

Migration Summary October 1st-15th, 2020

On October 2nd, strong north winds brought lots of birds – 55 species were recorded including many groups of White-throated Sparrows and American Goldfinches. Based on my census, which observed several Gray Catbirds and Brown Thrashers, it looked like numerous catbirds and thrashers arrived during the night. Fourteen warbler species and a couple of Empidonax flycatchers were in the trees under the sun – lots of Yellow-rumped and Western Palm Warblers and quite a few Northern Parulas. There was a good variety of species including kinglets, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, and a season first Northern Mockingbird and a Hermit Thrush and a Slate-colored Junco.

The temperature dropped to 4C with strong north-west winds on October 3rd. There were hundreds of Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets making high pitch ‘zee zee zee’, and ‘jidit’ sounds high up in the canopy and lower in the bush. Numerous Winter Wrens were flying beside me on my walk making ‘jip jip’ sounds and White-throated Sparrows’ sharp calls were everywhere in the shrubs. Quite a few Blue-headed Vireos, some flycatchers, and an Indigo Bunting were observed as well.

On October 5th, the wind shifted to north-west briefly during the night, and the morning temperature was 6C. The sunny weather appeared to give the birds some energy to look for food. I heard many finches flying over my head, and I recorded lots of American Goldfinches for the last couple of days. Some blackbirds - Rusty Blackbirds and Red-winged Blackbirds – started showing up although grackles were still not seen much on the census.

The census was busy on October 8th. I was looking down to see sparrows and up to count blackbirds and finches flying over. A total of 54 species were recorded including seven sparrow species – quite a few White-throated Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos. Fox Sparrows and Eastern White-crowned Sparrows were noted as new for the season. Many Yellow-rumped Warblers and Ruby-crowned Kinglets were seen. Along the roadside, hundreds of starlings and a large group of Pine Siskins were observed as a non-standard observation. Some Monarch Butterflies were spotted as well.

On the morning of October 11th, hundreds of sparrows arrived with the northeast winds overnight – especially numerous were Dark-eye Juncos and some Eastern Meadowlarks in the fields along the road as a non-standard observation. Three Northern Harriers and a few falcons were flying over the lake, and hundreds of Rusty Blackbirds had been seen in the area for days.

On October 12th thousands of European Starlings continuously showed up in the sky along with other groups of birds – mostly Blue Jays, and some Red-winged Blackbirds, and accipiters. A Nelson’s Sparrow was observed as new for the season. After the strong north-west wind with rain during the night, on October 13th, lots of flying insects were around under the sun at the east side, and many Yellow-rumped Warblers, kinglets, nuthatches, and quite a few other species were busy feeding on them.

The weather turned nasty on October 15th – with mostly south-west winds with gusts up to 16 knots and sporadic rain. Probably most of the birds were taking shelter in the dense vegetation. A total of 25 species was observed including a few groups of Dark-eyed Juncos, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and

kinglets. The colourful fallen leaves created a beautiful mosaic on the moist ground, and soon it will be covered by plenty of dead leaves for the winter.

The summary was written by Sumiko Onishi.

Western Palm Warbler and Nelson's Sparrow by Sumiko Onishi.



