



2018 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The 67th annual Sussex circle Christmas Count was held on Wednesday, December 19th. The date was changed from Sunday, Dec. 16th, due to a forecast for substantial rain and up to 2 inches of ice and snow in the higher elevations. Unfortunately, the date change meant that some of our regular field team participants were unable to participate, though two were able to provide feeder watch information in their zone before heading to work. Hopefully, the weather will be more cooperative next year. Thank you to all the observers who counted in 10 field teams and the 5 feeder watchers who contributed data. This was the second year in which we had feeder watchers, and there have already been inquiries received from additional feeder watchers for next year. Special thanks go to Merle and Roger Tanis for once again opening their home to us for the wrap-up and soup potluck; we all enjoyed the warmth and hospitality that they extend each year!

The weather was mostly sunny with light winds, no precipitation, and temperatures above freezing most of the day, all of which made for a relatively comfortable count day. A total of 75 species and 24,201 individual birds were seen, which is above the count circle average of 72 species and 16,428 individuals. This seems surprising, as our teams were more dispersed and the numbers for many common birds, especially sparrows, were below average, but the rare species and the species that were seen in higher numbers helped put the tallies over the averages.

Other highlights of this year's count:

- Some of the species that were well over their count average included:
 - ✓ Canada Goose – 4,945, vs 2,681 average (9th consecutive year above average)
 - ✓ Bufflehead – 35, vs 14 average (8th consecutive year above average)
 - ✓ Ring-billed Gull – 5,665, vs 1,758 average
 - ✓ Herring Gull – 1,926, vs 698 average
 - ✓ Red-winged Blackbird – 1,233, vs 234 average
 - ✓ Common Grackle – 2,800, vs 780 average
- Two Cackling Geese were seen, making this the 7th consecutive year for the count or count week.
- Only 129 Mallards were seen, once again below the count circle average (363) for the species, and the lowest number since 1973 when 142 were tallied.
- A Red-breasted Merganser was seen at Culvers Lake; it had been found there on Dec. 13th and was still there as of Jan. 9th. This species was first seen during the Sussex CBC in 1996, then again in '99, '00, '06, '10, '13, & during count week in 2015.
- A Double-crested Cormorant was also seen at Culvers Lake; there had been at least one there since October and it was last seen on Dec. 29th. This species was first seen during the Sussex CBC in 1991, then again in '01, '04, '11, '12, and '15.
- An immature Northern Goshawk was noted near Rt. 206 in Branchville. This species was first seen in 1971 and has been counted only a few times since then. It was last seen during count week 2006.
- A record-high 3 Iceland Gulls were seen – 1 at Culvers Lake, 1 at SCMUA, & 1 in Hyper Humus.
- 12 Bald Eagles were seen (second only to 2015's tally of 16), continuing the above-count-average annual trend for this species. Five adult & seven immature eagles were noted, with an additional known, mated pair of adults seen during count week.
- American Kestrel was missed for second time since 2015. With the exception of 1952, this species had been seen annually until the first miss in 2003, though it was a count week bird that year. The

highest tally (67) was counted in 1974, but the trend has been fewer individuals and fewer sightings in the county, both for the Christmas count and in general.

- 15 Common Ravens were seen, which exceeds last year's record-high count of 14; this species was first seen on the count in 2000 and has been seen every year since 2006.
- Only 160 American Crows were counted, which is the lowest tally since 1980 (143) and well below the count average (542).
- Golden-crowned Kinglet was missed for the first time since 1967 (count circle average is 21).
- Cedar Waxwing has been found annually since 1988, with an average of 96 birds each year, but this year's tally of a single bird has only happened twice since 1988 (in 1992 and 2012).
- Yellow-rumped Warbler was missed for the first time since 1988; the count average is 24. However, a Common Yellowthroat was seen near the Paulinskill River by the intersection of Kinney and Church Roads in Baleville. The only other time this species was seen during our count was in 1979.
- A record-low 27 American Tree Sparrows were counted, well below the circle average (409) for the species. This is the 16th consecutive year in which the tally was below-average, the 5th time in the last 10 years in which the numbers were below 100, and the first time ever that the tally was under 50 birds. Sadly, the trend for this species seems to be one of decline, at least locally.
- With the exception of White-throated Sparrow, all sparrow numbers were below average. Field and Fox Sparrows were each missed for only the second time over the last decade. One Field Sparrow was seen on Dec. 15th in zone 15, but due to the date change, it fell outside count week. Dark-eyed Juncos counted (382) were at the lowest number since 2000 when we had 300 (average is 673) and Song Sparrow (48) was at the lowest number since 2003 (33 seen that year, count average 76).
- Some of the other species that were well under their count average included:
 - ✓ Mute Swan – 10 vs. 57 average – lowest count since 1989's tally of 3
 - ✓ American Black Duck – 21 vs. 91 average – lowest count since 1972's tally (18)
 - ✓ Ruddy Duck – 30 vs. 56 average - lowest count in 7 years
 - ✓ Mourning Dove – 158 vs. 398 average - below average every year since 2005
 - ✓ Downy Woodpecker – 42 vs. 77 average - lowest count since 2000's tally of 31
 - ✓ Northern Flicker – 7 vs. 18 average - lowest tally since 1988, when we saw 6
 - ✓ Blue Jay – 142 vs. 251 average – lowest count since 2006's tally of 136
 - ✓ Black-capped Chickadee – 92 vs. 299 average - lowest count since 1956's tally (58)
 - ✓ Tufted Titmouse - 83 vs. 133 average - lowest count since 1979's tally (49)
 - ✓ Eastern Bluebird – 55 vs. 90 average – lowest count since 2003's tally (41)
 - ✓ Northern Mockingbird – 22 vs. 55 average - lowest count since 1973's tally (17)
 - ✓ House Finch – 34 vs. 277 average - lowest count since 1972's tally (21)
 - ✓ House Sparrow – 259 vs. 910 average – an interesting trend, if nothing else
- Great Horned Owl, a nearly annual count day bird, was missed; however, one was recorded for count week (heard in Karyn Cichocki's yard).
- Other count week birds included a Barred Owl heard in Barb Sendelbach's yard, at least 8 Fish Crows heard and seen at SCMUA, an adult drake Canvasback at Culvers Lake, and a Northern Saw-whet Owl that was struck by a car within the count circle area. It was alive and given into the care of the Avian Wildlife Center; as of this report, it's still alive but it's eyes are damaged. This species has only been seen 3 times on count day; this is the first time one has been recorded for count week.

The 2019 count will be held on Sunday, December 15th, 2019 (barring ice storms, blizzards, or other acts of God or man), 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, Sussex CBC Compiler

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SUSSEX COUNTY CBC

67TH ANNUAL COUNT TOTALS

12/19/18

Snow Goose		Wilson's Snipe		Brown Thrasher	
Cackling Goose	2	Ring-billed Gull	5,663	Northern Mockingbird	22
Canada Goose	4,945	Herring Gull	1,926	European Starling	3,652
Mute Swan	10	Iceland Gull	3	American Pipit	
Wood Duck		Lesser Black-backed Gull	3	Cedar Waxwing	1
Gadwall	3	Great Black-backed Gull	26	Snow Bunting	
American Wigeon		Rock Pigeon	339	Yellow-rumped Warbler	
American Black Duck	21	Mourning Dove	158	Common Yellowthroat	1
Mallard	129	Eastern Screech Owl	1	American Tree Sparrow	27
Northern Pintail		Great Horned Owl	CW	Field Sparrow	
Green-winged Teal		Barred Owl	CW	Fox Sparrow	
Canvasback	CW	Northern Saw-whet Owl	CW	Dark-eyed Junco	382
Ring-necked Duck	41	Belted Kingfisher	7	White-crowned Sparrow	1
Greater Scaup		Red-bellied Woodpecker	36	White-throated Sparrow	230
Lesser Scaup		Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	4	Song Sparrow	48
Long-tailed Duck		Downy Woodpecker	42	Swamp Sparrow	11
Bufflehead	35	Hairy Woodpecker	11	Eastern Towhee	
Common Goldeneye	45	Northern Flicker	7	Northern Cardinal	93
Hooded Merganser	33	Pileated Woodpecker	8	Red-winged Blackbird	1,233
Common Merganser	281	American Kestrel		Common Grackle	2,800
Red-breasted Merganser	1	Merlin		Brown-headed Cowbird	303
Ruddy Duck	30	Eastern Phoebe		House Finch	34
Ring-necked Pheasant	2	Blue Jay	142	Purple Finch	2
Wild Turkey	87	American Crow	159	Pine Siskin	38
Pied-billed Grebe	2	Fish Crow	CW	American Goldfinch	85
Double-crest. Cormorant	1	Common Raven	15	House Sparrow	259
Great Blue Heron	7	Horned Lark			
Black Vulture	52	Black-capped Chickadee	92	Total Species:	75
Turkey Vulture	49	Tufted Titmouse	83	Total Individuals	24201
Northern Harrier	1	Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	Count Week species	5
Sharp-shinned Hawk	7	White-breasted Nuthatch	53		
Cooper's Hawk	5	Brown Creeper	5	# of Teams	10
Northern Goshawk	1	Winter Wren	4	# of Participants on Teams	18
Bald Eagle	12	Carolina Wren	31	# of Feeder Watchers	5
Red-shouldered Hawk	2	Golden-crowned Kinglet			
Red-tailed Hawk	64	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	Low Temp (F)	19
Virginia Rail		Eastern Bluebird	55	High Temp (F)	39
Sora		Hermit Thrush	1	Skies, A.M.	Clear
American Coot		American Robin	235	Skies, P.M.	Pt ClDY
Killdeer		Gray Catbird		Winds (MPH)	2-15

PARTICIPANTS BY ZONE – SUSSEX CBC 12/19/2018

- Zone 1** Marianne Ofenloch
- Zone 2** Fred Weber, Jack Padalino
Feeder Watchers – Lee McQuillin & Terry McQuillin
- Zone 3** Marianne Ofenloch
- Zone 4** Donna Traylor, Don Traylor
- Zone 5** Donna Traylor, Don Traylor
- Zone 6 & 7** Marge Barrett, Joe Burgiel, Roberta Bramhall
Feeder Watcher – Barb Sendelbach
- Zone 8 & 9** Beverly Robertson, William Test
- Zone 10 & 11** Alan Boyd, Dennis Briede
- Zone 12** George Nixon
- Zone 13 & 14** George Johnson, Rosemary Popa
- Zone 15** Matt Skalla
Feeder Watchers – Ken Witkowski, Matt Skalla
- Zone 16** Merle Tanis, Roger Tanis
- Zone 17 & 18** Merle Tanis, Roger Tanis

SUSSEX COUNTY CBC 67TH ANNUAL ZONE TOTALS *(high count among zones in red)* 12/19/18

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5	6,7	8,9	10,11	12	13,14	15	16	17,18	TOTAL
Snow Goose														
Cackling Goose			1					1						2
Canada Goose	465	1500	552	71	330	32	258	1340	52			210	135	4945
Mute Swan		2					2		2			4		10
Wood Duck														
Gadwall								2		1				3
Am. Wigeon														
Am. Black Duck		5	14					2						21
Mallard	4	64	1	4		3	2	15		12		14	10	129
Grn-winged Teal														
Northern Pintail														
Ring-necked Duck		40									1			41
Greater Scaup														
Lesser Scaup														
Bufflehead		35												35
Com. Goldeneye		45												45
Hood. Merganser		27		3				3						33
Com. Merganser	5	100											176	281
Red-br Merganser		1												1
Ruddy Duck		30												30

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5	6,7	8,9	10,11	12	13,14	15	16	17,18	TOTAL
Rng-nckd Pheas.							2							2
Wild Turkey					45		42							87
Pied-billed Grebe		1											1	2
Dbl-cr. Cormorant		1												1
Great Blue Heron			2			1	1	2				1		7
Black Vulture		10	18		6			14	2	1		1		52
Turkey Vulture	2	4	13	3	1	6		2	11	3		4		49
Northern Harrier			1											1
Shrp-shnned Hawk			1	1		1		1	1	1			1	7
Cooper's Hawk		1				2		2						5
Northern Goshawk		1												1
Bald Eagle	1	2	1			2		1	4	1				12
Red-shoul. Hawk								1	1					2
Red-tailed Hawk	4	12	12	7	2	8	2	8	6	1		2		64
Virginia Rail														
Sora														
American Coot														
Killdeer														
Wilson's Snipe														
Ring-billed Gull		5000	106			200	148		175			2	32	5663
Herring Gull		100				1500	56		241			1	28	1926
Iceland Gull		1				1			1					3
Lss Blk-backed Gull		2							1					3
Gr Blk-backed Gull		1				25								26
Rock Pigeon		90	18	75	1	24	78	43					10	339
Mourning Dove	1	30	7	1	1	30	6	37	6		12	22	5	158
East. Screech Owl		1												1
Great Horned Owl														
Barred Owl														
Belted Kingfisher		2	1	1				3						7
Red-bellied Wood.		5	6	4		5	2	5	1		1	7		36
Yel-bel Sapsucker		1	2					1						4
Downy Wdpecker		5	2	1	1	6		5	3		4	13	2	42
Hairy Woodpecker						2		3	3		1	2		11
Northern Flicker			1	1				2	3					7
Pileated Wdpecker		1				1		3	2			1		8
American Kestrel														
Merlin														
Eastern Phoebe														
Blue Jay	10	8	18	24	1	31	7	9	9		12	13		142
American Crow	7	22	29	5		42	16	11	6	1	1	19		159
Fish Crow														
Common Raven		8	2			3					2			15
Horned Lark														

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5	6,7	8,9	10,11	12	13,14	15	16	17,18	TOTAL
Blk-cap Chickadee	1	15	2	3	4	8	13	18	12		4	11	1	92
Tufted Titmouse		10	9	4		13	12	12	2		11	8	2	83
Red-br Nuthatch			1											1
Wh-br Nuthatch		12	5	1	4	5	1	10	1		6	8		53
Brown Creeper								1	2		1	1		5
Winter Wren								1	3					4
Carolina Wren		3	1	3	3	3		10	5		2	1		31
Golden-cr Kinglet														
Ruby-cr Kinglet					1									1
Eastern Bluebird		3		11		10	5	9	12			5		55
Hermit Thrush								1						1
American Robin	1	1	10	4	2		158	49				10		235
Nor. Mockingbird		2	1	1	1	5	3	7	1			1		22
European Starling	35	1200	1113	42	120	430	252	430			15	15		3652
American Pipit														
Cedar Waxwing								1						1
Snow Bunting														
Com. Yellowthroat								1						1
Yell-rump Warbler														
Am. Tree Sparrow		7		1		2		11	6					27
Field Sparrow														
Fox Sparrow														
Dark-eyed Junco	5	44	22	27	9	102	23	40	78		14	15	3	382
Wh-crwn Sparrow								1						1
Wh-thrt Sparrow	2	12	21	10	3	25	3	71	59			24		230
Song Sparrow		2	9			7		19	9			2		48
Swamp Sparrow		1						8	2					11
Eastern Towhee														
Northern Cardinal	4	6	6	3	2	8	16	19	8		3	18		93
Red-wng Blackbird		2	1200					1	30					1233
Rusty Blackbird														
Common Grackle		400	2400											2800
Brn-head Cowbird		150	150						3					303
House Finch		2				27	1					4		34
Pine Siskin						4		2			30	2		38
Purple Finch												2		2
Am. Goldfinch		6	3	6	2	16	16	9	3			24		85
House Sparrow	9	62	5	20	1	19	61	75	1			6		259
TOTALS	16	55	39	28	21	37	27	49	38	8	16	35	13	24201
Total # Species	75													
Bald eagle ages	1 i	2 i	1 ad			2 i		1 a	3a 1i	1 i				

Suss CBC Species History: # of years seen (out of 67 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	43	12	3	Gyrfalcon	0	0	0	Field Sparr	43	33	5
Sn Goose	24	8110	607	Shrp-shn Hwk	48	16	5	Monk Pkeet	1	1	1	Lark Sparr	2	1	1
Brant	3	3	2	Coop Hawk	44	16	6	Nnday Pket	1	1	1	Fox Spar	41	51	7
Cck Goose	6	2	1	No Goshawk	11	1	1	E Phoebe	13	2	1	DE Junco	67	1422	673
Can Goose	49	8420	2681	Bald Eagle	26	16	4	No Shrike	20	6	2	WC Sparrow	31	69	11
Mute Swan	62	236	57	Rd-shld Hawk	25	9	2	Logg Shrike	6	2	1	WT Sparrow	67	761	166
Tund Swan	4	8	3	Rd-tail Hawk	67	138	54	Blue Jay	67	593	251	Vesp Sparr	5	8	3
Wood Dck	38	20	4	Rough Hawk	27	7	2	Am Crow	67	1802	542	Savan Sparr	7	4	2
Gadwall	20	44	16	King Rail	0	0	0	Fish Crow	14	70	22	Song Sparr	67	230	76
Eur Wign	1	2	2	Virginia Rail	30	6	2	Com Raven	17	14	5	Linc Sparr	1	1	1
Am Wign	18	57	10	Sora	3	2	2	Horned Lark	43	991	182	Swmp Spar	64	69	14
Am Bk Dck	66	314	91	Cm Gallinule	2	1	1	Bkcp Chick	67	716	299	E Towhee	24	4	1
Mallard	65	888	362	Am Coot	39	228	39	Breal Chick	2	5	4	N Cardinal	66	250	137
Blwg Teal	5	6	3	Killdeer	45	21	4	Tuft Ttmse	67	333	133	BkHd Grsbk	0	0	0
N Shovlr	5	2	1	Spot Sndpipr	1	1	1	Rdbr Nthch	45	103	6	Dickcissel	2	3	2
N Pintail	15	6	2	Sol Sndpipr	1	1	1	Whbr Nthch	67	179	74	Rdwng Bkbd	63	3006	234
Gnwn Teal	23	19	4	Wils Snipe	52	30	7	Brn Creepr	57	21	7	E Mdwlark	37	160	43
Cnvsbck	20	38	4	Am Woodck	13	2	1	Wntr Wren	37	10	3	Rusty Bkbird	44	372	22
Redhead	15	18	4	Rng-bill Gull	49	7526	1758	Marsh Wren	9	2	1	Brew Blkbrd	1	1	1
Rngneck	47	285	54	Herring Gull	60	3315	698	Sedge Wren	1	1	1	Com Grckle	53	15039	780
Gr Scaup	3	8	4	Iceland Gull	13	3	1	Carol Wren	48	84	21	BH Cowbird	63	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	17	4	2	R-cr Kinglet	43	19	3	Pine Grosbk	5	127	35
Lngtl Dck	2	1	1	Glauc Gull	3	2	1	E Bluebird	48	307	90	House Finch	54	1036	277
Buffle	34	76	14	Gr Blkbk Gull	35	316	70	Grchk Thrsh	1	1	1	Purp Finch	61	438	24
CmGldneye	48	200	48	Rock Pigeon	36	1101	563	Swns Thrush	1	1	1	Rd Crossbill	4	16	9
Hood Merg	47	154	32	Mourn Dove	66	1145	398	HermThrush	38	23	6	WW Crssbill	2	1	1
Com Merg	55	4193	318	Barn Owl	13	2	1	Am Robin	62	5824	342	CmRedpoll	22	443	43
Rdbr Merg	7	2	1	E Scrch Owl	59	20	5	Gray Catbird	22	3	1	Pine Siskin	34	281	30
Ruddy	32	391	56	GrHorn Owl	54	36	8	Br Thrash	6	2	1	Am Gldfinch	67	410	142
NBobwhite	5	12	3	Snowy Owl	2	1	1	N Mock	61	159	55	Eve Grosbk	35	485	76
Rgnk Pheas	56	61	9	Barred Owl	27	5	2	Eur Starling	66	23183	4331	Hse Sparr	67	3028	910
RfGrouse	43	9	3	Lng-ear Owl	20	7	2	Am Pipit	7	80	23				
Wild Turkey	31	360	116	Shrt-ear Owl	1	2	2	Cedar Wax	52	545	96				
Rdthr Loon	2	1	1	N Swwh Owl	3	1	1	McC Lngspr	1	1	1				
Com Loon	12	3	2	Belt Kngfshr	65	28	9	Lplnd Lgspr	8	8	2				
Pbill Grebe	37	25	5	Rd-hd Wdpckr	27	9	2	Snow Bunt	12	120	42				
Hrn Grebe	12	13	4	Rd-bel Wdpckr	55	104	28	N Wtrthrush	1	1	1				
Rdnk Grebe	2	1	1	Yibel Sapsckr	34	21	5	Nash Wrblr	1	1	1				
DblcrCorm	7	2	1	Downy Wdpckr	67	162	77	Com Ylwthr	2	1	1				
Am Bittern	3	1	1	Hairy Wdpckr	67	35	18	CM Warbler	3	1	1				
G Bl Heron	54	30	9	No Flicker	62	74	18	Pine Wrblr	1	1	1				
Grt Egret	0	0	0	Pil Wdpckr	54	23	6	Ylrmpr Wrblr	42	235	24				
Blk Vulture	26	177	60	Am Kestrel	62	67	16	Yelbr Chat	0	0	0				
Trk Vulture	32	156	50	Merlin	4	2	2	Am Tr Spar	67	1445	409				
Gold Eagle	0	0	0	Peregrine	1	1	1	Chip Sparrow	15	6	1				

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