

Magnolia Plantation and Gardens

BirdWalk Newsletter 8.21.2016

Conducted by Perry Nugent

Written by Jayne J Matney

Red- Shouldered Hawk

Photo by Ed Blicht



“I heard the sweet voice of a robin,
High up in a maple tree,
Joyously, singing his happy song
To his feathered mate, in glee!.....

If we could be like this tiny bird,
Just living from day to day,
Holding no bitterness in our hearts
For those we meet on our way.....

---Gertrude Tooley Buckingham “Heaven on Earth” (1940s)

Devotion to Birds of the Present: We are approaching the end of August and the end of summer. Don't get me wrong- we are still experiencing it! However, many of us are consoled enough by the fact that change is around the corner somewhere.....But in the present, it is hard to escape the fact that the birds' songs and their earthiness taking flight leaves us with a light heart. The gardens and grounds here provide what they need for a great life. Insects, berries, larvae, nuts, and even small animals to eat, and a shelter or supplies to make one, inhabit their thoughts and actions as they flutter around making music. I, for one, appreciate this music and their dance....how could I not? Some of the species we have been enjoying here will be leaving soon, so I want to thank the Glossy Ibis, White Ibis, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Little Blue Heron, and Green Heron that have filled many visitors with wonder this year and have made the ambiance of the plantation so special.And come back again next year..... Eventually, there will be others I will want to get ready for- the newcomers that are getting ready to come- but until then, I will savor the moments I have with you.



This week, 46 species were discovered around the grounds. The morning started out warm, partly cloudy and with a slight breeze. By the late afternoon, the humidity broke and the air was easier to enjoy. All of our regular wading birds and water birds were accounted for. Many of those were found in the Ravenswood Pond, Large Old Rice Field, and the Cross Dike. Some highlights on this day included the large flock of Mississippi Kite over the large rice field! One Swallow-tailed Kite was among them. Seen in the northern sky, they begin this ritualistic behavior before flying South to SA.

Great Egret Photo by Jo Frkovich

A definite highlight was the sighting of a Greater Yellowlegs out in the old rice field near the boat dock walking along the edge of a mud bank or island. The hope is that with the recent dredging of that field and future work to come in the winter, more of these types of shallow water, “mud bank” birds will begin using what is available to them. Another highlight this Sunday was sighting an Eastern Wood-Pewee. Perry told me that they are fairly common on the Donnelley State Refuge, but we do not see them often here. Along the River Trail, a dark brown bird darted across the front of Perry and one of the visitor’s path- zoomed past Perry’s elbow and camera scope then landed in the azaleas. It was a Northern Waterthrush. During these summer days of quick showers in the afternoons, puddles of water left standing seem to attract insects and therefore produce larvae. These birds do well to eat these insects and larvae associated with this time of year! Always a delight to see, the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were located scattered throughout the property. American Redstart were seen as well. One Yellow-bellied Cuckoo made an appearance, 6 Mourning Dove, 3 Red-bellied Woodpecker, 1 Downy Woodpecker, a Great-crested Flycatcher, 10 Eastern Kingbird, 10 White-eyed and 6 Red-eyed Vireo, and 6 Tree Swallow were on the list. Of course, we had our Mourning Dove, Blue Jay, Crow,



‘Lil Blue Heron after a shower
Photo by Robyn and Dana Hogan

Northern Mockingbird, Carolina Wren, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Eastern Bluebird, Northern Cardinal, and Grackle be our steadfast occupants.

Wood Duck were in high numbers again this week with approximately 130 individuals. It is good to know that the mating season here was fruitful.

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Here at the plantation, we are lucky enough to watch the pairing of the Wood Ducks as seen in the above picture, and the families emerging eventually from the grasses as seen in photo at left.

Photos by Perry Nugent

Moorhen were also in good numbers, the Red-shouldered Hawk and Red-tailed Hawk were seen readily, Black and Turkey Vulture circled overhead, Laughing Gulls reigned supreme over the river as they glided along in the saltier air, and Red-winged Blackbirds called out amongst the cattails to whomever would listen. An Osprey was observed overseeing the large field. As the team of birders rounded the house and looked over the field near the café, 2 Chimney Swifts swirled above with their famous acrobatics.



Red-winged Blackbird voicing his opinion
Photo by Jo Frkovich