

BirdWalk Newsletter

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Photos by Jo Frkovich or Robyn and Dana Hogan

“Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul-and sings the tunes without the words-and never stops at all.” Emily Dickinson

As many people know, Emily Dickinson is one of the most beloved American poetry writers of all time. Emily would steal away in her room and she became very much a hermit- Much like most of us do in winter. Thankfully, if it were not for her love of gardens and nature, she would have stayed in the entire year. She was known for her writings which often spoke of flowers as symbols for emotion or actions of humanity. She would also use her flowers and poetry as gifts to those she corresponded with. Therefore, it is very appropriate to appreciate her this week here at Magnolia Plantation and Gardens. In February, we usually “steal away” in our homes and cocoon ourselves in comfort as Emily would have -without coming outside. Yet this winter, we have been able to enjoy the warmest of Februarys and cabin fever has not been allowed to set in here. We are thankful are we not?



Photos from left to right: Great Blue Heron standing at attention at water’s edge (Frkovich), Two one year old gator siblings adventuring at the surface of the pond (Frkovich), A fabulous Anhinga male showing off his stature (Hogan), Prothonotary Warbler sitting pretty in the trees (Hogan)

To set the stage, this Sunday was lovely. The morning started with a cool 41 degrees but eventually the day reached around 66 degrees. 57 species of birds were identified and 5 participants were included on this walk.

Highlights of the Day: A Cooper’s Hawk was spotted over the dike by the river trail rice field, and a total of 8 Red-shouldered Hawks were sighted throughout the property. The bulk of this activity was on the exit side of the property between the Ashley River and the Audubon Swamp. At least 5 nests have been confirmed on the property, so

the hawks are definitely staying here on the land. Perry stated that “the White-eyed Vireos were singing very well today” which enabled the birdwatchers to listen and learn. Perry was also pleased with the numbers of American Robin, an estimated 500, darting through the trees, hopping along the ground, and crossing back and forth on the exit road and “everywhere”! The Hermit Thrush and the Brown Thrasher were also in the survey. Most of the 50 Chipping Sparrow were seen in the pasture area beyond the carriage house, and the group was pleased to see that 2 Dark-eyed Junco crossed pathways with them again this week! A Belted Kingfisher, 6 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Song, Swamp, and White-throated Sparrows were available, and 25 Carolina Wren, 1 House Wren, and 15 American Goldfinch were also a part of their morning. The Cedar Waxwing can be observed particularly near the Conservatory where nature provides bright red berries for them. 200 Yellow-rumped, 10 Pine, and 1 yellow-throated warblers were seen as well as the Red-bellied and Downy woodpeckers, and the Northern Flicker. Of course, we had our regulars including 125 Red-winged Blackbirds, 30 Common and 30 Boat-tailed Grackles,



Photos by Robyn and Dana Hogan: Above: Great Blue Heron Pair in courtship behavior Left: Egret preening Below: Little Blue Heron

25 Northern Cardinals, 20 Chickadees, 15 Tufted Titmouse, 3 Gray Catbird, 4 Northern Mockingbird, American and Fish Crow, Tree Swallows, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay. Our water birds did not disappoint. The birdwatchers were able to observe nest building, and some young rearing happening in the trees (Anhinga, Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Little Blues, and White Ibises). The duck (Wood duck, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Blue-winged and Green-winged teal, Pied-billed Grebe), moorhen, and coots are showing in large numbers. One Black Vulture and 10 Turkey Vulture are keeping the place in check! 30 Ring-billed gulls were flying above. No eagles were spotted on this trip, which could indicate that the mature pair preparing and occupying the nest have actually produced eggs or young and simply can't be spotted while sitting on the nest. An Osprey was sighted flying above just after the walk but was not included in the numbers.

