



2021 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT



The 70th annual Sussex circle Christmas Count was held on Sunday, December 19th. Thank you to the observers who counted in field teams or by feeder watching; some folks did both again this year. We had fewer observers this year than the last 2 years, due in part to several folks moving out of state or having prior commitments. Covid 19 restrictions were part of the rules for the 2nd consecutive year, which also meant we were again unable to have our annual soup potluck. We remain thankful that we could still hold the count and are hopeful that next year we can again gather for a wrap-up.

Temperatures were around freezing for most of the day. The sky was cloudy for more than half the day, with steady winds all day. None of the bodies of water were frozen. A total of 81 species (the most since 2017) and 25,165 individual birds (also the most since 2017) were seen, which is above the count circle average of 73 species and 16,621 individuals.

Other highlights of this year's count:

- Some of the species that were well over their count average included:
 - ✓ Canada Goose – 4,656 vs 2763 average
 - ✓ Ring-necked Duck - 207 vs 58 average
 - ✓ Bufflehead – 94 (count record high) vs 18 average
 - ✓ Hooded Merganser – 164 (count record high) vs 36 average
 - ✓ Ruddy Duck – 430 (count record high) vs 68 average
 - ✓ Turkey Vulture – 208 (count record high) vs 58 average
 - ✓ Ring-billed Gull – 3,184 vs 1,869 average
 - ✓ Red-bellied Woodpecker – 73 vs 29 average
 - ✓ Northern Flicker – 37 vs 18 average
 - ✓ Common Raven – 21 (count record high) vs 6 average
 - ✓ American Robin – 1,955 vs 359 average
 - ✓ Yellow-rumped Warbler – 46 vs 24 average (highest count since 2000)
 - ✓ White-throated Sparrow – 496 vs 184 average
 - ✓ Song Sparrow – 221 vs 78 average
- Only 209 Mallards were seen, making this the 5th consecutive year in which the species was below the count circle average (355). This is also the 10th consecutive year that the count of American Black Duck (48) was below the count circle average (89).
- A count record high 21 Bald Eagles were seen, which perhaps restarts the above-count-average annual trend for this species. Fourteen adult and seven immature eagles were noted.
- Almost no owling was conducted this year, primarily due to the windy conditions, so it's no surprise that the only owls recorded were during count week and not on count day.
- Only 1 American Kestrel was seen this year. A count record high 4 Merlins were seen, making this the 6th year since 2013 that the species was noted; there have been only 7 years in which the species was seen on count day (first time was in 2001).
- American Tree Sparrow numbers (32) dropped from last year and so were still well below the count circle average (393) for the species. This is the 19th consecutive year in which the tally was below-average. Other sparrow numbers were a mixed bag this year. Field Sparrow was missed. White-throated Sparrow numbers were well above average and Song Sparrows were well below average. Dark-eyed Juncos returned to count-average numbers.

- Several huge flocks (estimated 38,000 total birds) of mixed Common Grackles, Red-winged Blackbirds, Brown-headed Cowbirds, and European Starlings were seen in zones 1 and 3. The flocks were seen a few hours apart in each zone, but it's possible they were the same flocks, as all were seen heading southwest toward Ross's Corner. Even without counting these massive flocks, the totals from zone counts for RWBL (774) and COGR (6444) were well above their circle average (240 and 875 respectively).
- House Finch and American Goldfinch numbers were below average for the 4th consecutive year, but Purple Finch was seen again after a 2-year absence.
- Other species that were well under their count average included:
 - ✓ Common Goldeneye – 25 vs 47 average (lowest count since 2010)
 - ✓ Common Merganser – 82 vs 312 average (lowest count since 2012)
 - ✓ Wild Turkey - 10 vs 107 average (lowest count since 1990)
 - ✓ Herring Gull – 165 vs 682 average (lowest count since 1989)
 - ✓ Great Black-backed Gull – 5 vs 66 average
 - ✓ Mourning Dove – 169 vs 389 average
 - ✓ Hairy Woodpecker – 9 vs 17 average (lowest count since 2000)
 - ✓ Black-capped Chickadee – 98 vs 292 average
 - ✓ Golden-crowned Kinglet – 5 vs 21 average
 - ✓ Northern Mockingbird – 14 vs 54 average (lowest count since 2003)
 - ✓ European Starling – 2204 vs 4264 average
 - ✓ Cedar Waxwing – 38 vs 92 average
 - ✓ Northern Cardinal – 66 vs 135 average (lowest count since 1986)
 - ✓ Brown-headed Cowbird – 108 vs 312 average
 - ✓ House Finch – 95 vs 268 average
 - ✓ House Sparrow – 191 vs 881 average

Next year's count will be held on Sunday, December 18th, 2022 (barring ice storms, blizzards, or other acts of God or man), so please mark your calendars. Everyone, including returning players and new participants, particularly feeder watchers, are welcome and encouraged to join us!

Good birding to you all in the new year, and thanks again to everyone who participated in this year's count!

Marianne Ofenloch, Sussex CBC Compiler

SUSSEX COUNTY CBC

70TH ANNUAL COUNT TOTALS

12/19/2021

Snow Goose	80	Wilson's Snipe		Northern Mockingbird	14
Cackling Goose		Ring-billed Gull	3184	European Starling	2204
Canada Goose	4656	Herring Gull	165	American Pipit	
Mute Swan	77	Iceland Gull	1	Cedar Waxwing	38
Wood Duck	2	Lesser Black-backed Gull		Snow Bunting	
Gadwall	5	Great Black-backed Gull	5	Yellow-rumped Warbler	46
American Wigeon	2	Rock Pigeon	358	American Tree Sparrow	32
American Black Duck	48	Mourning Dove	169	Chipping Sparrow	
Mallard	209	Eastern Screech Owl		Field Sparrow	
Northern Pintail	4	Great Horned Owl	CW	Fox Sparrow	5
Green-winged Teal		Barred Owl	CW	Dark-eyed Junco	679
Canvasback		Northern Saw-whet Owl		White-crowned Sparrow	6
Ring-necked Duck	207	Belted Kingfisher	10	White-throated Sparrow	496
Greater Scaup		Red-bellied Woodpecker	73	Song Sparrow	39
Lesser Scaup	2	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	13	Swamp Sparrow	7
Long-tailed Duck		Downy Woodpecker	67	Eastern Towhee	1
Bufflehead	94	Hairy Woodpecker	9	Northern Cardinal	66
Common Goldeneye	25	Northern Flicker	37	Red-winged Blackbird	774
Hooded Merganser	164	Pileated Woodpecker	10	Rusty Blackbird	
Common Merganser	82	American Kestrel	1	Common Grackle	6444
Red-breasted Merganser	CW	Merlin	4	Brown-headed Cowbird	108
Ruddy Duck	430	Eastern Phoebe		House Finch	95
Ring-necked Pheasant	2	Blue Jay	190	Purple Finch	39
Wild Turkey	10	American Crow	440	Common Redpoll	
Common Loon		Fish Crow	6	Pine Siskin	
Pied-billed Grebe	7	Common Raven	21	American Goldfinch	114
Horned Grebe	CW	Horned Lark		House Sparrow	191
Great Blue Heron	13	Black-capped Chickadee	98	<i>Blackbird sp.</i>	38,000
Black Vulture	158	Tufted Titmouse	130	Total Species:	81
Turkey Vulture	208	Red-breasted Nuthatch	4	Total Individuals	25165
Northern Harrier	5	White-breasted Nuthatch	71	Count Week species	4
Sharp-shinned Hawk	5	Brown Creeper	4		
Cooper's Hawk	11	Winter Wren	2	# of Teams	(Covid)
Northern Goshawk		Carolina Wren	22	# of Participants on Teams	32
Bald Eagle	21	Golden-crowned Kinglet	5	# of Feeder Watchers	7
Red-shouldered Hawk	5	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2		
Red-tailed Hawk	41	Eastern Bluebird	124	Low Temp (F)	30
Virginia Rail		Hermit Thrush	8	High Temp (F)	33
Sora		American Robin	1955	Skies, A.M.	Cloudy
American Coot	4	Gray Catbird	2	Skies, P.M.	P Clidy
Killdeer		Brown Thrasher		Winds (MPH)	12-22

PARTICIPANTS BY ZONE – SUSSEX CBC 12/19/2021

- Zone 1** Karyn Cichocki, Sandy McPhail
- Zone 2** Fred Weber, Jack Padalino
- Zone 3** Marianne Ofenloch
- Zone 4** Sharon Wander, Wade Wander
- Zone 5** Sue Predl, Dave Pasake
- Zone 6 & 7** Marge Barrett, Joe Burgiel, Barb Sendelbach, Mark Sendelbach
Feeder Watchers – Barb Sendelbach, Mark Sendelbach
- Zone 8 & 9** Beverly Robertson, William Test
- Zone 10 & 11** Alan Boyd, Dennis Briede
- Zone 12** Tom Halliwell, Hank Burk
Feeder Watcher – Jessica Brewer
- Zone 13 & 14** Giselle Smisko, Sophie Cohen, Bob McDonnell, Allison Orsi, William Smisko,
- Zone 15** Ken Witkowski, Matt Skalla
Feeder Watcher – Matt Skalla
- Zone 16** Merle Tanis, Roger Tanis
- Zone 17** Bill Warren, Connie Warren, Mike Gannon
Feeder Watcher – Connie Warren
- Zone 18** Lori Krieger, Bill Warren, Connie Warren, Mike Gannon

SUSSEX COUNTY CBC 70TH ANNUAL ZONE TOTALS *(high count among zones in red)* 12/19/2021

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5	6,7	8,9	10,11	12	13,14	15	16	17	18	TOTAL
Snow Goose										80					
Gr Wh-frt Goose															
Cackling Goose															
Canada Goose	544	500	854	375	8	656	766	768	1	114	10	8	27	25	4656
Mute Swan	5	5						2	23	1		2	39		77
Wood Duck	2														2
Gadwall							2			3					5
Am. Wigeon		2													2
Am. Black Duck		25	4	2	4		11			2					48
Mallard	37	20	23	27	4	5	10	16		24	26	12		5	209
Grn-wngd Teal															
Northern Pintail	4														4
Ring-neckd Duck	2	200										5			207
Greater Scaup															
Lesser Scaup		2													2
Bufflehead	1	50						1				1	41		94
Com. Goldeneye		25													25
Hood. Mergansr	12	4					43	5		16	8	28	48		164
Com. Mergansr	16	3					3	60							82

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5	6,7	8,9	10,11	12	13,14	15	16	17	18	TOTAL
Rd-br Merganser															
Ruddy Duck		15											415		430
Ring-nkd Pheasant							2								2
Wild Turkey										1	9				10
Common Loon															
Pied-billed Grebe		3											4		7
Grt Blue Heron	2	1			1			2	1	1	5				13
Black Vulture	40	45	4		1	1	14	6	17	13	12	2	3		158
Turkey Vulture	18	5	5	7	97	13	28	4	8	13		3	6	1	208
Northern Harrier				1		2	1					1			5
Shrp-shnd Hawk						1		2		1		1			5
Cooper's Hawk		1	2	1		1	1	3		2					11
Bald Eagle	1	2	2		1		1	2	2	5	1	1	3		21
Red-shldrd Hawk		1				1		1				2			5
Red-tailed Hawk	4	7	5	3	2	2	4	5	2	4	1		2		41
American Coot													4		4
Killdeer															
Wilson's Snipe															
Ring-billed Gull	23	2000	9	1	8		391	102	500	46	2	9	93		3184
Herring Gull		150						1	4				10		165
Iceland Gull		1													1
Lssr Blk-bckd Gull															
Grt Blk-bckd Gull		5													5
Rock Pigeon	106	50	27	60	9	10	22	25	7	40			2		358
Mourning Dove	1	12	27	29	5	15	2	1		1	23	31	22		169
East Screech Owl															
Gr Horned Owl															
Barred Owl															
Belted Kingfisher	3	1	1				2	2	1						10
Rd-bell. Woodp.	8	8	4	3	11	7	2	8	5	4	7	2	2	2	73
Yel-bel Sapscker	1	5		1	1			3				1	1		13
Downy Wdpker	6	3	3	4	7	3	2	4	4	4	15	7	4	1	67
Hairy Wdpecker						1		1		1	2		2	2	9
Northern Flicker	13	1	4	1	2	1	1	7	1		4	2			37
Pileated Wdpker		1			1			3			2	2	1		10
Am. Kestrel				1											1
Merlin						1		2		1					4
Eastern Phoebe															
Blue Jay	15	21	20	11	23	9	7	14	28	18	18	2	2	2	190
American Crow	13	112	32	31	46	11	46	15	42	43	22	10	16	1	440
Fish Crow									3	3					6
Common Raven		5	1	1		2		1		5	2	1	2	1	21
Horned Lark															
Blk-cap Chkadee	7	4	3	6	3	5	4	4	4	4	26	12	2	14	98

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5	6,7	8,9	10,11	12	13,14	15	16	17	18	TOTAL
Tufted Titmouse	9	15	5	9	22	9	2	13	4		14	14	4	10	130
Red-br Nuthatch								4							4
White-br Nuthatch	8	7	2	3	3	6	2	5	7	4	10	6	3	5	71
Brown Creeper								1			2	1			4
House Wren															
Winter Wren								1	1						2
Carolina Wren	2	2			3			4	5	1	3	1	1		22
Goldn-cr Kinglet					1			3	1						5
Ruby-cr Kinglet								2							2
Eastern Bluebird	12	7	2	16	16	14	11	18	4	17	7				124
Hermit Thrush		1	1		1			2	2			1			8
American Robin	42	85	234	67	406	101	261	555	40	99	57	3	5		1955
Gray Catbird								1				1			2
Brown Thrasher															
Nor. Mckingbird	2		3		3	1	1			3	1				14
Euro. Starling	90	520	76	36	226	110	96	415	52	286	74	2	221		2204
American Pipit															
Cedar Waxwing					2		17	10			9				38
Snow Bunting															
Yel-rmpd Warblr	2	5	1		2		11	2	12	8	3				46
Am. Tree Sparr	25								3	1	3				32
Chipping Sparr															
Field Sparrow															
Fox Sparrow								5							5
Dark-eyed Junco	101	55	44	28	32	63	106	53	16	70	84	11	6	10	679
Wh-crn Sparrow					3							3			6
Wh-thrt Sparr	70	50	21	45	42	32	6	119	53	10	20	25	3		496
Song Sparrow	11	4	3	2	4	1		6	1		5		1	1	39
Swamp Sparrow		2						2			3				7
Eastern Towhee												1			1
North. Cardinal	8	5	5	5	4		1	14	9	1	7	5	2		66
Red-wngd Blkbird	200	50	323	106	30			60				2	3		774
Rusty Blackbird															
Comm. Grackle	6000		400	31		12		1							6444
Brwn-hd Cowbrd	100	1	4		1	2									108
House Finch	2	4	1	6	9	9	3	3	26	7	18		7		95
Purple Finch		10	2					2	20		5				39
Comm. Redpoll															
Amer. Goldfinch	17	2	13	14	1	1	14	3	15		33		1		114
House Sparrow	30		60	2	16	33		2	19	1		20	7	1	191
TOTALS	7615	4120	2230	935	1061	1141	1896	2376	943	958	553	241	1015	81	25165
Total # Species	44	54	38	33	40	34	36	57	37	40	38	38	37	15	81
Bald eagle ages	1i	1a, 1i	2a		1a		1i	1a, 1i	1a, 1i	4a, 1i	1i	1a	3a		

Suss CBC Species History: # of years seen (out of 70 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	2	1	1	No Harrier	45	12	3	Gyrfalcon	0	0	0	Chip Sparrow	16	6	1
Sn Goose	25	8110	586	Shrp-shn Hwk	51	16	5	Monk Pkeet	1	1	1	Field Sparr	44	33	5
Brant	3	3	2	Coop Hawk	47	17	6	Nnday Pket	1	1	1	Lark Sparr	2	1	1
Cck Goose	7	2	2	No Goshawk	11	1	1	E Phoebe	13	2	1	Fox Spar	43	51	6
Can Goose	52	8420	2763	Bald Eagle	29	21	5	No Shrike	20	6	2	DE Junco	70	2746	699
Mute Swan	65	236	57	Rd-shld Hawk	28	13	3	Logg Shrike	6	2	1	WC Sparrow	34	69	11
Tund Swan	4	8	3	Rd-tail Hawk	70	138	55	Blue Jay	70	593	247	WT Sparrow	70	893	184
Wood Dck	40	20	4	Rough Hawk	27	7	2	Am Crow	70	1802	541	Vesp Sparr	5	8	3
Gadwall	23	44	15	King Rail	0	0	0	Fish Crow	17	70	20	Savan Sparr	7	4	2
Eur Wign	1	2	2	Virginia Rail	30	6	2	Com Raven	20	21	6	Song Sparr	70	230	78
Am Wign	20	57	9	Sora	3	2	1	Horned Lark	44	991	175	Linc Sparr	1	1	1
Am Bk Dck	69	314	89	Cm Gallinule	2	1	1	Bkcp Chick	70	716	292	Swmp Spar	67	69	14
Mallard	68	888	355	Am Coot	40	228	38	Breal Chick	2	5	4	E Towhee	26	4	1
Blwg Teal	5	6	3	Killdeer	45	21	4	Tuft Ttmse	70	333	132	N Cardinal	69	250	135
N Shovlr	5	2	1	Spot Sndpipr	1	1	1	Rdbr Nthch	47	103	9	BkHd Grsbk	0	0	0
N Pintail	16	6	3	Sol Sndpipr	1	1	1	Whbr Nthch	70	179	74	Dickcissel	2	3	2
Gnwnng Teal	23	19	4	Wils Snipe	52	30	7	Brn Creepr	60	21	6	Rdwng Bkbd	66	3006	240
Cnvsbck	20	38	4	Am Woodck	13	2	1	House Wren	1	1	1	E Mdwlark	37	160	43
Redhead	15	18	4	Rng-bill Gull	52	7526	1869	Wntr Wren	40	10	3	Rusty Bkbird	45	372	22
Rngneck	50	285	58	Herring Gull	63	3315	682	Marsh Wren	9	2	1	Brew Bkbrd	1	1	1
Gr Scaup	3	8	4	Iceland Gull	15	3	1	Sedge Wren	1	1	1	Com Grckle	56	15039	875
LsScaup	31	36	5	Kumls Gull	1	1	1	Carol Wren	51	92	23	BH Cowbird	66	2482	312
BKScoter	0	0	0	Ls Bkbbk Gull	18	4	2	G-cr Kinglet	63	143	21	Balt Oriole	8	2	1
Lngtl Dck	2	1	1	Glauc Gull	3	2	1	R-cr Kinglet	45	19	4	Pine Grosbk	5	127	35
Buffle	37	94	18	Gr Bkbbk Gull	38	316	66	E Bluebird	51	307	90	House Finch	57	1036	268
CmGldneye	51	200	47	Rock Pigeon	39	1101	548	Grchk Thrsh	1	1	1	Purp Finch	62	438	25
Hood Merg	50	164	36	Mourn Dove	69	1145	389	Swns Thrush	1	1	1	Rd Crossbill	4	16	9
Com Merg	58	4193	312	Barn Owl	13	2	1	HermThrush	40	23	6	WW Crssbill	2	1	1
Rdbr Merg	8	3	2	E Scrch Owl	60	20	5	Am Robin	65	5824	359	CmRedpoll	23	443	43
Ruddy	35	430	68	GrHorn Owl	55	36	8	Gray Catbird	25	4	1	Pine Siskin	34	281	30
NBobwhite	5	12	3	Snowy Owl	2	1	1	Br Thrash	6	2	1	Am Gldfinch	70	410	140
Rgnk Pheas	59	61	8	Barred Owl	28	5	2	N Mock	64	159	54	Eve Grosbk	35	485	76
RfGrouse	43	9	3	Lng-ear Owl	20	7	2	Eur Starling	69	23183	4264	House Sparr	70	3028	881
Wild Turkey	34	360	108	Shrt-ear Owl	1	2	2	Am Pipit	7	80	23				
Rdthr Loon	2	1	1	N Swwht Owl	3	1	1	Cedar Wax	55	545	92				
Com Loon	14	3	2	Belt Kngfshr	68	28	9	McC Lngspr	1	1	1				
Pbill Grebe	39	25	5	Rd-hd Wdpckr	27	9	2	Lplnd Lgspr	8	8	2				
Hrn Grebe	12	13	4	Rd-bel Wdpckr	58	104	29	Snow Bunt	12	120	42				
Rdnk Grebe	2	1	1	Ylbel Sapsckr	37	26	6	N Wtrthrush	1	1	1				
DblcrCorm	7	2	1	Downy Wdpckr	70	162	78	Nash Wrblr	1	1	1				
Am Bittern	3	1	1	Hairy Wdpckr	70	35	17	Com Ylwthrt	2	1	1				
G BI Heron	57	30	9	No Flicker	65	74	18	CM Warbler	3	1	1				
Grt Egret	0	0	0	Pil Wdpckr	57	28	7	Pine Wrblr	1	1	1				
Blk Vulture	29	370	77	Am Kestrel	64	67	16	Ylmp Wrblr	44	235	24				
Trk Vulture	35	208	59	Merlin	7	4	2	Yelbr Chat	0	0	0				
Gold Eagle	0	0	0	Peregrine	1	1	1	Am Tr Spar	70	1445	393				

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