

BIRDS OF NENE LAND

by Jim Cox

Our neighborhood is well known for its natural features. The numerous parks and green spaces we have, coupled with yards filled with old trees and native shrubs, are a welcome relief amid the urban landscape. Not surprisingly, the natural qualities of our neighborhood also make it attractive to many types of animals. Opossums and raccoons are probably a familiar sight around most homes, but did you know that more than 140 species of birds have also been observed in our neighborhood?

Here we provide a list of the birds of "Nene Land" in hopes that it will make your neighborhood experience more enjoyable. By far the best time to look for birds is in fall when many migratory species pass through the neighborhood (particularly along the creek side nature trail). However, watching birds at any time of the year will usually turn up something noteworthy. In summer you spend hours watching the graceful Mississippi Kites as they snag cicadas from the tops of trees. In winter, our feeders may become overburdened with sparrows, siskins, and goldfinches. And in spring, the territorial displays of hummingbirds and nighthawks are sure to arouse interest.

This list was compiled from my casual field notes based on walks around the neighborhood over the last 6 years. The list is arranged by phylogenetic order, which means simply that the list is in the same order used by field guides. If you have information on other species, please pass them along so that I can update the neighborhood birdlist. You can drop off your notes at 1503 Wekewa Nene almost anytime, or call 942-2489.

Seasonal Terms

Migrant: species found only during spring and fall migration. Spring migration runs from roughly mid March to early May, while fall migration runs from early September to mid October. There is considerable variation in the peak migration period for different species within these broad time frames.

Winter Resident: species found generally from October through approximately April, but absent during breeding season.

Summer Resident: species found generally from March through September, but absent during the winter season.

Year-round Resident: a bird found in the neighborhood in all seasons.

Abundance Terms

Abundant: likely to be seen on strolls through the neighborhood and found in most backyards.

Common: likely to be seen on most strolls through the neighborhood but may sometimes be missed; found in some but not all backyards.

Uncommon: likely to be seen on some walks in specific areas of the neighborhood, but otherwise uncommon throughout most of the neighborhood; mostly associated with various conservation easements, nature trails, storm water retention ponds, or other special features.

Rare: not regularly seen on walks, but has been observed at least five times in the neighborhood.

Accidental: fewer than 5 observations in neighborhood.

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Common Loon: rare spring migrant; birds may be seen flying over neighborhood from mid April through early June.

Double-crested Cormorant: uncommon in winter, accidental in summer; birds may be seen flying over neighbor; may be seen frequently at storm water retention pond at corner of Orange and Jim Lee.

Anhinga: accidental in winter; rare in summer; birds observed flying over neighborhood; some may forage in nearby ponds at Blairstone Forest.

Great Blue Heron: rare in all seasons; birds observed flying over neighborhood; may be seen frequently at storm water retention pond at corner of Orange and Jim Lee.

Great Egret: rare in all seasons; birds observed flying over neighborhood; may be seen frequently at storm water retention pond at corner of Orange and Jim Lee.

Snowy Egret: accidental in all seasons; birds generally observed flying over neighborhood but may also forage very rarely along creek; may be seen occasionally at storm water retention pond at corner of Orange and Jim Lee.

Cattle Egret: rare summer resident; birds observed flying over neighborhood; may be seen occasionally at

storm water retention pond at corner of Orange and Jim Lee.

Little Blue Heron: accidental in all seasons; birds observed flying over neighborhood; may be seen occasionally at storm water retention pond at corner of Orange and Jim Lee..

Yellow-crowned Nightheron: accidental; 1 fly over record in late summer.

White Ibis: accidental; 1 fly over record in fall.

Wood Stork: accidental; 1 fly over record in fall; however, approximately 20 were seen last winter at storm water retention pond at corner of Orange and Jim Lee.

Canada Goose: rare year-round resident; birds observed flying over neighborhood most commonly in spring.

Wood Duck: rare summer resident; may breed in boxes in back yards; becomes uncommon in winter as birds come to urban areas to avoid hunters.

Mallard: feral birds occasionally seen year round at neighborhood ponds (e.g., on Atapha Nene).

Hooded Merganser: accidental winter resident; found

at ponds on Atapha Nene, Blairstone Forest, and storm water retention pond at corner of Orange and Jim Lee pond.

Black Vulture: rare summer resident; accidental winter resident; birds observed flying over neighborhood.

Turkey Vulture: rare in all seasons; birds observed flying over neighborhood.

American Swallow-tailed Kite: accidental spring and fall migrant; birds observed flying over neighborhood.

Mississippi Kite: common summer resident; one of our most common hawks in summer; nests most often located in pine trees.

Bald Eagle: accidental fall and very early spring migrant; birds observed flying over neighborhood.

Northern Harrier: accidental fall and spring migrant; birds observed flying over neighborhood.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: rare winter resident; these bird eating hawks may stake out feeders in winter looking for an easy meal.

Cooper's Hawk: rare winter resident, also occasionally staking out feeders; accidental summer resident.

Red-shouldered Hawk: common to uncommon year-round resident; our most common hawk year round.

Broad-winged Hawk: rare summer resident; uncommon spring and fall migrant.

Red-tailed Hawk: uncommon to common winter resident.

American Kestrel: rare to uncommon winter resident.

Merlin: accidental; 1 record in winter.

Sandhill Crane: accidental migrant primarily in fall; 2 fly over records.

Killdeer: uncommon winter resident; mostly heard flying over neighborhood but also found at larger ponds and infrequently at Optimist park.

Black-bellied Plover: uncommon in winter at the storm-water retention pond at Orange and Jim Lee.

Short-billed Dowitcher: uncommon in winter at the storm-water retention pond at Orange and Jim Lee.

Spotted Sandpiper: rare fall and spring migrant at pond on Atapha Nene and the storm-water retention pond at Orange and Jim Lee.

Least Sandpiper: rare winter resident at storm-water retention pond at Orange and Jim Lee.

Greater Yellowlegs: uncommon to rare winter resident at storm-water retention pond at corner of Orange and Jim Lee.

Lesser Yellowlegs: accidental at storm-water retention pond at corner of Orange and Jim Lee.

American Woodcock: rare fall migrant; accidental in winter; mostly observed at dusk flying along creek.

Ring-billed Gull: uncommon winter resident; mostly birds observed flying over neighborhood.

Laughing Gull: accidental year-round resident; most observations consist of stray birds observed flying over

neighborhood coming from landfill far to the east.

Least Tern: accidental summer resident; nests on rooftops at a few malls in Tallahassee, and strays may be seen flying over the neighborhood.

Rock Dove: Common to uncommon year-round resident; generally seen more frequently in the northern half of neighborhood towards city.

Mourning Dove: abundant year-round resident, becoming most abundant during winter.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: uncommon summer resident; best told by call coming from the tops of trees; uncommon fall and spring migrant.

Barred Owl: uncommon to common year-round resident; familiar nighttime caller throughout the neighborhood.

Screech Owl: accidental year-round resident; 1 record for neighborhood.

Great Horned Owl: rare winter resident; restricted mostly to open areas around Parkway Baptist Church and pine forests in the 1900 blocks from Chuli Nene to East Indianhead.

Common Nighthawk: uncommon summer resident; sometimes common fall migrant when large flocks (sometimes > 50 birds) can be seen passing over the neighborhood.

Chuck-will's-widow: uncommon summer resident; best told by distinctive call given at dusk and dawn.

Whip-poor-will: accidental winter resident; sometimes heard calling in very early spring.

Chimney Swift: abundant summer resident; very large flocks may be observed during fall migration.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: uncommon summer resident; uncommon fall and spring migrant.

Rufous Hummingbird: accidental winter resident; 1 record and several unconfirmed winter hummingbirds that might be rufous or black-chinned hummingbirds.

Belted Kingfisher: uncommon winter resident and spring and fall migrant; accidental in summer.

Red-headed Woodpecker: rare summer resident and uncommon winter resident.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: abundant year-round resident.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: common winter resident.

Downy Woodpecker: common year-round resident.

Hairy Woodpecker: accidental spring migrant(?); one record.

Pileated Woodpecker: common to uncommon year-round resident.

Eastern Wood Peewee: uncommon spring and fall migrant; rare summer resident.

Acadian Flycatcher: uncommon summer resident; common spring and fall migrant.

Great Crested Flycatcher: abundant summer resident; abundant spring and fall migrant.

Eastern Phoebe: common winter resident.

Eastern Kingbird: uncommon summer resident; uncommon to common fall and spring migrant with occasionally small flocks (> 10 birds) observed.

Purple Martin: abundant summer resident.

Barn Swallow: rare fall and spring migrant; birds generally observed flying over neighborhood.

Tree Swallow: uncommon to rare winter resident; birds observed flying over neighborhood throughout neighborhood; frequently seen at storm water retention pond at Orange and Jim Lee.

Northern Rough Winged Swallow: accidental spring and fall migrant; 3 records.

Blue Jay: abundant year-round resident.

American Crow: common to uncommon year-round resident.

Fish Crow: rare to uncommon year-round resident; most often seen in flocks passing over the neighborhood.

Carolina Chickadee: abundant year-round resident.

Tufted Titmouse: abundant year-round resident.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: accidental winter resident; 1 record.

Brown-headed Nuthatch: rare year-round resident; most common in pines along the 1900 block from Chuli Nene to East Indianhead.

White-breasted Nuthatch: uncommon summer resident, becoming more common in winter.

Carolina Wren: abundant year-round resident.

House Wren: common winter resident.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: rare to uncommon winter resident; best told by faint calls coming from the tops of trees.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: common winter resident.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: uncommon year-round resident.

Eastern Bluebird: rare winter resident.

Veery: rare to abundant fall migrant; mostly in moist wooded areas along creek.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: rare to abundant fall migrant; maximum count of 3 along creek in fall.

Swainson's Thrush: uncommon to common fall migrant; maximum count of 12 along creek path in fall.

Wood Thrush: uncommon summer resident; uncommon to common fall migrant; this species has not nested in the neighborhood in the last two years because of feral cats and cowbirds. Small, linear woodland corridors such as we have along the creek are prime areas for cats to capture nesting birds. Such corridors represent population sinks for many species of birds. The problem caused by brown-headed cowbirds is discussed below.

Gray Catbird: common winter resident; common in fall and spring migration.

Northern Mockingbird: abundant year-round resident.

Brown Thrasher: abundant to common year-round resident.

Cedar Waxwing: uncommon winter resident; largest flocks observed in early spring.

Loggerhead Shrike: uncommon winter resident, mostly near open fields; accidental summer resident: 1 remained on Wekewa Nene throughout the summer of 1992.

European Starling: common year-round resident, becoming most abundant in winter; summer observations generally restricted to power transfer station near Magnolia.

White-eyed Vireo: common to abundant year-round resident.

Red-eyed Vireo: common summer resident; abundant spring and fall migrant; maximum count of 20 along creek path in fall.

Yellow-throated Vireo: common summer resident; common spring and fall migrant.

Solitary Vireo: common winter resident.

Blue-winged Warbler: rare fall migrant; accidental spring migrant.

Golden-winged Warbler: rare fall migrant; accidental spring migrant.

Tennessee Warbler: accidental fall migrant; accidental spring migrant.

Orange-crowned Warbler: uncommon winter resident.

Northern Parula: abundant summer resident; abundant spring and fall migrant.

Yellow Warbler: rare fall migrant.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: uncommon to common fall migrant; may be abundant on some days during fall.

Magnolia Warbler: uncommon fall migrant; accidental spring migrant.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: uncommon fall migrant; accidental spring migrant.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: abundant winter resident, especially around myrtle bushes.

Blackburnian Warbler: rare fall migrant.

Yellow-throated Warbler: uncommon year-round resident.

Pine Warbler: uncommon to common year-round resident; becoming most abundant in winter.

Palm Warbler: uncommon to rare winter resident; mostly found in bushy areas with an open canopy.

Black-and-white Warbler: uncommon winter resident and fall and spring migrant.

American Restart: common to uncommon fall migrant; accidental in spring.

Prothonotary Warbler: accidental spring and fall migrant.

Worm-eating Warbler: rare to uncommon fall migrant; accidental spring migrant.

Ovenbird: rare spring and fall migrant; accidental winter resident.

Northern Waterthrush: uncommon fall migrant; accidental spring migrant.

Louisiana Waterthrush: rare spring and fall migrant; accidental summer resident. A male held a territory along the creek for 2 consecutive breeding seasons (1991-92) but has not been seen since.

Kentucky Warbler: rare fall migrant; accidental summer resident. A male held a territory in the Blairstone Forest easement throughout the summer of 1994.

Common Yellowthroat: uncommon summer resident; uncommon to common winter resident.

Hooded Warbler: rare summer resident; uncommon fall and spring migrant.

Wilson's Warbler: accidental winter resident; 1 record behind power transfer station near Magnolia.

Summer Tanager: common summer resident; common to abundant spring and fall migrant.

Scarlet Tanager: rare fall migrant; accidental spring migrant.

Northern Cardinal: abundant year-round resident.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: rare fall migrant; accidental spring migrant.

Blue Grosbeak: uncommon fall migrant; rare spring migrant.

Indigo Bunting: uncommon fall migrant; rare spring migrant.

Rufous-sided Towhee: common year-round resident.

Chipping Sparrow: uncommon to common winter resident; may be abundant at some feeders in winter (flock size > 100).

Field Sparrow: uncommon winter resident; occasionally at some feeders.

Fox Sparrow: accidental winter resident.

Song Sparrow: uncommon to common winter resident.

White-throated Sparrow: common to abundant winter resident.

Dark-eyed Junco: accidental winter resident; 1 record.

Bobolink: accidental spring and fall migrant; the distinctive call notes can be heard infrequently as birds pass over the neighborhood.

Red-winged Blackbird: uncommon summer resident; common to abundant at other times of year.

Common Grackle: common year-round resident becoming most abundant as large flocks gather from fall through spring.

Brown-headed Cowbird: common summer resident; common to abundant winter resident; along with cats, this species poses a threat to nesting songbirds. Cowbirds lay their eggs in the nest of other birds, and

when the cowbird young hatch they often kick their nest mates overboard. Cowbird parasitism is particularly troublesome in small, linear woodland corridors such as along the creek. Over the past few years, most of the yellow-throated vireos nesting along the creek have been parasitized by cowbirds.

Orchard Oriole: uncommon summer resident.

Northern Oriole: rare winter resident.

Purple Finch: rare winter resident.

House Finch: uncommon year-round resident, becoming increasingly common.

Pine Siskin: rare to uncommon winter resident.

American Goldfinch: common winter resident.

House Sparrow: rare year-round resident.