

Migration Summary May 1st- 15th, 2020

Hearing a season first Wood Thrush singing, and observing a Black-and-white Warbler gave me a nice feeling about the beginning of May. A nice variety of species were seen around the inland area covered by the growing green leaves of Trilliums and Solomon's Seals. The familiar call of Common Terns at the tip reminded me that the lake had warmed up.

It had been pleasant with mild temperature (above 10C) and south winds from May 2nd to 3rd. There was a full chorus of birds and even an American Toad! The season first American White Pelicans were observed at the tip. A bright male Blue-winged Warbler was an exciting sighting in the still wintery monotone coloured shrubs. A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was making wheezy noises high up, and Nashville Warblers sharp call was heard and the season's first Warbling Vireos and Black-throated Green Warblers were recorded.

The week May 4th to 8th was quiet. The wind had been mostly north, and the temperature was around 6C. Two Orchard Orioles were observed as new for the season, and many House Wrens showed up although they hadn't started performing their lively song yet. A season first Eastern Kingbird, Ovenbird, and Cape May Warbler were observed on 5th. May 6th had very calm weather in the afternoon. As a non-standard observation, a Whip-poor-will started singing in the dusk not so far from the house and kept up with their rhythmical song for quite a long time.

The south wind warmed up the air temperature to 8C on May 7th. A Blackburnian Warbler was observed as new for the season although the majority of warblers we had seen during this period were Yellow and Nashville, and Western Palm Warblers.

The cold snap with a strong northeast wind came on May 8th, and the temperature dropped to 1C for the morning of 9th. There were some sleet/snow on the ground. The freezing temperatures warmed up a bit with the south-west wind overnight. Although the weather conditions were still not great, there was lively bird activity on May 10th. A Cliff Swallow was observed in a small group of mixed swallow species at the pond. Most of the birds seem to be hanging around the same area for the last couple of days.

May 11th was another cold morning with a strong north-west wind (4C). The forest was quiet, unusually so as many birds usually are singing at this time of year! A season first Great-crested Flycatcher quietly hopped out from the grass, which was unusual because they like to stay high up to catch flying insects. A Black-crowned Night Heron observed at the pond was also new for the season. Numerous sparrows were busy feeding on the ground – the majority was White-throated, but there were some Lincoln's and Song. At our feeders eight Baltimore Orioles and two Orchard Orioles, a couple of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were there all day trying to feed up, and some of the orioles were sucking nectar from garden flowers.

On May 12th a season first Sora singing was heard, and some shorebirds started showing up from May 13th to 14th. A season first Black-bellied Plovers, Semipalmated Plovers and a group of Sanderlings were observed. Two Orange-crowned Warblers were found in a group of warblers along the west beach. Only one or two Blackburnian and Northern Parula (non-standard) had been seen along with Yellow and

Nashville Warblers, which started more constantly singing high up in the canopy.

Warm spring rain on May 14th night dropped a full bucket of birds at Fish Point. There were numerous thrushes, flycatchers and warblers in the south end of the trail on May 15th. Although many birds were not staying along the west shore, hundreds of birds were moving towards the south like a rush hour and took off to the blue sky, which was almost like a constant stream. A bunch of Baltimore Orioles (counted 27), Red-headed Woodpeckers (counted 6) and Scarlet Tanagers (counted 6) were observed. Finally a season first Magnolia and American Redstart were seen along with quite a few Chestnut-sided and Black-throated Blue Warblers and a couple of Northern Parulas. Fourteen warbler species were recorded, but there were more than that for sure. So many birds flew over my head, and it was too many to count for the ninety minutes walk! In the afternoon, birds were fluttering around everywhere, and some Bay-breasted and Blackpoll Warblers were observed as a non-standard observation.

My impression of the first half of May was the weird silence in the forest, which was missing bird's songs under the chilly air temperature. I kept expecting to hear the song of Ovenbird's 'Teacher, teacher, teacher!' and Tennessee's 'tip tip tip' and looking for colourful warblers like Magnolias and American Redstart. May 15th was a great migration day for this period.

Summary was written by PIBO Field Supervisor, Sumiko Onishi.

Scarlet Tanager by Sumiko Onishi

