



The way a crow shook down on me
The dust of snow from a hemlock tree,
Has given my heart a change of mood
And saved a part of a day I had rued

Magnolia Plantation and Gardens:
Bird Walk
November 22, 2015

-By Robert Frost

“Falling” Into Winter at the Gardens and Swamp!

The fall started out with some wonderful news from one of our nature enthusiast regulars here at Magnolia, Jo Frkovich. She won an award for “Best in Show” at the Virginia Highlands Festival this summer for one of her photos taken here at the plantation! Titled “Mother Egret Needs a Break” her photo, detailing the young on the



nest, won over all professional and amateur entries!

Having a warm start to the month, we are definitely seeing some cooler temperatures come in to remind us that it is November. The sasanquas have been in color, and camellias are budding up getting ready for their next bloom. The chill in the air on these last two Sunday mornings may have kept some birders away, but the courageous few have been watching the water fowl numbers increase dramatically giving us an increase total number of species to 54. Approximately 75 Gadwall, 80 blue-winged teal, 30 green-winged teal, and 5 pied-billed grebe could be found along with a 100 morehen and 120 American coot.

Hundreds of ring-billed gulls and one lone Caspian tern were flying above near the river. The shorebirds included the white ibis, the little blue herons, the great blue heron, and the great egret. 10 Virginia rail were spotted in the grasses while the anhinga rested on branches near the ponds. The fish crow, the American crow, the common

and boat-tailed grackle and red-winged blackbirds were in high numbers.

Twenty black vulture and six turkey vulture soared their routine circles in the sky. Speaking of soaring, the birders saw 2 adult eagles, and 1 Cooper’s hawk hunting for their prey high above while the northern harrier chose to soar close to the grass tops for the same.

The wooded areas were a treasure trove for finding many species of birds. The highlight of the woodpeckers was the pileated woodpecker of course, but included the red-bellied with 10 sightings, and the downy with 3. The yellow-bellied sapsucker and the northern flicker were not going to be outdone with 4 and 8 respectively.

Photos by Jo Frkovich



Darting about in the forest were a host of our small residents and visitors. 30 Carolian wren, our state bird, along with the house wren, hundreds of yellow-rumped warbler, one black-and-white warbler, eastern bluebirds, Carolina chick-a-dee, tufted titmouse, the white-eyed vireo and blue-headed vireo, blue jay, and the common throated warbler were all represented. The song sparrow, swamp sparrow, white-throated sparrow were accounted for as was the common yellow-throated warbler. Always a highlight to the birdwatchers were the golden-crowned and ruby-throated kinglet.