

WHERE-ON-EARTH & CRAZY-AS-A-COOT BIRD WALKS

December 17, 2024

Incidental Notes

Hi Everyone,

December 17th, on Block Island, was breezy and cloudy – generally not conducive to birding. The group chose a spot out of the wind with hopes of some duck sightings. We were surprised and delighted to see the normally secretive Wilson's Snipe. Not one, but two sprung out of the tussocks of Seneca Swamp. Most of the group had not seen a snipe before that morning.

As for fresh water ducks, Dan and Martha had some wonderful sightings of Common Merganser and Canvasback. These two species are rarely seen on BI – way out here in this marine environment.

Thanks to one-and-all who spent time outside observing birds, and then sharing their sightings. And remember, no matter where on earth you are, enjoy the birds and the day.

Peace, Kim.

-
- Both lists are an aggregate of observations from the two groups of observers (B.I. and Afar).
 - A note of caution: when counting at a bird feeder it is the most reliable/conservative to count the number of a species seen at any one time. Observations in *Gray* are deemed to be a double observation and are therefore not counted in the list. Care should be taken to not over count by tallying the cumulative number seen.
 - [Things in brackets are notes by me - kg] How I quantify: Few=3, Several=5, Many/Numerous=10, Flock = 15+

Block Island

(26 species)

Canada Goose – 5	Great Black-backed Gull – 5	American Robin – 75
American Black Duck – 3	Gull species – 250	Northern Mockingbird – 1
Mallard – 8	Mourning Dove – 60	E. Starling – 4
Ring-necked Duck – 13	Downy Woodpecker – 2	Song Sparrow – 6
Bufflehead – 4	Northern Flicker – 2	White-throated Sparrow – 6
Ring-necked Pheasant – 3	Blue Jay – 20	Slate-colored Junco – 1
Marsh Hawk – 1	American Crow – 13	Northern Cardinal – 15
Wilson's Snipe – 2	Black-capped Chickadee – 7	Brown-headed Cowbird – 4
Amer. Herring Gull – 5	Carolina Wren – 13	House Finch – 9

From Afar: South Kingstown, Providence RI; Jamesport, NY; Cambridge & Westport, MA.

(44 species)

Canada Geese – 200	Great Blue Heron – 2	Downy Woodpecker – 2
American Black Duck – 3	Turkey Vulture – 2	Hairy Woodpecker – 2
Mallard – 7	Bald Eagle – 1	Northern Flicker – 1
Canvasback – 1	Red-tailed Hawk – 5	Blue Jay – 21
Ring-necked Duck – 30	Ring-billed Gull – 1	American Crow – 4
Scaup species – 15	Herring Gull – 100	Fish Crow – 75
Bufflehead – 2	Gull species – 9	Black-capped Chickadee – 13
Common Merganser – 6	Rock Pigeon – 3	Tufted Titmouse – 3
Hooded Merganser – 11	Mourning Dove – 11	White-breasted Nuthatch – 5
Pied-billed Grebe – 1	Red-bellied Woodpecker – 6	Carolina Wren – 13

Golden-crowned Kinglet – 1
Eastern Bluebird – 1
American Robin – 8
Northern Mockingbird – 5
European Starling – 166

Eastern Towhee – 2
Fox Sparrow – 1
Song Sparrow – 5
White-throated Sparrow – 11
Slate-colored Junco¹ – 26

Northern Cardinal – 10
Red-winged Blackbird – 4
House finch – 9
American Goldfinch – 9
House Sparrow – 37

Cathy Joyce & Nigel Grindley – Hello Kim, Here is our bird list from today, in our backyard and in Warden's Pond: Mourning Dove – 40, Brown-headed Cowbird – 4, Blue Jay – 2, House Finch – 7, Black-capped Chickadee – 6, White-throated Sparrow – 3, Song Sparrow – 3, Junco – 1, Cardinal – 3, Carolina Wren – 1, American Crow – 7, American Black Duck – 3. Thanks, as always, for a very enjoyable Coot Walk. Cheers, Cathy & Nigel

Crazy-as-a-Coot Bird Walkers – Mitchell Lane, Washington, Rhode Island, US. Dec 17, 2024 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM. Protocol: Traveling 1.0 mile(s). Checklist Comments: Cloudy, 50F with SW wind. Participants: Heather Hatfield, Nigel Grindley, Cathy Joyce, Judy Gray, Amy Keeler and Kim G. 23 species (+1 other taxa) Canada Goose 5, Mallard 8, Ring-necked Duck 13, Bufflehead 4, Ring-necked Pheasant 3, Mourning Dove 20, Wilson's Snipe 2 (The 2 birds were seen together at edge of Seneca Swamp, they flew off together, and circled back offering several good looks in flight before diving back into the cover of the swamp's tussocks.), American Herring Gull 5, Great Black-backed Gull 5, gull sp. 250, Northern Harrier 1, Downy Woodpecker 2, Northern Flicker 2, Blue Jay 18, American Crow 6, Black-capped Chickadee 1, Carolina Wren 12, European Starling 4, Northern Mockingbird 1, American Robin 75, House Finch 2, White-throated Sparrow 3, Song Sparrow 2, Northern Cardinal 12.

Dan Kasuba & Martha Villie-Gass – Hi Kim, Martha and I got out on the 17th and walked around fresh pond and Cambridge.MA. It was relatively warm and a mixture of sun and clouds, and the following were our observations: 1 red-tailed hawk, 9 gull species,1 hairy woodpecker, 6 common mergansers, 1 canvasback (possibly the lone returnee who is there each winter), approx 30 ring-necked ducks, 8 hooded mergansers, 5 blue jays, 4 chickadees, 2 gold finches, 1 mockingbird, 1 great blue heron, and 2 American crows. Thanks and happy solstice and Merry Christmas! Dan

Lauren Miller-Donnelly – Hi Kim, I'll try something different and share a report from the **Providence DEM** neighborhood. When I approached the office on Tuesday the 17th I noticed a murder of crow along the Woonasquetucket river. So I grabbed my binoculars and took a side trip. When I approached some of the crows were bathing along the shore in the morning sun. I counted at least 75 Fish Crows! As I walked along the shore of the river I heard a White throated a sparrow and 3 chickadees were popping around as well. Here is my list from my 10 minute side-trip: Mallard 5, Rock Pigeon 3, Ring-billed Gull 1, Fish Crow 75, Black-capped Chickadee 2, White-throated Sparrow 1, Have a wonderful after-Christmas Day count. Sincerely, Lauren

Maggie Komosinski – Hi Kim, Here's my list of sightings for the day; 23 species.

Just FYI: This past Saturday (doing the CBC) we had a great view of an Eastern Screech-owl (red morph) in a tree hole — lovely! I hear them occasionally but rarely spot one. Best, Maggie.

Jamesport NY bird sightings, December 17, 2024

Canada Goose 140 (estimate), Hooded Merganser 3, Great Blue Heron 1, Turkey Vulture 1, Red-tailed Hawk 2, Mourning Dove 8, Red-bellied Woodpecker 3, Downy Woodpecker 1, Blue Jay 9, Am. Crow 3, Black-capped Chickadee 4, White-breasted Nuthatch 1, Carolina Wren 8, American Robin 3, Northern Mockingbird 4, European Starling 160 (estimate), Song Sparrow 2, White-throated Sparrow 4, House Finch 9, American Goldfinch 6, House Sparrow 22, Dark-eyed Junco 3, Northern Cardinal 7.

Tim Mooney – Hi Kim – I've been meaning to get a Dec 17 list to you. Aside from the list, I've been hearing a Great Horned Owl hooting before dawn near my house. And one morning (December 16, I believe) a second

owl hooted back! I loved it. They went back and forth several times, and eventually the second owl started earlier, “interrupting” the first owl. Bunnies, look out! Happy solstice and holidays. Turkey Vulture – 1, Red-tailed Hawk – 2, Canada Goose – 40 (estimated, overhead at dusk), American Crow – 2, Blue Jay – 6, Slate-colored Junco – 21, White-throated Sparrow – 1, Song Sparrow – 1, House Sparrow – 15, White-breasted Nuthatch – 2, Red-bellied Woodpecker – 3, Northern Flicker – 1, American Robin – 3, European Starling – 5, Tufted Titmouse – 1, Black-capped Chickadee – 1, Carolina Wren – 3, Northern Cardinal – 1

Tom Fetherston – 17 Dec 2024 Good morning, Kim – The day began warm with wind and rain before sunrise, then drizzle. Bird activity was slow to start, then picked up somewhat. I left at 0900 to go Christmas shopping, not returning till 1430 when it was warm and sunny. Much more happening then. The final list is similar to last week, many of the migratory individuals probably residents now. In the afternoon the pond was completely free of ice, high from the recent rain. After a long period of low water when they could touch bottom, the Labs were swimming as soon as they jumped off the dock!

Notes for this week:

- Evidently word is getting out about the buffet here. The male Eastern towhee has been joined by a female. They are the “red eyed” phenotype according to Sibley, which are most common in the northern part of their range.
- The pair of bluebirds I noted in my last report have told their friends about the mealworm feeder, and I’ve seen up to six lined up taking turns some days. Yesterday there was only one male before I left in the morning, but the cup in the feeder was empty in the afternoon so the flock must have enjoyed brunch during my absence.
- When I walked to the dock first thing in the morning, a juvenile bald eagle cruised by, hugging the south shore. A trio of black ducks flushed out of the marsh as the eagle approached and made a beeline for the north shore, but the eagle was uninterested.
- In the afternoon Canada geese were camped by the dock and obligingly allowed me to get an exact count. A small flock of scaup was off to the east, too distant to positively ID. Although most of the ones I’ve been able to get a good look at here are greater scaup, I’ve also seen ring-necked ducks and lesser scaup so listed them as “scaup sp.”

Here’s the list. Birds seen on or around Worden’s Pond are annotated with WP. Estimates noted with an asterisk (*) Birds in the field or at the feeders were counted as singles unless present simultaneously or different sexes. Canada goose (20) WP, Scaup (sp.) (15*) WP, Bufflehead (2) WP, American black duck (3) WP, Mallard (2) WP, Pie-billed grebe WP, Herring gull (100*) WP, Bald eagle WP, Blue jay, Red winged blackbird (4), European starling, Dark-eyed junco (2), American robin (2), White-throated sparrow (5), Song sparrow (2), Fox sparrow, Eastern towhee (2), Eastern bluebird, American goldfinch, Tufted titmouse (2), Black-capped chickadee (2), White-breasted nuthatch (2), Golden crowned kinglet, Northern cardinal (2), Downy woodpecker, Hairy woodpecker, Mourning dove (3), Carolina wren (2). Cheers, Fether

-
- ¹**Dark-eyed Junco** (*Junco hyemalis*) is a species that “includes at least six recognizable populations.” (The Sibley Guide to Birds). A junco seen on the east coast is Slate-colored Junco (*Junco hyemalis*). On the west coast, both Slate-colored and Oregon Junco (*Junco hyemalis*) can be found. So, when I am recording Junco sightings on the east coast I will list them as Slate-colored; however west coast Juncos will be recorded as Dark-eyed unless the reporter stipulates Oregon or Slate-colored. What fun it will be if we get reports of one of the other Juncos which are generally seen in limited areas “mid-country”.
 - ²Q. What is a ²**Myrtle Warbler**? A. Yellow-rumped Warbler (YRWA), *Setophaga coronata*. The species YRWA is comprised of two subspecies, once considered separate species. The eastern population/subspecies was known as Myrtle Warbler (*coronata*), and the western population/subspecies known as Audubon’s Warbler (*auduboni*). These two regional populations have been “lumped” to form Yellow-rumped Warbler.