

TOM RENICK COUNTY PARK BIRD COUNTS – DECEMBER, 2024

Another year is now complete (nine in all). During this month there were 31 surveys over 176 hours; a total of 128 species located another record. There were two additions to the list. As time goes on the number of additions each year should be going down not so here for this year there were 16 additions. The best days were the 9th with 62 species and the 29th with 4,874 birds.

This survey started on January 1, 2016 and since then there have been 3,076 surveys over 16,627 hours this led to a total of 342 species being located. Now to this month

Single Red-throated Loons were seen on the 3rd, 6th, 7th, 20th and 21st. Common Loons were seen on 12 days with six on the 1st with four on the 7th and four again on the 21st. There were two Horned Grebes on the 7th with one on the 30th. There was an Eared Grebe on the 6th. There were two Manx Shearwaters on the 14th with one on the 29th. Northern Gannets peaked at 1,110 on the 14th. There was one American White Pelican on the 6th with four on the 9th, eight on the 11th, two on the 19th, 21 on the 21st and two on the 30th. Brown Pelicans peaked at 295 on the 26th. Double-crested Cormorants peaked at 173 on the 14th.

There was a Reddish Egret on the 11th. White Ibis peaked at 80 on the 23rd. There were two Glossy Ibis on the 20th with three Roseate Spoonbills on the 19th. Wood Storks were seen on 14 days with a peak count of 22 on the 11th. For the vultures there were 15 Black on the 9th and 240 Turkey also on the 9th.

There were three Gadwall on the 3rd. There was a Mottled Duck on the 21st with six Blue-winged Teal on the 4th. There were 25 Green-winged Teal on the 7th with one on the 21st. There were three Canvasback on the 1st. Redheads were seen on nine days with 20 on the 27th. There were four Ring-necked Ducks on the 6th. Greater Scaup peaked at 690 on the 6th. Lesser Scaup peaked at 1,200 (on the river) on the 29th and the 31st. A party of seven Common Eider flew to the south on the 7th one was an immature male. I have never heard of such a flock in Florida. Surf Scoter were seen on 17 days with 22 on the 7th. There were two White-winged Scoter on the 5th with six on the 14th, four on the 25th and one on the 28th. Black Scoters peaked at 129 on the 7th (gone are the days when rafts of say 2,000 could be seen offshore). There was a Bufflehead on the 6th with five on the 7th, one on the 9th and one on the 23rd. There was a Hooded Merganser on the 21st. Red-breasted Mergansers were seen on eight days with 38 on the 3rd. Ruddy Duck are normally a rarity but for this month there was a “resident” flock on the river until the hunters arrived. There were 96 on the 1st (new high count), 89 on the 6th, 44 on the 8th, 32 on the 15th, 24 on the 16th, seven on the 19th and one on the 20th.

There were single Northern Harriers on the 1st, 4th and 21st. There was a Sharp-shinned Hawk on the 5th. Red-tailed Hawks were seen on seven days with two on the 15th. There was a male American Kestrel in the area all month with two on the 18th and 21st. There were single Merlins on the 10th and 21st.

There was an American Coot on the 23rd with a Sandhill Crane on the 31st. There was a Semipalmated Plover on the 4th. There was a Killdeer on the 9th. There was also an American Oystercatcher on the 5th. A Spotted Sandpiper was at the river all month. Red Knot were seen on 17 days with 150 on the 20th. There was a Dunlin on the 4th with four on the 9th.

Pomarine Jaegers were seen on seven days with higher counts of three on the 13th, eight on the 14th and three on the 31st. Parasitic Jaegers were seen on eight days with higher counts of two on the 13th, two on the 25th and three on the 31st. Laughing Gulls peaked at 2,950 on the 15th. There was a first-winter Franklin's Gull on the 26th. There was a Bonaparte's Gull on the 1st with three on the 6th. Herring Gulls peaked at 540 on the 13th. There was a first-winter Iceland Gull on the 15th. Lesser Black-backed Gulls were seen on ten days with four on the 24th and six on the 29th. There was a first-winter Glaucous Gull on the 13th. Great Black-backed Gulls were seen on six days with three on the 15th. There was a first-winter Sabine's Gull on the 14th. There was a first-winter Black-legged Kittiwake on the 13th. There was a Caspian Tern on the 17th. Royal Terns peaked at 49 on the 25th. Sandwich Terns peaked at 15 on the 25th. Black Skimmers were seen on 16 days with 16 on the 28th. There was a Thick-billed Murre on the 27th with a Razorbill on the 20th.

There were two White-winged Doves on the 2nd. There was an Eastern Screech-Owl on the 26th with a Great Horned Owl on the 9th. There was an Eastern Whip-poor-will on the 16th. Next comes the first of the two additions to the list. There was a Rufous Hummingbird on the 29th. There was a Belted Kingfisher on the 12th with one later on the 20th. There were single Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers on the 8th, 22nd and 29th. Single Downy Woodpeckers were located on four days. Single Pileated Woodpeckers were located on 12 days with two on the 18th. An Eastern Phoebe was present all month. There was a Loggerhead Shrike on the 1st with two on the 10th and two on the 29th. Tree Swallows peaked at 1,080 on the 8th. There was a Carolina Chickadee on the 19th with two on the 30th. There were single Tufted Titmouse on the 10th and 17th. There were single House Wrens on the 11th and 19th. There were single Ruby-crowned Kinglets on the 1st, 4th, 29th and 30th.

There were single Eastern Bluebirds on the 6th, 9th and 29th. There was a Hermit Thrush on the 5th. American Robins seen from the 3rd with 540 on the 19th and 1,740 on the 29th. Single Gray Catbirds were seen on six days. European Starling peaked at 560 on the 9th and 620 on the 24th. For Cedar Waxwing there were 280 on the 13th with 80 on the 29th and seven on the 31st. There were single Orange-crowned Warblers on the 15th and 26th. There were single Yellow-throated Warblers on the 11th and 13th. There was a Prairie Warbler on the 9th. There was a Black-and-white Warbler on the 30th. The second new species was a Lark Sparrow that was seen

on the 19th. Common Grackles peaked at 42 on the 3rd. Brown-headed Cowbirds peaked at 80 on the 2nd and 76 on the 23rd. There was an adult male Baltimore Oriole on the 8th. Up to three House Finches seen daily. There were two American Goldfinch on the 3rd with one on the 21st.

How many (if any) new species will be added in 2025?

Harry Robinson