

TOM RENICK COUNTY PARK BIRD COUNTS – OCTOBER, 2020

A special month with 140 species and eight additions (I had hoped for five for the whole year). The count of 140 is a joint high count as there were also 140 in April, 2018. There were surveys on all 31 days over 208 hours. The best days were the 12th with 52 species and the 14th with 3,310 birds. For the year 234 species have now been recorded this is already the highest annual count. The list now stands at 277.

A Common Loon flew to the north on the 22nd. From the 19th this was a Shearwater spectacle. Cory's Shearwaters were seen from the 21st to the 26th with singles on four dates and two on the 26th and five on the 22nd. Scopoli's Shearwaters were harder to separate out but singles were seen on seven dates from the 21st to the 28th. The last few sightings were very close just beyond the breakers. There was a Great Shearwater on the 19th and a Manx Shearwater on the 21st. Also on the 21st a Leach's Storm-Petrel flew to the south. Northern Gannets were seen from the 18th and numbers had reached 113 on the 31st. American White Pelicans were seen occasionally with three on the 3rd, 52 on the 9th, five on the 20th, one on the 22nd and two on the 27th. Double-crested Cormorants moved to the south all month with 320 on the 4th and 128 on the 31st.

Heron were migrating with peak counts of 113 Great Blue Herons on the 4th, 41 Great Egrets on the 1st, 120 Snowy Egrets on the 14th and 89 Little Blue Herons on the 14th with 39 Tricolored Herons on the same date. Single Reddish Egrets were seen on the 18th and the 24th. Cattle Egrets also flew to the south with 173 on the 1st (a new high count), 156 on the 3rd and 154 on the 14th. There was a Green Heron on the 4th with single Black-crowned Night-Herons on the 8th and 12th. Glossy Ibis had peak counts of 22 on the 16th and 63 on the 18th the latter is a new high count. Roseate Spoonbills were seen on three dates with 30 on the 3rd, seven on the 5th and 11 on the 27th. Black Vultures peaked at 425 on the 16th this is another new high count. Turkey Vultures only peaked at 295 on the 30th.

Now to the ducks there were two Gadwall on the 30th with one on the 31st. There were five American Wigeon also on the 31st. Blue-winged Teal peaked at 290 on the 2nd and 425 on the 16th. Northern Shovelers were seen on seven dates from the 4th 32 in all; the highest count was that of seven on the 4th. There were two Northern Pintail on the 18th with 42 on the 26th and one on the 31st. Green-winged Teal were seen from the 12th with 157 on the 16th and 260 on the 31st. There were 34 Redheads on the 31st the 31st is the date for ducks so far this fall. Ring-necked Ducks were seen from the 26th with 27 on the 30th and 34 on the 31st. Lesser Scaup were seen from the 22nd with 125 on the 31st. A single Black Scoter was seen on the 27th with six on the 31st.

Bald Eagles present all month with a new high count of eight on the 29th. Northern Harriers were seen on seven dates from the 1st to the 25th with two on the 12th and three on the 25th. Sharp-shinned Hawks were seen on nine dates with counts of two on the 13th and the 16th. There were single Broad-winged Hawks on the 9th and 16th. There was a juvenile light morph Swainson's Hawk on the 23rd this is always a major rarity. Red-tailed Hawks seen regularly with five on the 23rd this is another high count. For a second record for the park there was an adult Golden Eagle on the 26th it was heading to the north. The previous sighting was also of an adult on October 30, 2017. American Kestrels were seen from the 1st with three on the 18th, two on the 27th and two on the 28th. During the month 57 Merlins counted with peak counts of eight on the 11th and ten on the 12th the latter is another new high count. In contrast 208 Peregrine Falcons were seen during the month with peak counts of 26 on the 4th, 44 on the 5th and 30 on the 18th.

There were 35 Black-bellied Plovers on the 18th a new high count. There were two Semipalmated Plovers on the 3rd. American Oystercatchers were seen on four dates with eight on the 3rd (a new high count), singles on the 15th and 25th with five on the 27th. There were two Greater Yellowlegs on the 22nd. Willets have been migrating north all month with 245 on the 24th. Marbled Godwits were seen on five dates with singles on the 16th and 17th then two seen on the 24th with singles again on the 25th and 29th. The only Red Knots were 15 on the 19th. Sanderlings peaked at 110 on the 18th and again on the 26th. There were 35 Western Sandpipers on the 3rd. Another very uncommon migrant is the Purple Sandpiper there were three on the 18th with two on the 28th (the latter were flying to the north with a flock of ten Willets!). There was a Dunlin on the 3rd with nine on the 31st. Long-billed Dowitchers were seen on four dates with 12 on the 6th, 35 on the 13th, four on the 25th and seven on the 27th. Finally for this group two Wilson's Snipe flew to the north on the 4th.

Jaegers have been very scarce this fall with single Pomarine Jaegers on the 19th and 20th. Parasitic Jaegers were seen on seven dates with two on the 18th and two on the 22nd. Laughing Gulls have been gradually increasing with 1,395 on the 31st. There was a Ring-billed Gull on the 6th. Herring Gulls were seen all month with a peak count of 23 on the 31st. There were single Lesser Black-backed Gulls on the 4th, 11th and 19th. From the 20th to the 31st a total of 16 were seen with seven on the 22nd. Another very special species was a Sabine's Gull an adult flew to the south on the 19th. Caspian Terns peaked at eight on the 15th. Royal Terns moved to the south all month with 408 on the 16th, 385 on the 17th, 715 on the 20th, 1,270 on the 21st and 580 on the 22nd. There were 20 Common Terns on the 2nd with 104 on the 13th and 2,420 on the 14th (this is yet another new high count). Only 39 seen on the 15th with 14 on the 18th the last was seen on the 24th. Forster's Terns were scarce with one on the 12th and two on the 21st. Black Skimmers were seen on five dates with ten on the 9th and nine on the 15th.

There was a White-winged Dove on the 12th. There was an Eastern Screech-Owl on the 24th. A Ruby-throated Hummingbird was seen on the 9th. There was a Belted Kingfisher on the 29th with a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker on the 24th. There were single Downy Woodpeckers on the 17th and 30th with a Pileated Woodpecker on the 24th/25th. There was an Eastern Phoebe from the 14th to the 17th with others on the 20th and 25th. There was a Loggerhead Shrike on the 2nd. A rarer visitor was a Florida Scrub-Jay on the 23rd second record this year. American Crows present all month with three on the 30th. Tree Swallows were seen from the 2nd but in very low numbers. There was a Northern Rough-winged Swallow on the 6th with two Cliff Swallows on the 3rd. Barn Swallows peaked at 830 on the 3rd and the last were 17 on the 29th. There were single House Wrens on the 12th, 25th and 26th. There were single Blue-gray Gnatcatchers on the 16th and the 21st. Finally for this group there was an Eastern Bluebird on the 12th.

For the first time at the park I have been noting the various thrushes that call as they migrate south (this added four species to the park list). There was a Veery on the 1st (new species). Gray-cheeked Thrushes were heard on six nights from the 8th to the 31st. There were three on the 8th with ten on the 27th (a high count). A major rarity was a Bicknell's Thrush calling by A1A on the 27th. Swainson's Thrushes were recorded on three dates with singles on the 2nd and 7th with four on the 8th (another new species and the count of four is the high count). Hermit Thrushes noted from the 17th to the 27th with singles on the 17th and 21st with two on the 26th and three on the 27th another high count. This was also a new species. Taking them out of order but here because they were heard flying over there was a Dickcissel on the 1st (new species) with Bobolinks on three dates. There were two on the 7th and 8th with one on the 13th.

There was a Brown Thrasher on the 2nd. The next new bird was an Orange-crowned Warbler on the 26th. There were two Northern Parula on the 4th with one on the 5th. There was a Yellow Warbler on the 4th and the 5th. There were single Yellow-rumped Warblers on the 14th and the 30th. There were also single Yellow-throated Warblers on the 8th and the 17th. A Pine Warbler was seen on the 6th and 9th and there was a Prairie Warbler on the 11th. There were three American Redstarts on the 4th with singles on the 5th and the 11th. There were two Common Yellowthroats on the 4th with one from the 12th to the 14th and another from the 19th to the 20th. The next new bird was a Wilson's Warbler on the 7th.

There was a Summer Tanager on the 15th with a Scarlet Tanager on the 9th the latter is another new species for the park. There were single Savannah Sparrows on the 12th and 25th. There was a Rose-breasted Grosbeak on the 13th with two Blue Grosbeaks on the 15th that is a new high count. There was also an Indigo Bunting on the 10th. There were two male Baltimore Orioles on the 5th. House Finches were scarce there were three on the 5th and four on the 26th. Just what will November bring?

Harry Robinson