

New York City 10th – 12th April 2012

This is a very brief report on an even briefer visit to New York for a major wedding anniversary. The timing of the trip was poor from a birding perspective but spot on for our anniversary which seemed more important. The key date being 11th April which is just before migration really gets going and significantly before “peak” migration for Central Park. The date however was not moveable and coinciding with the Easter break was massively expensive as well. We should really have thought more carefully 25 years ago when deciding what date to get married. Anyway with children left at home we set off for the Waldorf Astoria in New York City. We had chosen this for the name and its perfect location for downtown and central park. Prior research indicated that to some extent it was trading on its past glories, but it was still the Waldorf and although some of its grandeur may have faded, frankly it remains most agreeable.

New York is a rare thing in America, it is a walking city, and walk we did. A wander along 42nd street towards Times Square brought us to Bryant Park. I had not heard of this little gem but it was lovely place so we stopped for coffee. Being a total anorak I had bins and camera with me and sitting under the shade of the London Plane trees I notched up a couple of cheap ticks. Chipping, Song, Swamp and White-throated Sparrows along with Dark-eyed Junco and a cracking Hermit Thrush all graced us with their presence.



As we were leaving my wife pointed out a notice for guided walks on Mondays and Thursdays along with a web address for park sightings which is well worth checking out.

<http://blog.bryantpark.org/2012/04/migratory-season-in-bryant-park.html>

We wandered along to the Rockefeller Center for the “Top of the Rock” experience to get that all important high rise view of the city. It also affords the best view down into Central Park - so well worth it! Actually it really is stunning.



This is your mission should you choose to accept it.

We decided to have lunch at Grand Central Station, and “Grand” is the word. After lunch we mooched on down to get the Staten Island ferry in order to view the Statue of Liberty. At Staten Island I managed a few gulls, some Brant and Canada Geese, and Bufflehead. Returning to Long Island a quick trot around Battery Park produced a couple of American Robin and a male Hairy Woodpecker. This sight-seeing business sure is tiring.

Next morning we had a stroll from the Waldorf through the southern end of Central Park as far as the Metropolitan Museum of Art taking in the Rambles area. The weather was overcast with showers which seemed to contribute to it being very quiet at the southern end (ignoring the 100's of American Robins). The rambles area including the Gill was livelier. In the feeder area Fox Sparrow, House Finch, American Goldfinch various woodpeckers kept it busy with Ruby crowned Kinglet and Tufted Titmouse adding sparkle. One of us quickly tired of bird watching so we popped across to the Museum which was the real reason for being there. Mind you, the Museum is huge and we tired soon after lunch pining to be outdoors again. A brief fruitless search for the famous “Pale Male” and off to rest. We busied ourselves with normal sightseeing and a show for the rest of the day.

The following day I sneaked out to Central Park on my own promising to be back for breakfast. I



took a cab to the northern end of the Park with the aim of birding my way to the south and back to the Waldorf. The cab driver didn't really get where I wanted to go and the area north east of the park is definitely the "other side of the tracks". However I arrived by 06:15 and was soon skirting Harlem Meer noting Common Merganser and into the woods beyond. A flyover Turkey Vulture was an early surprise and I was soon into familiar species with House Wren and Brown Creeper, then more exotic with Northern Flicker and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. The reservoir produced the expected waterbirds. Passing back through the Rambles I paused to photograph a Rusty Blackbird which was a lifer and then bumped into an organised bird walk (again) which appear to be run daily. I lingered a bit hoping to spot Pale Male around the nest site but dipped again. Then the mad dash back for breakfast at Pershing

Square – probably one of the finest establishments in New York!



And that was about it for the birding, a species account appears below. I cannot begin to describe how much I enjoyed New York as a fantastically vibrant city. This was an excellent few days away for an important anniversary with 17 lifers thrown in. It is quite rare for me to want to return to cities but this is one that I will return to, preferably with a fellow birder at peak migration!

Colin Manville cmanville@fsmail.net

Copyright Colin Manville 2012

United States 2012 - New York

Event period: 10-Apr-2012 to 12-Apr-2012

Participants:

25th Anniversary Trip

Bryant Park (Manhattan, New York, USA)

10/04/2012 13:00 to 10/04/2012 14:00

15c, 6W, sunny with white clouds

A one block park of grass surrounded by London Plane trees

Hermit Thrush [sp] (<i>Catharus guttatus</i>)	1
Common Starling [sp] (<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>)	c.10
Chipping Sparrow [sp] (<i>Spizella passerina</i>)	c.2
Song Sparrow [sp] (<i>Melospiza melodia</i>)	c.4
Swamp Sparrow [sp] (<i>Melospiza georgiana</i>)	1
White-throated Sparrow (<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>)	1
Dark-eyed Junco [sp] (<i>Junco hyemalis</i>)	3
House Sparrow [sp] (<i>Passer domesticus</i>)	c.20

Staten Island (New York, USA)

10/04/2012 15:00 to 10/04/2012 16:05

15c, 6W, sunny with white clouds

Crossing and shoreline by ferry port

Black Brant [group] (*Branta bernicla nigricans/orientalis*) c.50

Canada Goose [sp] (<i>Branta canadensis</i>)	4
Mallard [sp] (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>)	2
Bufflehead (<i>Bucephala albeola</i>)	2
Double-crested Cormorant [sp] (<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>)	5
Laughing Gull [sp] (<i>Leucophaeus atricilla</i>)	4
Ring-billed Gull (<i>Larus delawarensis</i>)	c.25
American Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus smithsonianus</i>)	c.11
Great Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus marinus</i>)	4
American Crow [sp] (<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>)	1
Northern Mockingbird [sp] (<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>)	1

Battery Park (Manhattan, New York, USA)

10/04/2012 16:30 to 10/04/2012 17:00

13c, 10W, sunny with white clouds

Seafront park with trees

Hairy Woodpecker [sp] (<i>Picoides villosus</i>)	1
American Robin [sp] (<i>Turdus migratorius</i>)	2
Common Starling [sp] (<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>)	c.10
House Sparrow [sp] (<i>Passer domesticus</i>)	c.30

Central Park (Manhattan, New York, USA)

11/04/2012 08:00 to 11/04/2012 09:30

7c-11c, NW11, light rain to white cloud

Hallett Park to Rambles

Mallard [sp] (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>)	c.20
Mourning Dove [sp] (<i>Zenaid macroura</i>)	3
Red-bellied Woodpecker (<i>Melanerpes carolinus</i>)	2
Downy Woodpecker [sp] (<i>Picoides pubescens</i>)	1
Yellow-shafted Flicker [group] (<i>Colaptes auratus</i> [auratus-group])	2
Blue Jay [sp] (<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>)	c.10
Tufted Titmouse (<i>Baeolophus bicolor</i>)	2
Brown Creeper [sp] (<i>Certhia americana</i>)	4
Blue-grey Gnatcatcher [sp] (<i>Poliottila caerulea</i>)	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet [sp] (<i>Regulus satrapa</i>)	1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet [sp] (<i>Regulus calendula</i>)	c.4
Hermit Thrush [sp] (<i>Catharus guttatus</i>)	3
American Robin [sp] (<i>Turdus migratorius</i>)	c.100
Common Starling [sp] (<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>)	c.40

12/09/2012 23:50:27

Red Fox Sparrow [group] (<i>Passerella iliaca iliaca/zaboria</i>)	2
Song Sparrow [sp] (<i>Melospiza melodia</i>)	2
Swamp Sparrow [sp] (<i>Melospiza georgiana</i>)	1
White-throated Sparrow (<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>)	c.20
Northern Cardinal [sp] (<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>)	1
Red-winged Blackbird [sp] (<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>)	1
Common Grackle [sp] (<i>Quiscalus quiscula</i>)	c.10
House Finch [sp] (<i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>)	3
American Goldfinch [sp] (<i>Spinus tristis</i>)	6
House Sparrow [sp] (<i>Passer domesticus</i>)	c.50

Central Park (Manhattan, New York, USA)

12/04/2012 06:15 to 12/04/2012 08:45

11-18c, WNW15, sunny

North start, Harlem Meer to The rambles

Canada Goose [sp] (<i>Branta canadensis</i>)	2
Gadwall [sp] (<i>Anas strepera</i>)	c.6
Mallard [sp] (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>)	c.18
Bufflehead (<i>Bucephala albeola</i>)	5
Goosander [sp] (<i>Mergus merganser</i>)	2
Ruddy Duck [sp] (<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>)	1
Double-crested Cormorant [sp] (<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>)	3
Great Egret [sp] (<i>Ardea alba</i>)	3
Turkey Vulture [sp] (<i>Cathartes aura</i>)	1
American Coot [sp] (<i>Fulica americana</i>)	2
American Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus smithsonianus</i>)	c.22

Great Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus marinus</i>)	3
Mourning Dove [sp] (<i>Zenaid macroura</i>)	5
Red-bellied Woodpecker (<i>Melanerpes carolinus</i>)	1
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>)	1
Northern Flicker [sp] (<i>Colaptes auratus</i>)	2
Blue Jay [sp] (<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>)	c.11
Tufted Titmouse (<i>Baeolophus bicolor</i>)	5
Brown Creeper [sp] (<i>Certhia americana</i>)	1
House Wren [sp] (<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>)	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet [sp] (<i>Regulus satrapa</i>)	1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet [sp] (<i>Regulus calendula</i>)	1
Hermit Thrush [sp] (<i>Catharus guttatus</i>)	c.5
American Robin [sp] (<i>Turdus migratorius</i>)	c.150
Field Sparrow [sp] (<i>Spizella pusilla</i>)	3
Savannah Sparrow [sp] (<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>)	1
Red Fox Sparrow [group] (<i>Passerella iliaca iliaca/zaboria</i>)	1
Song Sparrow [sp] (<i>Melospiza melodia</i>)	2
White-throated Sparrow (<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>)	6
Dark-eyed Junco [sp] (<i>Junco hyemalis</i>)	2
Northern Cardinal [sp] (<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>)	2
Rusty Blackbird [sp] (<i>Euphagus carolinus</i>)	1
Common Grackle [sp] (<i>Quiscalus quiscula</i>)	c.15
House Finch [sp] (<i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>)	5
American Goldfinch [sp] (<i>Spinus tristis</i>)	1
House Sparrow [sp] (<i>Passer domesticus</i>)	c.10

Bryant Park (Manhattan, New York, USA)

12/04/2012 13:00 to 12/04/2012 14:00

18c, 15WNW, sunny

Blue-grey Gnatcatcher [sp] (<i>Poliottila caerulea</i>)	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet [sp] (<i>Regulus satrapa</i>)	1

Copyright Colin Manville 2012