

TOM RENICK COUNTY PARK BIRD COUNTS – JANUARY, 2021

In January 2020 I recorded 106 species (the highest January count to that point) and this year the total has jumped to 121 it seems that the exceptional events go on and on. There were two additions this month bringing the total to 286. I carried out 31 surveys over 187 hours and the best day was the 26th when 62 species and 24,640 birds were seen.

Single Red-throated Loons were seen on the 5th, 21st, 22nd and 29th with three on the 30th. On the 29th a Pacific Loon flew to the north just out beyond the breakers this is a new species for the park. Common Loons were seen on 16 dates with four on the 29th and five on the 30th. There was an immature Masked Booby on the 3rd. Northern Gannets peaked at 753 on the 22nd and 402 on the 31st. American White Pelicans were seen on ten dates with a high count of 23 on the 31st. Brown Pelicans peaked at 284 on the 3rd and 363 on the 22nd.

There was a Reddish Egret on the 12th and single Green Herons were seen on the 8th and 30th. There was a Black-crowned Night-Heron on the 16th. There were single Glossy Ibis on the 5th, 12th and 16th. Roseate Spoonbills were seen on seven dates with 24 on the 9th, seven on the 14th and eight on the 25th. Wood Storks were present all month with peak counts of 119 on the 1st and 127 on the 6th.

Exceptionally there were eight Blue-winged Teal on the 28th with more normally three Canvasbacks on the 4th. There were 70 Redheads on the 2nd with ten on the 3rd, two on the 4th and one on the 24th. There was a Ring-necked Duck on the 24th. Only low numbers of scaup were seen there were 20 Greater Scaup on the 1st with 42 on the 26th. Lesser Scaup were a bit better with 190 on the 3rd and 160 on the 22nd. Surf Scoters were seen on seven dates with four on the 14th and 16th. There were three White-winged Scoter on the 3rd with one on the 23rd. Black Scoters were in very low numbers the highest count was that of 99 on the 6th. There were seven Buffleheads on the 3rd with one on the 8th and seven again on the 12th. There was a Hooded Merganser on the 11th. Red-breasted Mergansers only peaked at 19 on the 3rd.

There was a Northern Harrier on the 5th. Sharp-shinned Hawks were seen on nine dates with two on the 4th and 22nd. Red-tailed Hawks were seen on 13 dates with two on the 18th and the 28th. The male American Kestrel was present all month with two on the 4th. Merlins were seen on six dates there were singles on the 4th, 9th, 15th, 19th, 21st and 31st. Peregrine Falcons were seen on three dates there were singles on the 5th, 11th and 27th.

There was a Wilson's Plover on the 3rd and 11th this is always a rarity. Willets peaked at 46 on the 3rd. Red Knot peaked at 61 on the 10th and Sanderling peaked at 114 on the 28th. There were two Western Sandpipers on the 8th. There were ten Dunlin on the 9th with 30 on the 13th and one on the 15th. Three Wilson's Snipe flew to the north on the 8th.

A total of 23 Pomarine Jaegers were seen during the month with seven on the 2nd. In contrast 132 Parasitic Jaegers were seen with 13 on the 22nd and 21 on the 28th. Laughing Gulls peaked at 6,550 on the 17th. Bonaparte's Gulls were seen on 17 dates with 12 on the 14th, 13 on the 22nd and 13 again on the 29th. Herring Gulls peaked at 242 on the 15th. There were single Lesser Black-backed Gulls on the 3rd, 12th and 25th with two on the 31st. There was a first-winter Glaucous Gull on the 22nd. Royal Terns peaked at 175 on the 6th and on that date there were also 44 Sandwich Terns. Forster's Terns peaked at 515 on the 13th. Black Skimmers were seen on nearly every day with high counts of 48 on the 10th, 49 on the 23rd and 56 on the 24th. Finally for this group a major rarity a Thick-billed Murre was sitting on the sea on the 3rd unfortunately it drifted out to the north-east.

There was a White-winged Dove on the 8th and up to three Common Ground-Doves were present all month. There was an Eastern Screech-Owl on the 14th and Great Horned Owls were heard on the 3rd, 18th and 29th. There were single Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers on the 15th and 27th. Single Downy Woodpeckers were seen on five dates. There were single Northern Flickers on the 26th and 31st this is a real rarity. Single Pileated Woodpeckers were seen on four dates with two on the 7th. There were one to two Eastern Phoebes in the area all month. There was a Loggerhead Shrike on the 30th. Up to three American Crows seen all month with five on the 5th. There was a Purple Martin on the 17th. Tree Swallows were rare the best count was that of 18 on the 2nd.

There was a House Wren on the 9th. There were single Blue-gray Gnatcatchers on the 26th and 30th with single Ruby-crowned Kinglets on the 25th, 26th and 30th. There were two Eastern Bluebirds on the 7th with a Hermit Thrush on the 6th. It has been robin month there were counts of over 3,000 a day on 14 days with high counts of 13,650 on the 27th and 23,270 on the 26th both these counts are higher than the previous high count. There were single Gray Catbirds on the 25th and 30th with two on the 26th a joint high count. European Starlings peaked at 730 on the 8th. There was also a flock of Four American Pipits on the 26th. Good numbers of Cedar Waxwings seen with 405 on the 8th, 675 on the 9th and 405 again on the 10th. There was an Orange-crowned Warbler on the 26th. Yellow-rumped Warblers moved south ahead of two cold fronts there were 383 on the 25th and 81 on the 31st. There were single Yellow-throated Warblers on the 10th and 13th and daily from the 27th to the 31st. There was a Prairie Warbler on the 25th and 26th and there were single Common Yellowthroats on the 4th and the 23rd.

There were single Savannah Sparrows on the 6th and 20th. Northern Cardinals reached a new peak count of nine on the 27th. Now to the second new species there was an adult male Yellow-headed Blackbird on the 11th. Nearly as rare was a male Shiny Cowbird on the 27th. Brown-headed Cowbirds peaked at 950 on the 9th this is a new high count for the park. There was a male Baltimore Oriole on the 16th. There were two Purple Finches (male and female) on

the 25th second record for the park. There were one to three House Finches on 14 dates with a count of five on the 21st. American Goldfinches had high counts of 27 on the 10th and 42 on the 15th.

From this month on calmer days I have started to check the trees at the western end of the loop. I have always been able to identify the larger birds but not the small passerines. This now completes the picture.

Harry Robinson