

Migration Summary August 1st-15th, 2020

The summer flew by while we enjoyed watching many birds nesting around our house. Now it is time to see fall migration in which many young birds will take their first journey to the wintering grounds.

PIBO started census at Fish Point on August 1st. The first week of August had a little bit of autumn-like weather which was a good break from the heat in the previous week (morning temperature dropped from 26C to 20C). Many birds with their young started moving away from their nest site and dispersed farther little by little as their young became independent.

We recorded 37 species on August 1st including a big flock of swallows – the majority were Tree and Barn Swallows - roosting in the phragmites at the pond. It looked like they were ready to travel south soon. On August 2nd and 3rd, some Bank and Northern Rough-winged were observed along with the flock. There were quite a few young Great Blue Herons and a Great Egret –a local nester - that were hanging around the pond where it was probably easy for them to catch frogs. At the tip, a small group of American White Pelicans was regularly seen.

August 4th was cloudy, and a brief shower came down at the beginning of the census. But it was enjoyable with the cooler temperature (18C) to see the season first four Sanderlings walking around and lots of Bonaparte's Gulls resting at the tip.

The next morning (August 5th) the pond was full of frog calls and birds chirping under the sun. Five lively adult Red-headed Woodpeckers - probably local nesters - calling, drumming, and chasing each other were seen from the viewing deck. Also, quite a few Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, including some fledglings were observed.

There was a south wind during the night before August 9th, but there were more birds observed at the pond. Especially Baltimore Orioles and Yellow Warblers were everywhere along the trail, and quite a few Eastern Wood-Pewees were calling. Also, a Least Flycatcher was recorded as a season first. After the big group of swallows left Purple Martins started gathering at Fish Point on August 10th. Their calls were heard everywhere above the trees. Although there are still some swallows around - Barn Swallows rushing to raise a second brood after they successfully raised the first one and Purple Martins at our staff cottage re-nesting after the first nest failed. We will see how they do.

On August 12th a Green Heron's sharp call was heard at the pond, and a couple of Red-breasted Mergansers flying over the lake was observed. The largest number of American White Pelicans (60 of them) so far was recorded. The constant north-east wind during the night stimulated another swallow migration, hundreds of Purple Martins kept showing high up in the blue sky, and many Barn Swallows were flying around clouds of midges above the canopy on August 14th. There were quite a few Bank Swallows observed as well.

The wind changed direction from north-east to east and became quite strong during August 14th. Some shorebirds – Killdeers, Spotted Sandpipers, Sanderlings, and Least / Semipalmated Sandpiper (could not get closer to identify them) - avoiding the strong east wind was feeding on insects in the seaweed pushed on to the sand. It was quiet, and 35 species were recorded.

We are still seeing some nesting cuckoos and Cedar Waxwings around but noticed that the Red-winged Blackbirds that used to come to our feeder every day had already left. Fall migration has just started, and soon we will see more flycatchers and warblers coming through Pelee Island!

The summary was written by Sumiko Onishi.

Purple Martins flying and American White Pelicans and Bald eagle at Fish Point by Sumiko Onishi.



