

BIRDWALK NEWSLETTER

3.13.16

Magnolia Plantation and Gardens

By Jayne J Matney

Spring has sprung early this year! We are having a nice overlap of the camellia blooms and azaleas blossoms. The azaleas will probably be in full force this coming week or so. With this wonderful weather and colorful pathways comes eggs and babies in the nests! Below are some gorgeous pictures taken by Dana and Robyn Hogan of a snowy egret on her nest with her eggs and showing off an eye catching display of feathers in the process! Hopefully soon, I will have some babies in the nest to show you. But until then, we are enjoying what we can see presently- she looks marvelous!



We all “nest” in our own ways. Usually the woman has the house, the man with his garage or tool shed, the college student with their new, humble dorm room, etc. Spring tends to be that time where the nest becomes a central core of our mental and physical being and we spring clean or change things up. Birds go through their own transition time. Their usual activities of life all year-round get altered and nesting and raising young become the themes of the entire day. Here at Magnolia Plantation and Gardens- especially in the Audubon Swamp- the birdwatchers can witness these behaviors and events of our precious feathery friends.

I was very surprised the first time I saw the young Anhinga. These babies are so ridiculously odd looking! NOT what I was expecting an Anhinga fledgling to look like! Here is a photo taken, again by our members Dana and Robyn Hogan, of Anhinga parents taking care of the young. The mother is the one with the golden brown head and neck at the back of the nest, the father is basically black and here he is feeding a young one from his throat. Two other young are waiting their turn.



This particular Sunday, March 13, 2016 was our one hour clock change where we “sprang forward” to keep up with the cycles of nature. The birdwatchers still made it to the plantation on time! There were 4 participants and the temperature was very moderate and partly cloudy. 60 Species were spotted along the walk this day.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WALK: *Seeing the Bald Eagles again was great! The first year eagle was spotted first, then the second year. Eventually the 2 nesting adults were also seen. It is unclear whether they have young ones in the nest. None have been spotted, but it is sometimes difficult to tell. The woodpeckers were fairly plentiful, and most people enjoy seeing them 8 Red-bellied, 3 Downy, 5 Pileated- along with 2 yellow-bellied sapsucker and 2 Northern Flicker. The Cedar Waxwings and the American Robin were in large numbers between the office and Carriage House with numbers of 60 and 100 respectively. 12 Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were also on the count for the first time this year. The Northern Parula also had its first week on the list. Speaking of warblers, the Yellow-throated and Pine Warblers were starting to sing up a storm in attempts to impress mates. The Chipping Sparrows are altering their behavior to feeding high up on the elm trees for seeds rather than on the ground, so don't forget to look up!*

Ravenswood: *Ravenswood is up to its same tricks with many types of ducks and wading birds. 6 Wood Duck, 65 Gadwall, 30 Blue-winged Teal, only 1 Green-winged Teal, 4 Pied-billed Grebe, 25 Great Blue Heron, 25 Great Egret, 2 Snowy Egret, 2 Little Blue Heron, and 8 Black-crowned Night Heron were accounted for. The interesting thing about the Great Blue is the fact that we are seeing babies in the nests now. There are many nests for the Great Egrets as well. The Black-crowned Night Heron seem to be migrating in more readily now. Their nests and babies will come later in the season. 30 Anhinga were setting up residence at Ravenswood as well.*

Large Dike and Perry Field: *1 American Bittern, 50 Moorhen, 100 American Coot, 100 Laughing and 20 Ring-billed Gulls showed up. 150 Red-winged Blackbird, 50 Common Grackles, and 50 Boat-tailed Grackles still prefer that area above all others.*

To round up the field of birds on the property were Black Vultures, Turkey Vultures, Cooper's Hawk, 3 Red-shouldered Hawk, 1 Red-tailed Hawk, Mourning Dove, Eastern Phoebe, White-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Fish Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, Brown Thrasher, Black-and-white Warbler, Song, Swamp, and White-throated Warbler, and the American Goldfinch. See you next week!

“A March Glee”

I hear the sparrow's ditty

Oh, Spring is surely coming,

Anear my study door;

Her couriers fill the air;

A simple song of gladness

Each morn are new arrivals,

That winter days are o'er

Each night her ways prepare;

My heart is singing with him

I scent her fragrant garments,

I love him more and more.....

Her foot is on the stair.

John Burroughs