There were a lot of baby birds and aggressive parents protecting their young throughout the marsh. In the Back 40 area, Darrell & Jim were buzzed by a Cooper’s Hawk which was up in a tree; (the nest was not visible), but the hawk quickly “escorted” them out of the nesting area. In the Riparian Area, Jan & Mary saw a Cooper’s Hawk nest with chicks in it. Terry and Barbara found the island at pond 1 well used by nesting birds which included Western Grebes with 1 bringing nesting material, an avocet chick, nesting Caspian Terns, a Great-tailed Grackle feeding young, and a pair of Egyptian Geese which were also possibly nesting there. At ponds A-D, Mark & Lena saw a Gadwall with 7 ducklings, a Coot chick, an Avocet chick, and a juv. Yellow Warbler. At Pond E, Carol & Nancy watched a mother Cinnamon Teal swim around the pond with her 7 ducklings. One of the Black-necked Stilts had 3 chicks which were huddled beneath her while she stood stationary along the shore with her outstretched wings covering them. A very aggressive American Avocet chased 4 Mallards to a corner of the pond out of sight and then flew after a pair of Black-necked Stilts until they left the area. “He” also chased a Mallard mother with her ducklings and then found a juv. Mallard which was swimming along the shore and chased it up on the land where it was forced to hide behind Carol’s stool, out of sight, so the avocet couldn’t find it, though he sure looked. After chasing all the Mallards into a corner of the pond, the avocet and his mate flew over to an empty dirt hummock where he promptly sat down on the top of it in nesting position while he stood on guard at the bottom. . . The lone Greater Yellowlegs was calling as he stalked around the pond. Yellow Warblers were singing loudly from the tree tops as were the Bell’s Vireos from their hiding places deep in the shrubbery. A variety of swallows were swooping low over the ponds catching insects, Caspian Terns were calling from high above as they flew overhead, and the Common Yellowthroats were singing lustily. It was a wonderful morning to be out birding!
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