

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

December 16, 2025

Incidental Notes

Hi Everyone,

Again, another set of great observations. Lucky for us, the observations included wonderful descriptions and references. Here are a few that especially stand out:

~ Margaret H.'s favorite poem about snow: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45236/thirteen-ways-of-looking-at-a-blackbird>

~ Annie K.'s reminder about the North Light webcam: <https://blockislandnorthlight.com/>

~ Fether's experience with 1000s of blackbirds in his yard, and

~ Penny L.'s west coast bird species deserve a look-up at All About Birds. Stellar Jay is sooooo much more blue than our east coast blue jay; and the west coast N. Flicker is red-shafted compared to the east coast yellow-shafted N. Flicker; and, wow, the Acorn Woodpecker is so different than our east coast varieties, and is described as being "Reminiscent of a troupe of wide-eyed clowns":

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Acorn_Woodpecker/overview

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

(33 species)

Canada Goose – 50+

Mallard – 33+

Amer. Black Duck – 1

Common Eider – 7

Bufflehead – 22+

Hooded Merganser – 2

Red-breasted Merganser – 3

Ring-necked Pheasant – 4

Great Cormorant – 1

Marsh Hawk (aka Northern Harrier) – 3

Sharp-shinned Hawk – 1

American Herring Gull – 36+

Great Black-back'd Gull – 6+

Rock Dove – 4

Mourning Dove – 38

Red-bellied Woodpecker – 1

Blue Jay – 8

American Crow – 15+

Common Raven – 1

Black-backed Chickadee – 16

Red-breasted Nuthatch – 1

Carolina Wren – 8

E. Starling – 45+

Gray Catbird – 2

American Robin – 26

Cedar Waxwing – 1

Song Sparrow – 9

White-throated Sparrow – 8

¹Slate-colored Junco – 4

Northern Cardinal – 23

Red-winged Blackbird – 5

House Finch – 38

House Sparrow – 1

From Afar South Kingstown, Cumberland, RI; Woodbury, CT; Dalton, Westport, MA; Teaneck, NJ;
Jamesport, NY; Roseburg, OR
(54 species)

| | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Canada Goose – 202+ | Acorn Woodpecker – 3 | Gray Catbird - 1 |
| Mute Swan – 1 | Downy Woodpecker – 9 | Northern Mockingbird – 2 |
| Amer. Black Duck – 2 | Hairy Woodpecker – 1 | Eastern Towhee – 2 |
| Mallard – 8 | Northern Flicker – 2 | Chipping Sparrow – 1 |
| Hooded Merganser – 6 | Pileated Woodpecker – 1 | Savannah Sparrow – 1 |
| Double-crested Cormorant – 2 | Blue Jay – 26 | Fox Sparrow – 1 |
| Great Blue Heron – 2 | Steller's Jay – 1 | Song Sparrow – 8 |
| Bald Eagle – 2 | American Crow – 6 | White-throated Sparrow – 19 |
| Cooper's Hawk – 2 | Fish Crow – 1 | White-crowned Sparrow – 3 |
| Red-tailed Hawk – 1 | Black-capped Chickadee – 15 | Dark-eyed ¹ Junco – 62 |
| Amer. Herring Gull – 103+ | Tufted Titmouse – 13 | Northern Cardinal – 9 |
| Ring-billed Gull – 12 | Golden-crowned Kinglet – 2 | Red-winged Blackbird – 17 |
| Great Black-backed Gull – 1 | Ruby-crowned Kinglet – 2 | House Finch – 27 |
| Mourning Dove – 62 | White-breasted Nuthatch – 18 | Purple Finch – 1 |
| Great Horned Owl – 1 | Winter Wren – 3 | American Goldfinch – 6 |
| Belted Kingfisher – 2 | Carolina Wren – 8 | House Sparrow – 23 |
| Anna's Hummingbird – 1 | Cedar Waxwing – 5 | |
| Red-bellied Woodpecker – 7 | European Starling – 55+ | |
| Yellow-bellied Sapsucker – 1 | Amer. Robin – 54+ | |

Annie Kurz – Hi Kim, I **love** reading the lists of birds people see — and sometimes, envy them for seeing different birds. ... In case you do not know about the N Light webcam, this link will take you to today's 24-hours-in-two-minutes video <http://blockislandnorthlight.com/cam6.htm> It shows seals hauled out at the Sandy Point and moving up the beach as the tide comes in. Best, Annie Kurz [or live streaming at blockislandnorthlight.com] Here is the day's list:

- the usual Mrs. Red Belly (wonder where Mr. is?)
- the usual three downies (what do they keep arguing about? also, why do they stay hanging on the suet or peanut butter cages long after they have stopped eating?)
- a mocking bird (on the gluttonous side)
- 3 blue jays (I cheated by putting out some peanuts; they won't approach the hanging net bag filled with peanuts)
- pair of house finches
- carolina wren

[I] did not see any house sparrows or chickadees this time. Thanks Kim. A.

Cathy Joyce & Nigel Grindley – Hi Kim. Here is our bird list for the rest of the day. They were seen around our yard or during a walk to the Cooneymus beach. Mallard 2, Common Eider 7, Bufflehead 2, Red-breasted Merganser 1, Sharp-shinned Hawk 1, Herring Gull 8, Mourning Dove 3, Blue Jay 5, American Crow 4, Black-capped Chickadee 5, American Robin 13, Song Sparrow 2, White-throated Sparrow 1, Northern Cardinal 3, House Finch 4. Thanks for a great walk to end the year — we look forward to the rest of this winter's Coots season! Hoping you have a Very Merry Christmas! Nigel & Cathy

Crazy-as-a-Coot bird walkers – Rodman Pond Rd., Washington, Rhode Island, US. Dec 16, 2025 8:30 - 9:30 AM Protocol: Traveling: 0.75 mile(s) Checklist Comments: Cloudy to sunny. 30-34F. Light west wind. Participants: Cathy Joyce, Nigel Grindley, Socha Cohen, Heather Hatfield, Amy Keeler, Nancy Miles, Susan Matheke, Anne Salinas, & Kim G. 23 species plus 1-2 roosters: Mallard 6, Bufflehead 2, Ring-necked Pheasant 1, Mourning Dove 12, American Herring Gull 1, Great Black-backed Gull 3, Great Cormorant 1, Red-bellied Woodpecker 1, American Crow 1, Black-capped Chickadee 7, Red-breasted Nuthatch 1,

Carolina Wren 4, European Starling 25, Gray Catbird 2, American Robin 6, Cedar Waxwing 1, House Sparrow 1, House Finch 15, Dark-eyed Junco 2, White-throated Sparrow 5, Song Sparrow 5, Red-winged Blackbird 2, Northern Cardinal 12.

Dan Kasuba – Greetings Kim, I did get out on 12/16 and my sightings were throughout the day in Dalton, MA. Oddly, the birds I've seen the most all winter, (juncos) went into hiding that day! 1 hairy and 1 red-bellied woodpecker, 1 European starling, 6 white breasted nuthatches, 7 bluejays, 2 titmice, 4 black capped chickadees and, 2 American crows. Thanks, and enjoy! Dan

Darcy Thurrott – Hi Kim, This is my Crazy Coot list! Was such a nice day without the brutal cold wind of days previous! Birds seemed to enjoy it too. Not many birds, but I will do the Christmas Count on Saturday from 8-1 & will find many more with the pres. of my bird club hopefully! Enjoy these days prior to Christmas & may the merriness & magic of the season find you well! Ho Ho Ho... Darcy

Dec. 16, 2025. North Cemetery, Woodbury, CT. 10 species observed, 24 individuals.
1 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 1 Pileated Woodpecker, 2 Blue Jay, 1 Amer. Crow, 1 Black-capped Chickadee, 2 White-breasted Nuthatch, 1 E. Starling, 1 Amer. Robin, 1 Amer. Goldfinch, 13 Dark-eyed Junco.

Heather Hatfield – Dec. 16, At Vin's pond/yard/road off Dorries Cove Rd.: Herring Gull 2, Black Duck 1, Hooded Merg. 2, Cardinal 3, House Finch 5, A. Crow 5; Old Town Rd. home feeders: M. Dove 21, House Finch 14, Cardinal 3, Blue Jay 2, BC Chickadee 4, Pigeon 4, Song Sp. 2, RW Blackbird 3, RB Woodpecker 1, White-thr Sparrow 2, Carolina Wren 1.

Kim Gaffett – Going about my day – At home: A. crow 4, C. Geese 30+, Herring Gull 20+, GBBG 2, Mallards 25+, C. Raven 1, Carolina Wren 1; Hog Pen & Payne's dock: Bufflehead 18+, GBBG 1, RB Merganser 2, C. Geese 20+, Junco 2,

Lauren Miller-Donnelly – Hello Kim, I have a list from the 16th here for you, a day when I had time to walk out back and get the Winter Wrens that have been quite **conspicuous**. Mourning Dove 6, Amer. Herring Gull 1, Red-bellied Woodpecker 1, Downy Woodpecker 1, Northern Flicker 1, Fish Crow 1, Black-capped Chickadee 2, Tufted Titmouse 5, Golden-crowned Kinglet 2, White-breasted Nuthatch 2, **Winter Wren 3**, Carolina Wren 1, Gray Catbird 1, American Robin 4, House Finch 1, Purple Finch 1, American Goldfinch 2, Dark-eyed Junco 12, White-throated Sparrow 1, Song Sparrow 1, Northern Cardinal 2.

Got a Tundra Swan on the Taunton River at the end of 2025 and started 2026 with a male Eurasian Wigeon that had been MIA for a month, but we were determined to find it. So we scoped New Bedford Harbor out hard-core yesterday and with persistence (and frozen toes) we finally **got it!** Take care, Lauren

Margaret Haight – Hi Kim, being quite snowed-in I am going to miss the bird walk tomorrow, unfortunately. Will keep an eye out for birds nearby me! Wishing you a very happy holiday season, Merry Christmas and happy healthy '26! 🌲 A very snowy and cold day reminds me of my favorite snowy day poem - about blackbirds! 🐦 All the best, Margaret [[Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird | The Poetry Foundation](#)]

Maggie & Mary Komosinski – Hello Kim. The day here on the North Fork was beautiful: cold, still, mostly sunny and snow on the ground! Winter is here although not officially. Our report includes birds seen at the feeders (mine and Mary's), along our walk to the bay and around the campground, and also a short drive on the back road to catch any waterfowl in the Peconic Bay creeks. Note the number of Mourning Dove (56), seen in 2 large flocks. Our Wild Turkey have been absent for a few days. Winter cheers! Maggie and Mary

Canada Goose 190+, Mute Swan 1, A. Black Duck 2, Mallard 6, Hooded Merganser 1, Great Blue Heron 2, Cooper's Hawk 1, Herring Gull 2, Ring-billed Gull 12, Great Black-backed Gull 1, Mourning Dove 56, Great Horned Owl 1 (heard), Belted Kingfisher 2, Red-bellied Woodpecker 3, Downy Woodpecker 2, Blue Jay 5, B.C. Chickadee 1, White-breasted Nuthatch 1, Carolina Wren 2, American Robin 45+, Northern Mockingbird 1, Red-winged Blackbird 17, European Starling 50+, Song Sparrow 3, White-throated Sparrow 11, House Finch 20, A. Goldfinch 3, House Sparrow 7,

Dark-eyed Junco 24, Northern Cardinal 2.

Penny Lapham – Morning Kim. A plethora of birds. Went out at 11a.m. for about an hour and saw all of these species in the back yard and path going down to the river. Fun morning.

3 Acorn Woodpecker, 5 Cedar Waxwings, 2 Black-capped Chickadees, 2 House Finches, 3 Dark-eyed Junco, 1 Northern Flicker, 1 Steller's Jay, 2 Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 1 Downy Woodpecker, 4 American Robin, 2 Double-crested Cormorant, 3 White-crowned Sparrow, 1 House Sparrow, 1 White-breasted Nuthatch, 5 Hooded Merganser, 2 Mallard, 1 Hummingbird (think it was an Anna's) 1 Bald Eagle (flying over my head while I was on my phone talking to Curt Milton).

Susan Matheke – Hello Kim, I have nothing special to report. However, I think it is special to see 3 Northern Harriers in one day in different places. [EVERYTHING is special – kg] My list comes from horse care in the Dories Cove area and at Martha Ball's Farm. Best, Susan M. 3 Northern Harriers, 7 Robins, 20+ Starlings on a wire, 2 Carolina wrens, 2 Blue Jays, 3 Cardinals, 2 male, 1 female, 3 Pheasants, all male, 2 Mourning Doves, 6 American Crows

Tim Mooney – Hi Kim - Doing well here today. The lights went off at home for a few seconds and my watering can went bouncing down the driveway, but otherwise everything is fine. Why the watering can is still outside is another matter. Cumberland, RI Neighborhood Walk - December 16. On this day, I heard several more White-breasted Nuthatches than usual. I hadn't seen a Red-bellied Woodpecker here in a while, but on this day, a Red-tailed Hawk cruising the neighborhood prompted one to rattle in protest.

Red-tailed Hawk – 1, House Sparrow – 15, Dark-eyed Junco – 6, Tufted Titmouse – 1, Blk. Cp'd Chickadee - 3, Northern Cardinal – 1, House Finch – 2, American Goldfinch – 1, Blue Jay – 6, American Crow – 2, European Starling – 3, Red-bellied Woodpecker – 1, Downy Woodpecker – 2, White-breasted Nuthatch – 5, Carolina Wren – 3.

On December 9, I went out for a morning walk after 8am and it was still in the mid-teens here. Passing a narrow patch of woods, I heard a heavy thump-thump... thump-thump-thump-thump. I looked up and saw the sun shining through the brilliant red crest of a Pileated Woodpecker! I didn't mind that the bird was backlit one bit! My toes were cold, but it was definitely worth getting out there.

I haven't done a Christmas Bird Count in a while, but I'll look for an opportunity over the holidays. Best, Tim

Tom Fetherston – 16 December 2025. Good evening Kim – A decent birding day. I had some trips to town that intervened but there were decent numbers of birds in the morning and later in the afternoon. A nice assortment of sparrows along with the usual suspects. The pond was iced-over limiting sightings but there was a huge flock of gulls on the ice, a flock of geese flew past, and a lone eagle was soaring overhead. There seem to be more juncos joining in the mob at the feeders.

Notes for this week:

- On Sunday hundreds, if not a thousand “blackbirds” descended on the yard during the snow. Mostly grackles, but also some of their brown-headed cowbird and red-winged blackbird flunkies. They tore up the ground, emptied feeders and when they took off together in a rush it was a roar of wings. I've never had that many here at once, the flocks stretched into my neighbor's yards. By mid-morning, with no food left they departed. I waited a bit then re-filled the feeders and my resident birds returned.
- Starlings are the bane of bluebirds. Even though they can't get into the bluebird feeder their flock will tip it enough to dump the mealworms and provide a feast. Today there was only one starling, and the male bluebird put up a staunch defense beating him off the feeder.
- Among the “sparrow carpet” there was one that stood out as being darker and more heavily striped than the surrounding song sparrows. Looked it up and it was a Savannah sparrow. I've seen them before, but this one was decidedly duskier.

Here's the list. Birds seen around Worden's Pond will be noted with WP. Estimates are noted with an asterisk (*) Birds in the field or at the feeders were counted as singles unless present simultaneously or different sexes. Herring gull (100*) WP, Bald eagle WP, American crow WP, Canada goose (12) WP, Coopers

hawk, White-throated sparrow (7), Fox sparrow, Song sparrow (4), Chipping sparrow, Savannah sparrow, Swamp sparrow, Dark-eyed junco (5), Eastern bluebird (2), Northern cardinal (4), Tufted titmouse (5), Blue jay (3), White-breasted nuthatch, Carolina wren, Golden-crowned kinglet, Mourning dove (6), Red-winged blackbird (4), Common grackle, European starling, Brown-headed cowbird (24*), Downy woodpecker (2), Hairy woodpecker. Cheers, Fether

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- 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.