

TOM RENICK COUNTY PARK BIRD COUNTS – DECEMBER, 2021

A year comes to an end it was another very good year with 19 additions to the list which now totals 303 species. This year a total of 270 species located of these 126 were found this month. This is a new high count there were 123 species in December, 2020. 31 surveys were conducted in December over 175 hours. In all there have been 1,980 surveys over 10,217 hours. The best days this month were the 23rd when 17,240 birds seen and the 24th when 63 species located.

Now to the birds single Red-throated Loons were seen on eight dates. Common Loons were seen on 14 dates with three on the 10th, 18th and 21st with four on the 23rd. There was a Horned Grebe on the 14th. For a second record for the park there was a Red-necked Grebe on the 5th. Exceptionally on the 16th there were two shearwaters a Manx flew to the south whilst a Scopoli's Shearwater wandered back and forth for 30 minutes! Northern Gannets were present all month with 1,021 on the 9th and 2,713 on the 10th. American White Pelicans (only over the river) were seen on 12 dates with 18 on the 12th and 18 again on the 15th. Brown Pelicans peaked at 544 on the 10th. Double-crested Cormorants peaked at 416 on the 6th.

There was a Reddish Egret on the 8th with a Green Heron on the 2nd. There was also a Black-crowned Night-Heron on the 26th. Roseate Spoonbills were seen on six dates with ten on the 22nd. Wood Storks were present all month with 26 on the 2nd and 30 on the 28th. The vulture high counts for the month were 103 Black on the 8th and 500 Turkeys on the 6th.

There was a Muscovy Duck on the 23rd with a Wood Duck on the 5th. There were ten Gadwall on the 4th with three American Wigeon on the 11th. There were three Northern Shoveler on the 8th with one on the 11th. There was a Northern Pintail on the 5th with ten on the 9th. Green-winged Teal were seen on nine dates with 20 on the 2nd and the 4th. There were six Canvasbacks on the 4th with 12 on the 5th, 16 on the 11th and ten on the 23rd. Redheads were seen on eight dates with 59 on the 5th and 50 on the 11th. There were 12 Ring-necked Ducks on the 9th with four on the 26th. Most of the fresh water ducks were seen during the first 11 days of the month. Greater Scaup were seen flying to the south all month with high counts of 870 on the 11th and 15,800 on the 23rd the latter is a new high count for the park. Lesser Scaup were seen all month but in much lower numbers there were 140 on the 11th and 245 on the 23rd. Surf Scoters were seen on six dates with three on the 1st and three again on the 22nd. There were single White-winged Scoter on the 3rd and the 21st. Black Scoter are scarce this year the high count was that of 300 on the 22nd. There were single Long-tailed Ducks on the 15th and 22nd this is always a major rarity. Buffleheads were seen on 5 dates to the 11th with six on the 9th. Later there were two on the 23rd and one on the 24th. Another rarity was a Common Goldeneye on the 5th. There was a Hooded Merganser on the 1st with two on the 5th and two again on the

22nd. Red-breasted Mergansers were only seen in low numbers there were 18 on the 4th, 18 on the 14th and 20 on the 20th.

There were single Northern Harriers on the 2nd, the 4th and the 19th. There were singles Sharp-shinned Hawks on the 8th and 26th. There was an immature Broad-winged Hawk on the 26th. There were single Red-tailed Hawks on the 2nd, 18th, 24th and 27th with two on the 26th. The male American Kestrel was only seen on the 1st, 4th, 8th and 29th. There was a Peregrine Falcon on the 5th (no Merlins seen).

There were two American Oystercatchers on the 5th. There were two Red Knot on the 5th with two on the 12th, one on the 21st and ten on the 26th. There was a flock of six Long-billed Dowitchers on the 10th. In all 42 Pomarine Jaegers seen during the month with 16 on the 20th. There were also 41 Parasitic Jaegers seen during the month with 12 on the 20th. Laughing Gulls peaked at 6,700 on the 20th. There was a first-winter Franklin's Gull on the 22nd. Another major rarity was an adult Black-headed Gull that flew to the north on the 22nd. There were single Bonaparte's Gulls on the 1st and the 27th. Herring Gulls peaked at 210 on the 11th and 780 on the 27th. A total of 77 Lesser Black-backed Gulls seen during the month with 26 on the 19th. Royal Terns peaked at 61 on the 8th and 81 on the 23rd. Sandwich Terns peaked at 45 on the 14th and 86 on the 25th. A total of 51 Black Skimmers seen during the month with 20 on the 18th.

There was a White-winged Dove on the 28th. There were single Great Horned Owls on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th with a later individual on the 25th. There were single Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers on the 3rd, 5th, 7th and 27th. Downy Woodpeckers were seen on 13 dates just 1 – 2 a day. There was a Northern Flicker on the 3rd this is always a rarity. Single Pileated Woodpeckers were seen on 11 dates. Eastern Phoebe seen all month with five on the 1st and three on the 5th and 17th. Single Loggerhead Shrikes seen all month with two on the 12th and 30th. There was a White-eyed Vireo on the 5th with single Blue-headed Vireos on the 26th and 31st. There was a Florida Scrub-Jay on the 27th the second sighting this year. Up to two American Crows were seen daily. Tree Swallows were scarce as one seen on the 3rd with three on the 6th, 13 on the 8th and two on the 17th.

There were single Tufted Titmouse on the 14th and 19th. Up to two House Wrens seen daily with three on the 26th. Single Blue-gray Gnatcatchers seen during the month with two on the 24th and the 26th. Single Ruby-crowned Kinglets were seen on the 1st, 5th, 7th, 12th and 24th. American Robins were all but absent with 180 on the 4th, one on the 27th and ten on the 31st. There was a Gray Catbird from the 3rd to the 7th with perhaps another from the 23rd to the 31st (there were two on the 26th). European Starlings peaked at 650 on the 12th and 1,450 on the 19th the latter is a new high count for the park. There was a lonely Cedar Waxwing on the 6th. Apart from Yellow-rumped, Palm and Common Yellowthroats the warbler have gone. Exceptionally there was a Northern Parula on the 24th. There were single Yellow-throated

Warblers on the 1st and the 24th. There was also a Northern Waterthrush on the 4th. There was an Eastern Towhee on the 6th with a Savannah Sparrow on the 31st. Common Grackles peaked at 35 on the 12th. Boat-tailed Grackles peaked at 62 on the 12th and 68 on the 26th. Brown-headed Cowbirds peaked at 420 on the 16th and 430 on the 28th. Up to three House Finches seen daily. Finally, there were three American Goldfinches on the 6th with one on the 29th.

What will 2022 bring?

Harry Robinson