on the 10th.

Black Vultures peaked at 102 on the 10th. Blue-winged Teal were seen from the 12th with 80 on the 30th and 170 on the 31st. There was a Black Scoter on the 7th. The last Swallow-tailed Kites (two) were seen on the 1st. There was an adult Bald Eagle in the area all month. There was a light morph Short-tailed Hawk on the 20th with a dark morph on the 28th. There were single Red-tailed Hawks on the 15th and 23rd. This brings us to the addition to the list a Crested Caracara flew to the north along the river but on the eastern side on the 19th a most unexpected sighting. Also on the 19th an American Kestrel flew to the south this is one of the earliest fall dates for Florida. There was a peregrine Falcon on the 6th.

For the shorebirds there were single American Golden-Plovers on the 1st, 14th and 23rd. There were two American Oystercatchers on the 17th. Black-necked Stilts continued to fly to the south to the 17th with higher counts of 36 on the 6th, 25 on the 9th, 56 on the 11th and 49 on the 12th. The count of 56 is the highest count for the park. There was an American Avocet on the 19th. There were two Greater Yellowlegs on the 19th with 12 on the 21st. Lesser Yellowlegs were seen on five dates from the 18th to the 31st with six on the 24th. There was a Solitary Sandpiper

on the 16th. Spotted Sandpipers were uncommon this year there were singles on the 21st, 22nd and 29th. There was a Marble Godwit on the 2nd with three on the 3rd, five on the 4th, two on the 13th, one on the 18th and six on the 31st. Semipalmated Sandpipers were seen regularly with higher counts of 42 on the 19th, 65 on the 23rd, 78 on the 24th and 18 on the 28th. There were single Western Sandpipers on the 2nd and 28th. There were one to five Least Sandpipers all month with 21 on the 24th. There were three White-rumped Sandpipers on the 13th with one on the 30th. There were five Pectoral Sandpipers on the 14th with six on the 22nd then singles seen on the 24th and 26th. There was a Stilt Sandpiper on the 11th with five on the 21st, then one seen on the 31st. Short-billed Dowitchers were seen through to the 28th with higher counts of 13 on the 14th, 79 on the 15th, 15 on the 19th and 35 on the 20th. On the 31st with single Lesser Yellowlegs and a Stilt Sandpiper a Wilson's Phalarope flew to the south – this is only the second record for the park. Finally for this group there was a Red-necked Phalarope on the 2nd.

There were single Ring-billed Gulls on the 28th and Herring Gull on the 30th both were exceptionally early. There were single Caspian Terns on the 2nd and 15th. The higher counts for the Royal Tern were 127 on the 1st and 102 on the 8th. Common Terns were seen regularly all month with higher counts of 65 on the 20th, 194 on the 28th and 43 on the 31st. There were four Arctic Terns on the 2nd with two on the 21st. There was a Forster's Tern on the 14th with three on the 31st. Least Terns were seen to the 29th with 41 on the 2nd. Back to the tropical storm there were 11 Bridled Terns on the 2nd with 13 on the 3rd the latter is the highest count for the park. There were three Sooty Terns on the 2nd with 28 on the 3rd. Black Terns were present all month with higher counts of 168 on the 3rd, 32 on the 19th, 124 on the 28th and 55 on the 30th. Along with the Bridled and Sooty Terns there were Brown Noddy there was one on the 2nd with five on the 3rd.

A Chuck-will's-widow was in residence through to the 21st across A1A it seemed to choose a different tree to roost in each day. There were single Belted Kingfishers over the sea on the 12th, the 16th, the 22nd and the 31st. There was a Downy Woodpecker on the 21st. There were four Pileated Woodpeckers on the 19th with one on the 21st. Previously I had only seen singles with two once. There were single Eastern Kingbirds on the 13th and 17th with three on the 31st. Again there were American Crows all month with seven on the 16th this is another new high count. There were four Purple Martins on the 13th with singles on the 14th and 23rd. There was a Tree Swallow on the 14th. There was a Northern Rough-winged Swallow on the 14th. Bank Swallows were seen from the 11th with 16 on the 13th, eight on the 16th and five on the 31st. Cliff Swallows were seen from the 5th with four on the 13th, 16 on the 16th and a staggering 161 on the 31st (there were even more on September 1st a count of 224). Normally they must fly over very high up but with all the storms they were flying low. There were no large counts of Barn Swallows the highest was that of 385 on the 16th. A rarity was a Tufted Titmouse on the 28th. Totally out of season was a House Wren on the 4th and 5th.

There were a few warblers: there was a Yellow Warbler on the 15th, a Yellow-throated Warbler on the 20th, a Prairie Warbler on the 13th and two American Redstarts on the 27th. There was a Brown-headed Cowbird on the 6th. House Finches were scarce there were two on the 4th, six on the 9th and singles on the 6th and 20th.

A very unexpected visitor was a Leatherback Sea Turtle on the 7th.

September has started with a bang not only the Cliff Swallows, a Cave Swallow but 417 Anhingas flying to the south.

Harry Robinson