

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

December 19, 2023

Incidental Notes

Hi Everyone,

Once again we have had reported some fun observations that have included reports: from a homeward bound, snarled traffic commute; evidence of fox presence; Norwegian & US woodpeckers, late-season Bluebirds, and even later-season Willet on BI.

Have a peaceful and warm-hearted holiday season.

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**

(32 species)

Canada Goose – 15

Amer. Black Duck – 13

Common Eider – 10

Bufflehead – 12

Red-breasted Merganser – 50+

Ring-necked Pheasant – 4

Common Loon – 9

Great Cormorant – 5

American Bittern – 1

Great Blue Heron – 3

Great Egret – 4

Marsh Hawk (a.k.a. Northern Harrier) – 4

Red-tailed Hawk – 1

Sanderling – 12

Willet – 1

Herring Gull – 23

Great Black-backed Gull – 5

Mourning Dove – 22

Belted Kingfisher – 2

Northern (Yellow-shafted) Flicker – 10

Blue Jay – 4

American Crow – 8

Black-capped Chickadee – 4

Carolina Wren – 2  
American Robin – 32  
Gray Catbird – 1  
European Starling – 42  
Myrtle Warbler (a.k.a. Yellow-rumped) – 2  
Song Sparrow – 20  
White-throated Sparrow – 4  
Northern Cardinal – 2  
House Finch – 2

**From Afar:** South Kingston, Matunuck, Cumberland, and Providence (highway) RI; Pittsfield, MA;  
Teaneck, NJ; Drangedal, Norway  
(40 species)

Mute Swan – 2  
Canada Goose – 130+  
Mallard – 60  
Greater Scaup – 24  
Bufflehead – 2  
Hooded Merganser – 4  
Common Merganser – 1  
Pied-billed Grebe – 1  
Double-crested Cormorant – 2  
Coopers Hawk – 2  
Ring-billed Gull – 17  
Herring Gull – 78  
Great Black-backed Gull – 10  
Gull species – 10<sup>+/-</sup>  
Mourning Dove – 4  
Red-bellied Woodpecker – 2  
Downy Woodpecker – 6  
Hairy Woodpecker – 1  
Pileated Woodpecker – 2  
Green Woodpecker\* – 1  
Peregrine Falcoln – 1  
Blue Jay – 12  
American Crow – 11  
Crow species (probably Amer.) – 75  
Fish Crow – 1  
Common Raven – 1  
Black-capped Chickadee – 6  
Tufted Titmouse – 10  
White-breasted Nuthatch – 5  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet – 1  
Golden-crowned Kinglet – 1  
Carolina Wren – 4  
Eastern Bluebird – 2  
American Robin – 9  
Northern Mockingbird – 1

European Starling – 13  
White-throated Sparrow – 5  
Slate-colored Junco<sup>1</sup> – 9  
Northern Cardinal – 5  
House Finch – 5  
American Goldfinch – 5  
House Sparrow – 9

\*European species

Also seen: Evidence of fox.

**Annie Kurz** – Fox report: Caught mice (had an infestation inside my house) w snaptrap and put the dead ones out. They were gone the next morning. When I ran out of mice, I put out half my can of sardines; gone the next morning. Put out an unpeeled hard boiled egg; gone the next morning. I think the fox is at least coming by even if the lair is not here. Can't wait for spring when the family of chipmunks will be on the menu. Bird observations Tuesday: - red belly, - family of [4] downies (Papa w marked red cap, a two with hints of a red cap and one with no red at all), - one hairy, - a pair of Carolina wrens. Best to you Kim, Annie. Teaneck, NJ.

**Cathy Joyce & Nigel Grindley** – Hello Kim, Here are our bird-lists for today.

From Cathy: In our backyard at 1168 Cooneymus Road: 12 Mourning Doves, 3 Chickadees, 4 Blue Jays (enjoying the suet cake I had just put out). On the Cooneymus Swamp: 6 Black Ducks.

From Nigel: At our kids' house, just behind the Mansion Beach dune: 15 Canada Geese, 3 Mourning Doves, 2 Northern Harriers. As always, thanks for a great Coot Walk this morning. Cheers, Cathy & Nigel

**Corrie Heinz** – Hi. 3 Great Blues, 12 sanderlings Charlestown, 1 dead sanderling at NL, 1 willet north light, Red tail Hawk my house [Beach Ave.], Kingfisher trims pond, 4 great egrets (2 at Nevis 2 at beach Ave bridge). Daily visits from my resident female northern harrier. Tons of eiders, loons, etc... [listed conservatively as 5 each Common Eider and Common Loon. -kg] Happy Holidays. I am heading to Florida tomorrow will try to do a report from Sebastian.

**Crazy-as-a-Coot Bird Walkers** – Cormorant Cove, Cormorant Point & road & Swamp & environs, Washington, Rhode Island, US. Dec 19, 2023 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM. Protocol: Traveling 0.5 mile(s). Checklist Comments: Sunny, SW wind, 44F to start. Participants: Heather Hatfield, Cathy Joyce, Nigel Grindley, Susan Matheke, Anne Salinas, and Kim G. 23 species: American Black Duck 7, Common Eider 5, Bufflehead 12, Red-breasted Merganser 50, Ring-necked Pheasant 2, Mourning Dove 7, Herring Gull 20, Great Black-backed Gull 5, Common Loon 4, Great Cormorant 5, Belted Kingfisher 1, Northern Flicker 10, American Crow 5, Black-capped Chickadee 1, Carolina Wren 2, European Starling 17, Gray Catbird 1, American Robin 30, House Finch 2, White-throated Sparrow 4, Song Sparrow 20, Yellow-rumped Warbler 2, Northern Cardinal 2.

**Dan Kasuba** – Hi Kim, I got out yesterday am, 8-10, and at times thought I might be better off in a kayak vs a car. I was in Pittsfield Massachusetts, where many birds could be seen on Onota Lake.

Sightings on the lake included > 100 Canada geese, approximately 50 mallards, 8 herring gulls, 4 hooded mergansers and one common merganser. The following were seen “around town” : 2 pileated woodpeckers, 5 black capped chickadees, 6 American crows, 13 European starlings, 2 blue jays, 3 tufted titmice, and 2 dark eyed juncos. Hope everyone enjoys their holidays and stay warm!

**Faye Benedict** – What a great report today, thanks :) I have been just too busy to bird, but you might be interested to know I had a visit from the green woodpecker today just outside my window. First time since I got home. It's a beautiful bird. Maybe he will be around for the next Where in the World walk. Happy holiday to you! I will have a houseful.

 Faye. <https://ebird.org/species/eugwoo2>

**Kim Gaffett** – During a visit to and with Nancy Greenaway. Along Corn Neck Rd.: Starling 25, A. Robin 2, A. Crow 3. At Nancy G.'s: Marsh Hawk 1, Pheasant 2, A. Robin 5, Herring Gull 3, A. Bittern 1.

**Lauren Miller-Donnelly** – Hi Kim, I thought I had nothing but then I remembered this series of events: This past Tuesday during my commute home through Providence at sunset (because the highways are jammed recently due to the Washington Bridge debacle) I saw a HUGE group of crows going to a roost up on college hill, I estimate 75 birds, & I opened my window to hear them but I was unable to determine if they were Fish or American Crows. As I drove along, I noticed a woman was feeding Mallards [10], Gulls [10] and two Mute Swans on the river. Then I glanced up and saw a swift raptor so with a quick binocular grab it revealed to be a Peregrine Falcon flying over the Providence River. Then literally 5 minutes later as I turned the corner to get on the highway a Coopers Hawk landed in a tree at Indian Point Park!  
**Longer days PLEEEASE!!!!** & a very Happy Winter to you too. -Lauren

**Tim Mooney** – Hello Kim! And Happy Solstice to you, too! I pulled out my crumpled bird list just now and it starts off with “1 green pepper.” Oh no, that’s my grocery list. Where are my birds? Well, just have to do the best I can from memory. Best, Tim  
Cumberland neighborhood walk: Cooper’s Hawk – 1 (gliding across the road in front of me, right between two houses), American Crow – 1, Fish Crow – 1, Blue Jay – 8, [American Northern -kg]Cardinal – 2, House Finch – 3, American Goldfinch – 2, Tufted Titmouse – 4, Black-capped Chickadee – 1, Slate-colored Junco – 5, White-throated Sparrow – 1, House Sparrow – 9, American Robin – 7, Northern Mockingbird – 1, Downy Woodpecker – 1, White-breasted Nuthatch – 3, Red-bellied Woodpecker – 1, Carolina Wren – 2.

**Tom Fetherston** – 19 Dec 2023. Good morning, Kim – Got an early start in the yard yesterday, then had to walk Matunuck Beach on behalf of Mystic Aquarium at low tide looking for cold-stunned sea turtles. The surf was huge, lots of beach erosion and swarms of gulls offshore. I have a few sightings from that, then spent the remainder of the day around the yard or at the dock on Worden’s Pond. Nothing particularly remarkable this time but a good number of species logged.

Notes for this week:

- The flock of scaup I saw at a distance in the morning ended up not far from the dock in the afternoon so could be identified as greater scaup. Not nearly as many as last time, but still hard to get an exact number as they were frequently diving.
- The bluebirds have been standing guard at the Bird Buddy feeder when there are mealworms present. When they were nesting here last summer, the male in particular aggressively defended the area around the bird house, now they are doing the same at the feeder. Lots of squawking and pecking if a titmouse or house finch dares to land on the tray. Even cardinals get attacked. Don’t mess with bluebirds!
- I’ve had golden crowned kinglets on my lists several times, but I think this is the first one with both golden and ruby-crowned listed. There has been a ruby crowned female hanging around for a while. Had it not been for you showing me how to identify such an otherwise non-descript, tiny bird by the white eye ring I’d never have been able to figure out what it was.

Here’s the list. Birds seen on or around Worden’s Pond are annotated with WP. Birds seen at Matunuck with have MAT. Estimates noted with an asterisk \* Birds in the field or at the feeders were counted as singles unless present simultaneously or different sexes. Bufflehead (2) WP, Pie-billed grebe WP, Ring-billed gull (17) WP, Herring gull (10) WP, (60\*) MAT, Greater black-backed gull (10\*) MAT, Tufted titmouse (3), Blue jay (2), Dark-eyed junco (2), White-breasted nuthatch (2), White-throated sparrow (4), House finch (2), Greater scaup sp. (24\*) WP, Double-crested cormorant (2) WP, Downy woodpecker, American goldfinch (3), Northern cardinal (3), Mourning dove (4), Common raven, American robin (2) MAT, American crow (4), Canada goose (30\*) WP, Eastern bluebird (2), Golden crowned kinglet, Ruby crowned kinglet. 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.
- <sup>3</sup>Western Scrub-Jay has been “split” in to California Scrub-Jay and Woodhouse’s Scrub-Jay.