

April 16th-30th 2020

The census was missed on April 16 and 22nd unfortunately. On the 16th it was all day a medley of snow, sleet and freezing rain. The morning of April 22nd started with 2C and was on and off sleet and snow in the late afternoon. The weather had stayed like this for almost a week. Sprouts of understory along the trail hung down their heads because of the weight of sleet.

With the strong south-west wind on the morning of April 19th, thousands of Bonaparte's Gulls showed up, and many Brown Creepers were still hanging around the area. From April 20th to 21st, the north-west wind gust up to 31kts and a big tree fell along the west beach. The muddy green rough water striking on to the sand bar and showed quite a contrast with the smooth blue surface on the east side. An American Kestrel was seen in the trees which were unusual habitat to see the bird. The strong easterly wind on 23rd brought many swallows including Barn and Northern Rough-winged along the calm west shore.

More birds started showing up in the afternoon of 23rd and April 24th, which was the second push of migration for the season. Quite a few Hermit Thrushes, Yellow-rumped Warblers and White-throated Sparrows were observed although the temperature was still low (5C). A season first Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was recorded along with many swallows including two Cliff Swallows.

The temperature warmed up a bit (7C) next morning (April 25th). There were a couple of hot spots for warblers including three Pine Warblers and kinglets and a season first shorebird, Spotted Sandpiper on the west beach! On April 26th, numerous birds were observed in the area where the strong northeast wind pushed the lake water into the inland. White-throated Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos were everywhere along the trail.

Because of the south wind, the forest was veiled in the mild and moist spring-like air in the morning of April 28th. The tree branches growing the new green shoots were beautiful in the blue sky, and a lively House Wren's song echoed. Numerous White-throated Sparrows were still in the area, and quite a few Eastern Towhees were counted. Season first Baltimore Oriole and a Nashville Warbler were observed.

The busiest day so far this season was observed on April 29th. A total of 51 species and eight season-first species were recorded during the census – Red-headed Woodpecker, Yellow, and Black-throated Green Warbler, Summer Tanager, Indigo Bunting, and so on – the grey sky and rain didn't help with the identification of birds. Trees were quite busy with the sounds of birds' chips and fluttering although many warblers had not quite started to sing yet. Hundreds of birds kept flying above me and flew toward the south. It looked mostly like Yellow-rumped Warblers and some groups of blackbirds. The last day of April was an overcast sky with on and off drizzle. There were some Blue-headed Vireos and warblers still hanging around the area since yesterday, but the numbers were less.

It feels like we had a long winter, but May has started, and we will see and hear more birds coming around us!

Summary was written by PIBO Field Supervisor, Sumiko Onishi.

Northern Mockingbird by Sumiko Onishi

