



2017 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The 66th annual Sussex circle Christmas Count was held on Sunday, December 17th. Thank you to the thirty-one observers who counted in twelve field teams and the three feeder watchers who contributed data. This was the first year – but hopefully not the last – in which we had feeder watchers. Special thanks go to Merle and Roger Tanis for once again opening their home to us for the wrap-up and soup potluck.

The weather was primarily overcast, but light breezes and no precipitation made for a relatively comfortable count day. A total of 83 species was seen, which is above the count circle average of 72 species. We've been above that average every year since 2004.

Other highlights of this year's count:

- We saw a total of 48,484 birds, which is a new record for our count circle. The last record was 40,456 set in 1991. This included a record high for 9 species as follows:
 - ✓ 16 Cooper's hawks, breaking last year's record of 14
 - ✓ 9 red-shouldered hawks. Last high count was 4, seen in both 1955 and 2016.
 - ✓ 104 red-bellied woodpeckers. Last high count was 80, set in 2002.
 - ✓ 21 yellow-bellied sapsuckers. Last high count was 13, set in 2001.
 - ✓ 23 pileated woodpeckers. Last high count was 20, set in 2014.
 - ✓ 14 common ravens. Last high count was 10, set in 2008. This species wasn't seen on the count until 2000, and has been seen almost every year since then.
 - ✓ 5,824 American robins. Last high count was 3,922, set in 2015.
 - ✓ 761 white-throated sparrows. Last high count was 617, set in 2011.
 - ✓ 3,006 red-winged blackbirds. Last high count was 1,288, set in 1998.
- This was the first year since 1988 in which great black-backed gull was missed during the actual count, though it was a count-week bird (16 seen at SCMUA).
- Other count week birds included a brown thrasher that had been visiting feeders at Karyn Cichocki's residence almost daily – just not on count day – and 2 long-tailed ducks at Culvers Lake. This duck has been seen during count week in 8 different years since 2003, but has only been seen on 2 actual count days (1974 & 1992).
- Not surprisingly, most of the waterfowl observed were seen on either Culvers Lake or Lake Mohawk, since both still had open water.
- Two cackling geese were seen, making this the 6th consecutive year for the count or count week.
- 7,628 Canada geese were seen; this was the 2nd highest tally (highest set in 2014 at 8,420).
- Only 191 mallards were seen, well below the count circle average of 366 for the species, and the lowest number since 1973 when 142 were tallied.

- Five adult and three immature bald eagles were noted, continuing the above-count-average annual trend for this species.
- Five Virginia rails and a sora responded to taped calls played at Hyper Humus. There have been only two other times that five or more Virginia rails were noted during the count (six in 1986, five in 1994). Sora has only been noted at three other times in our circle: during the count days of 1967 and 1970 and during count week in 1968.
- This was the 7th consecutive year in which an eastern phoebe was seen, and the 10th consecutive year in which gray catbirds were seen. Catbird has been an almost annual bird since 2001.
- An American pipit was seen and photographed near a cattle watering trough in Hamburg. This is only the 7th time this species has been seen during our count; the last time was in 2003.
- 8,007 common grackles were seen, the 2nd highest tally in count history, second only to last year's tally of 15,039. Once again, most of them were seen at the southern end of Hyper Humus outside Newton.

The 2018 count will be held on Sunday, December 16th, 2018, so please mark your calendars. New participants, particularly feeder watchers, are welcome and encouraged to join us!

Good birding to you all in the new year, and thanks again for participating!

Marianne Ofenloch
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SUSSEX COUNTY CBC

66TH ANNUAL COUNT TOTALS

12/17/17

Snow Goose	162	Rock Pigeon	482	American Tree Sparrow	83
Cackling Goose	2	Mourning Dove	134	Field Sparrow	8
Canada Goose	7,628	Eastern Screech Owl	2	Fox Sparrow	3
Mute Swan	52	Great Horned Owl	4	Dark-eyed Junco	905
Wood Duck	1	Barred Owl		White-crowned Sparrow	5
Gadwall		Belted Kingfisher	11	White-throated Sparrow	761
American Wigeon	2	Red-bellied Woodpecker	104	Song Sparrow	119
American Black Duck	49	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	21	Swamp Sparrow	10
Mallard	191	Downy Woodpecker	91	Eastern Towhee	
Northern Pintail		Hairy Woodpecker	15	Northern Cardinal	106
Green-winged Teal		Northern Flicker	35	Red-winged Blackbird	3,006
Ring-necked Duck	43	Pileated Woodpecker	23	Common Grackle	8,007
Greater Scaup		American Kestrel	2	Brown-headed Cowbird	346
Lesser Scaup	12	Merlin		House Finch	302
Long-tailed Duck	CW	Eastern Phoebe	1	Purple Finch	5
Bufflehead	39	Blue Jay	307	Pine Siskin	
Common Goldeneye	55	American Crow	595	American Goldfinch	171
Hooded Merganser	97	Fish Crow	50	House Sparrow	466
Common Merganser	124	Common Raven	14		
Ruddy Duck	69	Horned Lark	6		
Ring-necked Pheasant	2	Black-capped Chickadee	163	Total Species:	83
Wild Turkey	122	Tufted Titmouse	178	Total Individuals	48,484
Pied-billed Grebe	4	Red-breasted Nuthatch		Count Week species	3
Great Blue Heron	10	White-breasted Nuthatch	103		
Black Vulture	120	Brown Creeper	1	# of Teams	12
Turkey Vulture	47	Winter Wren	2	# of Participants on Teams	31
Northern Harrier	2	Carolina Wren	7	# of Feeder Watchers	3
Sharp-shinned Hawk	8	Golden-crowned Kinglet	37		
Cooper's Hawk	16	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	Low Temp (F)	29
Bald Eagle	8	Eastern Bluebird	142	High Temp (F)	36
Red-shouldered Hawk	9	Hermit Thrush	10	Skies, A.M.	Ovrkst
Red-tailed Hawk	76	American Robin	5,824	Skies, P.M.	Ovrkst
Virginia Rail	5	Gray Catbird	2	Winds (MPH)	0-6
Sora	1	Brown Thrasher	CW		
American Coot	35	Northern Mockingbird	36		
Killdeer		European Starling	10,598		
Wilson's Snipe		American Pipit	1		
Ring-billed Gull	5,659	Cedar Waxwing	111		
Herring Gull	358	Snow Bunting			
Great Black-backed Gull	CW	Yellow-rumped Warbler	21		

PARTICIPANTS BY ZONE – SUSSEX CBC 12/17/2017

- Zone 1** Karyn Cichocki, Allison Orsi
- Zone 2** Fred Weber, Erin Keller
 Feeder Watchers – Lee McQuillin & Terry McQuillin
- Zone 3** Marianne Ofenloch, Giselle Smisko
- Zone 4 & 5** Donna Traylor, Don Traylor, Amy Supko, Dave Supko
- Zone 6 & 7** Marge Barrett, Joe Burgiel, Roberta Bramhall, Bob Barth
- Zone 8 & 9** Beverly Robertson, William Test, Ian Brooks, Jason Lambert
- Zone 10 & 11** Alan Boyd, Dennis Briede
- Zone 12** Tom Halliwell, Hank Burk, George Nixon
- Zone 13 & 14** George Johnson, Rosemary Popa
- Zone 15** Ken Witkowski
- Zone 16** Merle Tanis, Roger Tanis, Bill Warren
- Zone 17 & 18** Blais Brancheau, Bob Templin
 Feeder Watcher – Connie Warren

SUSSEX COUNTY CBC 66TH ANNUAL ZONE TOTALS *(high count among zones in red)* 12/17/17

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5	6,7	8,9	10,11	12	13,14	15	16	17,18	TOTAL
Snow Goose		1	1				60	50				50		162
Cackling Goose		1						1						2
Canada Goose	307	3000	1124	640	50	206	228	725	70	325	90	363	500	7628
Mute Swan	8	12					7					8	17	52
Wood Duck			1											1
Gadwall														
Am. Wigeon		2												2
Am. Black Duck	2	15	1				7	2	15			3	4	49
Mallard	37	18	6			16	5	11	10		4	30	54	191
Grn-winged Teal														
Northern Pintail														
Ring-necked Duck		40									1	2		43
Greater Scaup														
Lesser Scaup		12												12
Bufflehead		36									3			39
Com. Goldeneye		55												55
Hood. Merganser		70									18		9	97
Com. Merganser		14									20		90	124
Ruddy Duck		25											44	69
Rng-nckd Pheas.							2							2

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5	6,7	8,9	10,11	12	13,14	15	16	17,18	TOTAL
Wild Turkey		2			96		4		20					122
Pied-billed Grebe		2											2	4
Great Blue Heron		1	3	1		1	1	3						10
Black Vulture	3	3	25		15	2	30	21	6			3	12	120
Turkey Vulture					9	1	15	2	5	4	2	4	5	47
Northern Harrier			1						1					2
Shrp-shind Hawk				1			3		2	1	1			8
Cooper's Hawk		1	1	2		1	4	4	2			1		16
Bald Eagle		3							1		1	1	2	8
Red-shoul Hawk		2	1				2	3					1	9
Red-tailed Hawk	4	4	11	4	3	5	10	7	11	4	3	5	5	76
Virginia Rail									5					5
Sora									1					1
American Coot		22											13	35
Killdeer														
Wilson's Snipe														
Ring-billed Gull	54	5000	12	2	5	1	134	15	340	1	2	3	90	5659
Herring Gull		200	11				1		9			2	135	358
Gr Blk-bckd Gull														
Rock Pigeon	6	60	77	99		70	71	50	38	2			9	482
Mourning Dove	3	4	14	25	8	14	11	12	11		5	9	18	134
East. Screech Owl								1		1				2
Gr. Horned Owl		1						3						4
Barred Owl														
Belted Kingfisher	1		2					5					3	11
Rd-bellied Wood.	4	21	7	2	4	4	12	12	7		10	12	9	104
Yel-bel Sapsucker	3	5	4				3	1	1		1	3		21
Downy Wdpecker	9	15	7	1	4	2	9	9	9		5	10	11	91
Hairy Wdpecker		4	1					5	1		1	3		15
Northern Flicker	4	3	4	2			3	5	12	1		1		35
Pileat. Wdpecker	2	2	3	1				5	2		3	3	2	23
American Kestrel										1			1	2
Merlin														
Eastern Phoebe								1						1
Blue Jay	15	37	32	21	9	16	37	30	47		19	23	21	307
American Crow	14	28	43	29	12	14	194	50	100	41	9	24	37	595
Fish Crow									10				40	50
Common Raven	3	4			1			1	2		2		1	14
Horned Lark			6											6
Blk-cp Chickadee	11	16	6		1	5	39	18	11		16	21	19	163
Tufted Titmouse	4	19	10	6	4	7	27	20	13		12	34	22	178
Red-br Nuthatch														

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5	6,7	8,9	10,11	12	13,14	15	16	17,18	TOTAL
Wh-br Nuthatch	14	26	5		1	2	2	14	2		9	13	15	103
Brown Creeper												1		1
Winter Wren								1	1					2
Carolina Wren	3	2	6		3		5	9	4		3	4	7	46
Golden-cr Kinglet	2	1	4			3	6	13	8					37
Ruby-cr Kinglet								1						1
Eastern Bluebird	7	25	10	8		14	14	6	27	28			3	142
Hermit Thrush		1		1	1	1		5	1					10
American Robin	4	80	26	32	96	68	844	639	4000	2	18	15		5824
Gray Catbird							1	1						2
Brown Thrasher														
No. Mockingbird	5	3	4	1	1	1	12	3	3	2		1		36
European Starling	43	500	336	74	644	204	299	44	8000	250	150	10	44	10598
American Pipit							1							1
Cedar Waxwing			15				92	4						111
Snow Bunting														
Yell-rmp Warbler							8	5	8					21
Am. Tree Sparrow	7	2	2		4	3		8	50	1		2	4	83
Field Sparrow	1		1								4		2	8
Fox Sparrow									3					3
Dark-eyed Junco	97	58	47	47	40	142	200	105	29	7	34	46	53	905
Wh-crn Sparrow				5										5
Wh-thr Sparrow	73	160	109	23	65	33	54	102	80	3	5	25	29	761
Song Sparrow	20	28	11	7	2	1	8	19	7	2	4	4	6	119
Swamp Sparrow		2						2	1		4		1	10
Eastern Towhee														
North. Cardinal	20	8	16		3	2	6	7	11	1	3	19	10	106
Rd-wnged Blkbird		2	1			1		2	3000					3006
Rusty Blackbird														
Common Grackle		1							8000		3	3		8007
Br-head Cowbird	1	300	4	1					1			39		346
House Finch	8	2	207			6	14	18	15	7	11	4	10	302
Purple Finch	1	3						1						5
Amer. Goldfinch	1	6	7		12	4	53	19	14		14	16	25	171
House Sparrow	57		82	24	1	8	64	55	110	10	5	17	33	466
TOTAL SPECIES PER ZONE	38	59	46	26	27	32	44	53	52	21	36	40	43	48484
83 SPECIES 2017														
Bald eagle ages		2 ad, 1 im							1 adult		1 adult	1 imm	1 ad, 1 im	

Suss CBC Species History: # of years seen (out of 66 possible years), high count, & average # seen per year

SPECIES	yrs	high ct	ave	SPECIES	yrs	high ct	ave	SPECIES	yrs	high ct	ave	SPECIES	yrs	high ct	ave
GWF Goose	1	1	1	No Harrier	42	12	3	Gyrfalcon	0	0	0	Field Sparr	43	33	5
Sn Goose	24	8110	607	Shrp-shn Hwk	47	16	5	Monk Pkeet	1	1	1	Lark Sparr	2	1	1
Brant	3	3	2	Coop Hawk	43	16	6	Nnday Pket	1	1	1	Fox Spar	41	51	7
Cck Goose	5	2	1	No Goshawk	10	1	1	E Phoebe	13	2	1	DE Junco	66	1422	674
Can Goose	48	8420	2634	Bald Eagle	25	16	4	No Shrike	20	6	2	WC Sparrow	30	69	11
Mute Swan	61	236	58	Rd-shld Hawk	24	9	2	Logg Shrike	6	2	1	WT Sparrow	66	761	157
Tund Swan	4	8	3	Rd-tail Hawk	66	138	54	Blue Jay	66	593	253	Vesp Sparr	5	8	3
Wood Dck	38	20	4	Rough Hawk	27	7	2	Am Crow	66	1802	548	Savan Sparr	7	4	2
Gadwall	19	44	17	King Rail	0	0	0	Fish Crow	14	70	23	Song Sparr	66	230	76
Eur Wign	1	2	2	Virginia Rail	30	6	2	Com Raven	16	14	4	Linc Sparr	1	1	1
Am Wign	18	57	10	Sora	3	2	2	Horned Lark	43	991	182	Swmp Spar	63	69	14
Am Bk Dck	65	314	92	Cm Gallinule	2	1	1	Bkcp Chick	66	716	304	E Towhee	24	4	1
Mallard	64	888	366	Am Coot	39	228	39	Breal Chick	2	5	4	N Cardinal	65	250	138
Blwg Teal	5	6	3	Killdeer	45	21	4	Tuft Ttmse	66	333	133	BkHd Grsbk	0	0	0
N Shovlr	5	2	1	Spot Sndpipr	1	1	1	Rdbr Nthch	44	103	9	Dickcissel	2	3	2
N Pintail	15	6	2	Sol Sndpipr	1	1	1	Whbr Nthch	66	179	74	Rdwng Bkbd	62	3006	173
Gnwn Teal	23	19	4	Wils Snipe	52	30	7	Brn Creepr	56	21	7	E Mdwlark	37	160	43
Cnvsbck	20	38	4	Am Woodck	13	2	1	Wntr Wren	36	10	3	Rusty Bkbrd	44	372	22
Redhead	15	18	4	Rng-bill Gull	48	7526	1677	Marsh Wren	9	2	1	Brew Blkbrd	1	1	1
Rngneck	46	285	54	Herring Gull	59	3315	677	Sedge Wren	1	1	1	Com Grckle	52	15039	598
Gr Scaup	3	8	4	Iceland Gull	12	2	1	Carol Wren	47	84	20	BH Cowbird	62	2482	323
LsScaup	28	36	6	Kumls Gull	1	1	1	G-cr Kinglet	61	143	21	Balt Oriole	8	2	1
BkScoter	0	0	0	Ls Bkbk Gull	16	4	2	R-cr Kinglet	42	19	3	Pine Grosbk	5	127	35
Lngtl Dck	2	1	1	Glauc Gull	3	2	1	E Bluebird	47	307	90	House Finch	53	1036	281
Buffle	33	76	13	Gr Blkbk Gull	34	316	72	Grchk Thrsh	1	1	1	Purp Finch	60	438	26
CmGldneye	47	200	48	Rock Pigeon	35	1101	569	Swns Thrush	1	1	1	Rd Crossbill	4	16	9
Hood Merg	46	154	32	Mourn Dove	65	1145	402	HermThrush	37	23	6	WW Crssbill	2	1	1
Com Merg	54	4193	320	Barn Owl	13	2	1	Am Robin	61	5824	252	CmRedpoll	22	443	43
Rdbr Merg	6	2	1	E Scrch Owl	58	20	5	Gray Catbird	22	3	1	Pine Siskin	33	281	29
Ruddy	31	391	57	GrHorn Owl	54	36	8	Br Thrash	6	2	1	Am Gldfinch	66	410	142
NBobwhite	5	12	3	Snowy Owl	2	1	1	N Mock	60	159	56	Eve Grosbk	35	485	76
Rgnk Pheas	55	61	9	Barred Owl	27	5	2	Eur Starling	65	23183	4243	Hse Sparr	66	3028	926
RfGrouse	43	9	3	Lng-ear Owl	20	7	2	Am Pipit	7	80	27				
Wild Turkey	30	360	117	Shrt-ear Owl	1	2	2	Cedar Wax	51	545	97				
Rdthr Loon	2	1	1	N Swwh Owl	3	1	1	McC Lngspr	1	1	1				
Com Loon	12	3	2	Belt Kngfshr	64	28	9	Lplnd Lgspr	8	8	2				
Pbill Grebe	36	25	5	Rd-hd Wdpckr	27	9	2	Snow Bunt	12	120	42				
Hrn Grebe	12	13	4	Rd-bel Wdpckr	54	104	27	N Wtrthrush	1	1	1				
Rdnk Grebe	2	1	1	Yibel Sapsckr	33	21	5	Nash Wrblr	1	1	1				
DblcrCorm	6	2	1	Downy Wdpckr	66	162	78	Com Ylwthr	1	1	1				
Am Bittern	3	1	1	Hairy Wdpckr	66	35	18	CM Warbler	3	1	1				
G Bl Heron	53	30	9	No Flicker	61	74	18	Pine Wrblr	1	1	1				
Grt Egret	0	0	0	Pll Wdpckr	53	23	6	Ylmp Wrblr	42	235	24				
Blk Vulture	25	177	60	Am Kestrel	62	67	16	Yelbr Chat	0	0	0				
Trk Vulture	31	156	50	Merlin	4	2	2	Am Tr Spar	66	1445	420				
Gold Eagle	0	0	0	Peregrine	1	1	1	Chip Sparrow	15	6	1				

Species with zeroes in all columns were only seen during count week(s).