

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

December 3, 2024

## Incidental Notes

Hi Everyone,

This report reveals an unusual occurrence – more species seen on Block Island than the from afar. The likely reason is the relatively low number of off island observers reporting in.

Please take note of Lauren's description of her bird feeder offerings.

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.

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- 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

(53 species)

Canada Goose – 110	Bald Eagle – 3 (maybe 2)	Common Raven – 3
Snow Goose – 3	Marsh Hawk – 5	Black-capped Chickadee – 11
Gadwall – 3	Cooper's Hawk – 1	White-breasted Nuthatch – 1
American Wigeon – 1	Sharp-shinned Hawk – 2	Carolina Wren – 15
American Black Duck – 7	Black-bellied Plover – 6	American Robin – 115
Mallard – 46+	Sanderling – 20+	Gray Catbird – 1
Green-winged Teal – 8	Dunlin – 3	Northern Mockingbird – 1
Ring-necked Duck – 3	Amer. Herring Gull – 17+	E. Starling – 316+
Common Eider – 9	Great Black-backed Gull – 6+	Song Sparrow – 4
Bufflehead – 66+	Gull species – 103	White-throated Sparrow – 8
Hooded Merganser – 10	Mourning Dove – 67	Slate-colored Junco – 3
Red-breasted Merganser – 8+	Belted Kingfisher – 1	Northern Cardinal – 27
Ruddy Duck – 35	Red-bellied Woodpecker – 2	Red-winged Blackbird – 12
Ring-necked Pheasant – 4	Downy Woodpecker – 4	Eastern Meadowlark – 12
Common Loon – 1	Northern Flicker – 1	Brown-headed Cowbird – 1
Northern Gannet – 9	American Kestrel – 1	House Finch – 9
Double-cr. Cormorant – 1	Merlin – 3	House Sparrow – 6
Cormorant species – 1	Blue Jay – 11	
Great Blue Heron – 1	American Crow – 76	

**From Afar:** South Kingstown, Cumberland, RI; Westport, MA.


(34 species)

Canada Geese – 31	Hooded Merganser – 1	Mourning Dove – 17
Greater Scaup – 24	Red-tailed Hawk – 2	Red-bellied Woodpecker – 3
Bufflehead – 2	Herring Gull – 15	Downy Woodpecker – 3

Hairy Woodpecker – 1  
Northern Flicker – 1  
Blue Jay – 11  
American Crow – 16  
Common Raven – 2  
Black-capped Chickadee – 3  
Tufted Titmouse – 4  
White-breasted Nuthatch – 7  
Brown Creeper – 1

Carolina Wren – 3  
Golden-crowned Kinglet – 1  
Eastern Bluebird – 3  
American Robin – 4  
Northern Mockingbird – 1  
European Starling – 12  
Eastern Towhee – 1  
Fox Sparrow – 1  
Song Sparrow – 7

White-throated Sparrow – 8  
Slate-colored Junco<sup>1</sup> – 37  
Northern Cardinal – 5  
Red-winged Blackbird – 2  
House finch – 16  
American Goldfinch – 1  
House Sparrow – 11

**Amy Keeler** – December 3, 2024. Going about my day: 1 Raven, 2 Bald Eagle, 1 Cormorant, 4 Bluejay, 6 Cardinal, 4 RN Pheasant, 8 Gannet (Mansion B), 50+ Gull Species, 50+ Bufflehead, 15 Mallard , 100+ Starling, 100+ American Crow, 4 Carolina Wren, 1 Downy Woodpecker, 3 Northern Harrier, 6 House Sparrow, 8 American Robin, 1 Catbird, 14 Mourning Dove, 32 Canadian Geese.

**Chris Blane** – Called in with a Kestrel, 2 Merlins and a Red-bellied in his yard [Corn Neck Rd.]

**Crazy-as-a-Coot Bird Walkers** – Fresh Swamp Preserve east (Payne fields) to Sands Pond, Washington, Rhode Island, US. Dec 3, 2024 8:00 AM - 9:30 AM. Protocol: Traveling 1.0 mile(s). Checklist Comments: Sunny, 30F, light nw wind. Walked the perimeter of "Payne Farm" fields from the Fresh Swamp Preserve trail (east/off Payne Rd.) and paths to Sands Pond. Participants: John Formica, Socha Cohen, Susan Matheke, Cindy Davis, Nigel Grindley, Cathy Joyce, Ellen Davis, Heather Hatfield, Amy Keeler, & Kim G. Note: the Bald Eagle was seen by most, while en route to breakfast, standing on a mud flat at Seneca Swamp eating unidentified prey. 24 species (+1 other taxa). Snow Goose 3, Mallard 6, American Black Duck 5, Bufflehead 6, Hooded Merganser 10, Ruddy Duck 33, Mourning Dove 12, Great Black-backed Gull 1, gull sp. 3, Double-crested Cormorant 1, Northern Harrier 1, Bald Eagle 1, Belted Kingfisher 1, Downy Woodpecker 2, Northern Flicker 1, Blue Jay 1, American Crow 5, Black-capped Chickadee 3, Carolina Wren 10, European Starling 16, American Robin 100, House Finch 5, Song Sparrow 3, Eastern Meadowlark 12, Northern Cardinal 12.

**Heather Hatfield** – At the Pit (Westside Rd.) Mallard 7, Green-winged Teal 8; Dorries Cove Rd. – Sharp-shinned Hawk, Starlings 200, Mockingbird 1, Bald Eagle 2, Mourning Dove 6; Heinz Field – Canada Goose 27, Merlin 1; Home on Old Town Rd. – BC Chickadee 3, WB Nuthatch 1, Red-bellied Woodpecker 1, Downy 1, Mourning Dove 14, Blue Jay 2, Cardinal 3, White-throated Sp. 7, RW Blackbird 11.

**Kim Gaffett** – Going about my day: At home – Canada Goose 5, Mallard 15+, Carolina Wren 1, C. Raven 2. Andy's Way – Song Sp. 1, Mourning dove 3, Sanderling 20+, Black-bellied Plover 6, Dunlin 3, Red-br Merg 8+, Herring Gull 15+, GBBG 5+, Great Blue Heron 1, Bufflehead 10+, Marsh Hawk 1.

**Lauren Miller-Donnelly** – Hi Kim, Just a quick count at the bird feeders before heading to Providence on December 3rd. At my feeders I feed safflower-only in the tube feeders, a few upsidedown-suets and I recently purchased a mix that has bugs in it from Ace hardware: "[Wild Delight Bugs N' Berries Wild Bird Food](#)" and that seems to be a big hit around the yard. I use a platform feeder and I also sprinkle it on the stonewall, sparingly. Tues Dec 3rd: Mourning Dove 6, Red-bellied Woodpecker 1, Downy Woodpecker 1, Blue Jay 1, Black-capped Chickadee 1, White-breasted Nuthatch 2, European Starling 5, Eastern Bluebird 1, American Robin 1, House Sparrow 2, House Finch 16, Dark-eyed Junco 5, White-throated Sparrow 1, Song Sparrow 3. Thank you for compiling these lists, I really enjoy reading them. Sincerely, Lauren

**Nigel Grindley & Cathy Joyce** – Hi Kim. Here's our Where on Earth list from the feeders and yard plus a walk down Cooneymus past the swamp and to the beach. Canada Goose 46, American Wigeon 1, Gadwall 3, Am. Black Duck 3, Mallard 3, Ruddy Duck 2

Common Eider 9, Common Loon 1, Northern Gannet 1, Sharp-shinned Hawk 1, Cooper's Hawk 1 (the Cooper's was chasing the Sharpie around our feeders!!! I don't think it appreciated the competition.), Herring Gull 2, Gull sp. 50, Mourning Dove 18, Blue Jay 4, American Crow 21, Black-capped Chickadee 5, American Robin 7, White-throated Sparrow 1, Dark-eyed Junco 3, Northern Cardinal 6, Red-winged Blackbird 1, Brown-headed Cowbird 1, House Finch 4, {and, in case no-one else mentions them: Am. Black Duck 2, Ring-necked Duck 3 on Peckham Pond.} Very enjoyable walk and social breakfast. Very many thanks, Nigel & Cathy.

**Sam Spier** – 9:29a.m. texted: “There is a bald eagle hanging at Seneca Swamp, a big one.”

**Tim Mooney** – Hi Kim – Good to see you, yesterday, if only for a short time. Yes, we got about an inch of snow on Thursday morning, which was a surprise. Here's what I can remember from last Tuesday. As I mentioned, I'm seeing quite a few more juncos around the neighborhood this year, especially in the past couple weeks. I'm seeing little flocks of 20-25 birds in residential front yards, instead of the usual 3 or 4 together. Best, Tim

PS – Geoff Dennis shared this recent photo of a banded female Ipswich Savannah Sparrow at Goosewing Beach. He found out she was banded on Assateague Island by William & Mary scientists last winter, as part of a sparrow diet study. [This is cool. Note that is overall much lighter than a Song Sp. especially around the face. -KG]

Red-tailed Hawk – 1,  
Canada Goose – 21 (flying fairly low, to the SW),  
American Crow – 4,  
Blue Jay – 5,  
Slate-colored Junco – 30 (est.),  
White-throated Sparrow – 2,  
Song Sparrow – 1,  
House Sparrow – 9,  
White-breasted Nuthatch – 3,  
Red-bellied Woodpecker – 2,  
Northern Flicker – 1,  
Downy Woodpecker – 1,  
American Robin – 2,  
European Starling – 7,  
Tufted Titmouse – 1,  
Carolina Wren – 2,  
Northern Cardinal – 3,  
Northern Mockingbird – 1.



**Tom Fetherston** – Good evening Kim, great day for birding 😊 3 Dec 2024: A cold start (15) but lots of bird activity. There was a good mix of year-round residents, common winter vacationers and species not seen as often. Most birds were observed in the yard, around the feeders and on the pond. There was a fringe of ice out 100' but plenty of open water. The drake hooded merganser was foraging along that edge. A handsome fellow to be sure! Notes for this week:

- Starting shortly before Thanksgiving, I began seeing a fox sparrow and a male Eastern towhee, both striking birds. When the fox sparrow is feeding among song and white-throated sparrows, its size and reddish coloration really stands out. I'm glad both of them decided to be counted today.
- I hadn't observed any bluebirds since late summer, but this morning a pair was at the suet feeder! I put mealworms in another feeder, and they found them in short order. A nice surprise 😊
- There was a flock of twelve American crows in some trees on the west side of the pond and four by the shore. No raptor was evident, perhaps there was an animal carcass in the water I couldn't see from that distance, but the aggregation suggested it.

- There were certainly more white-throated sparrows and song sparrows than recorded, but when a “sparrow carpet” is kicking leaves around and moving constantly I could only count a few at any given time.

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 (10) WP, Greater scaup (24\*) WP, Bufflehead (2) WP, Hooded merganser WP, Herring gull (15\*) WP, American crow (12) WP, Common raven (2), Blue jay (5), Red winged blackbird (2), Dark-eyed junco (2), American robin, White-throated sparrow (5), Song sparrow (3), Fox sparrow, Eastern towhee, Eastern bluebird (2), American robin, American goldfinch, Tufted titmouse (3), Black-capped chickadee (2), White-breasted nuthatch (2), Golden crowned kinglet, Brown creeper, Northern cardinal (2), Downy woodpecker, Hairy woodpecker, Mourning dove (11), Carolina wren, Red-tailed hawk. Cheers, Fether.

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- <sup>1</sup>**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”.
- <sup>2</sup>Q. What is a <sup>2</sup>**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.