

BirdWalk Newsletter

11.13.16



Walk Conducted by Perry Nugent

Written by Jayne J Matney

Featured Photo above by: Cary McDonald

**“Winter is an etching, spring a watercolor,
Summer an oil painting, and autumn a mosaic of them all”**

Stanley Horowitz

As the new birds migrate in and the landscape changes, I want to pause and recognize some of our regulars here on the plantation grounds that just don't get enough attention. From a swimming and diving *snakebird*, or Anhinga, cutting through the glassy surface of the water,

Photo by Marina Coppedge



Or this female Anhinga thermo-regulating in the sunlight on a fall afternoon,

Photo by
Jo Frkovich

to the pesky but entertaining raccoon (this one was caught “sitting on a narrow limb, balancing on his 2 hind legs and one hand, while using his free hand to draw twigs to his mouth and feed on the fruits. He cracked them with his teeth, swallowed the soft inside and spit out the shells. And all of this at the speed of a squirrel. Wisely I wore a hat”).



“Rascal Times Two”

Quote and Photo by Marina Coppedge

We mustn't forget about our cute anoles that hop, stop, cock their head sideways and roll their eyes back, just to see where you are. This one got caught as it was shedding his previously worn skin layer!



Above Photo by Cary McDonald



Photo by Marina Coppedge

The glorious peacock, which I know isn't a native species, but every now and then should be acknowledged. And then getting back to our native birds, we can be very comfortable with the knowledge that the Carolina Chickadee stays close year round.



Photo by Chuck Fuhrman

The cold weather is seeping in these days while 5 bird watchers stayed diligent. This was a chilly, breezy day that ended up drizzling most of the time. 46 species were located, but one surprise was the lack of mourning doves. They must have been hunkered down somewhere for the day. At both the Ravenswood Pond and the cross dike,



Great Blue Heron in Fall Foliage photo by Jo Frkovich

50 Blue-winged Teal, 70 Green-winged Teal, 7 Pied-billed Grebe, and 20 Ring-necked Duck were accounted for. Also at Ravenswood Pond, 2 Rusty Blackbird, only 2 Wood Duck, but 40 Gadwall were spotted. 4 White Ibis and a Wood Stork flyover also made that area special. Near the Ravenswood and Audubon swamps, 2 Red-shouldered Hawks were flyovers. 50 Red-winged Blackbird were also counted in the Audubon



Young White Ibis with first white feather showing! Photo by Jo Frkovich

Swamp. 40 Black Vultures and 30 Turkey Vultures were also circling above indicating a carcass was in the area. The few species of warblers on the plantation must have been hunkered down or hidden this morning except for the Yellow-rumped Warbler which

made themselves obvious all over the plantation grounds. 100 of them were approximated. Medium to large flocks of Cedar Waxwings would not sit still, but chose to fly about looking for a food source during this migrating time. 2 American Goldfinch were heard. Along the trails, 6 Red-bellied Woodpecker, 1 Downy Woodpecker, 3 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and 5 Northern Flicker made the tally. It was surprising for Perry that no Pileated Woodpeckers made themselves known because they are usually very noisy. There were small numbers of Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush (one of which was walking around near the birders at the café at the end of the tour), and Northern Cardinal. However, there was a large flock of about 100 American Robin roaming the skies.

One Song Sparrow and one Swamp Sparrow barely made the count! A highlight was the sighting of Bald Eagles again this weekend. One adult and one second year eagle were visible, and clearly the Great blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, and Tri-colored Heron were a bit “antsy” while being harassed by those eagles. They were not stationary as usual at the pond, but rather flying here and there looking for safe places to go. They were not “hanging out” in that pond like usual. About 40 Moorhen were in the water, but no American Coots! Perry has been seeing coots near the Raptor Center but they just aren’t showing up here on the plantation yet. 1 Ring-billed Gull, some Common Grackle, 25 American Crow and one Fish Crow round out the numbers for the day.



“Illuminating Wings” photo by Jo Frkovich