

Social Distance Crazy-as-a-Coot Bird Walks: April 6, 2021

Incidental Notes.

- The individual Block Island lists are reduced as the Crazy-as-a-Coot Bird Walk on Block Island has resumed, thus generating one list from one walk location, rather than separate lists from a variety of locations. (For the time being the in-persons walks will be limited to 10 people, with, of course, mask-wearing and other Covid-19 protocols.)
- For the fun of it note the variety of weather conditions as reported from the “Afar” group – spring like in the US Pacific Northwest, and spells of winter still making appearances in Europe. (At this writing, on 4/16, snow has fallen on mainland RI, and I have the wood stove going and providing warmth – spring is a fickle time of year.)
- 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. 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

Block Island

(36 species)

Canada Geese – 76

American Black Duck – 2

Mallard – 27

Ring-necked Duck – 4

Common Eider – 5

White-winged Scoter – 9

Bufflehead – 4

Red-breasted Merganser – 17

Ring-necked Pheasant – 7

Common Loon – 3

Horned Grebe – 4

Great Egret – 5

Turkey Vulture – 3

Osprey – 1

Hawk species – 1

Herring Gull – 4

Great Black-backed Gull – 43

Gull species – 5

Mourning Dove – 12

Downy Woodpecker – 6

Blue Jay – 3

American Crow – 26

Fish Crow – 7

Black-capped Chickadee – 10

Carolina Wren – 4
American Robin – 64
Gray Catbird – 1
N. Mockingbird – 2
European Startling – 53
Song Sparrow – 16
Northern Cardinal – 11
Red-winged Blackbird – 98+
Common Grackle – 6
Brown-headed Cowbird – 15
House Finch – 6
House Sparrow – 18

From Afar Cumberland, RI; Seattle, WA; Pleasant Hill, OR; Sedbergh, England; Drangedal, Norway
(42 species)

Canada Goose – 3
American Wigeon – 10
Mallard – 10
Northern Shoveler – 10
Bufflehead – 10
Hooded Merganser – 4
Common Merganser – 1
Pied-billed Grebe – 2
Double-crested Cormorant – 2
Great Blue Heron – 6
Turkey Vulture – 1
Osprey – 1
Bald Eagle – 1
Cooper's Hawk – 3
American Coot – 10
Rock Pigeon – 4
Anna's Hummingbird – 10
Red-bellied Woodpecker – 1
Downy Woodpecker – 1
Northern Flicker² – 1 Red-shafted
Northern Flicker² – 10
Steller's Jay – 7
Blue Jay – 6
American Crow – 1
White-breasted Nuthatch – 1
Brown Creeper – 1
Black-capped Chickadee – 12
Carolina Wren – 2
*Blackbird – 3
American Robin – 18
*Song Thrush – 1
Yellow-rumped Warbler³ – 4
Yellow-rumped Warbler³ /Myrtle Warblers – 9

Yellow-rumped Warbler³ /Audubon Warbler – 1

Song Sparrow – 15

White-throated Sparrow - 1

Golden-crowned Sparrow – 10

Slate-colored Junco (Dark-eyed)¹ – 2

Oregon Junco (Dark-eyed)¹ – 1

Northern Cardinal – 3

Red-winged Blackbird – 5

Common Grackle – 7

Brown-headed Cowbird – 2

House Finch – 4

American Goldfinch – 5

House Sparrow – 10

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.

²**Northern Flicker** is another species with differing eastern and western populations. Northern Flicker in the east is most often Yellow-shafted Flicker (under wings yellow); whereas western populations are most often Red-shafted Flicker (under wings reddish). Just to keep your birding interesting, remember either color variation could occasionally be seen on both U.S. coasts; and “cross pollination” is regularly seen in mid-country.

Since I have more experience with east coast populations, I am likely to list N. Flickers reported from east coast locations as Yellow-shafted. On the other hand, I am likely to list west coast reports as Northern Flicker (due to my lack of experience in the west regarding the likelihood of Yellow-shafted), or unless the observer confirms that it is a Red-shafted Flicker.

And then, there is the Gilded Flicker.....

³ **Yellow-rumped Warbler** (*Dendroica coronata*) yet another species with differing eastern and western population traits. Myrtle Warbler is the overwhelmingly predominant variety on the east coast, and is found throughout US and Canada. Whereas the Audubon Warbler (with a yellow throat and differing song) is limited to the west coast of the US and SW corner of Canada, with only rare and limited occurrences through the middle and eastern US. Once, these two variants were considered to be different species, but currently they are classified as one species.

⁴**Pheasant (UK) and Ring-necked Pheasant (US)** (*Phasianus colchicus*)

~ For more information about Junco, Northern Flicker or Yellow-rumped Warbler populations, see *The Sibley Guide to Birds* or your favorite bird guide.

Amy Keeler. Missed you all. ! Had a great bird watching day . Starting on Mitchell Lane then, Southeast side, through town , then North and West on horseback. 1Turkey Vulture

1 Osprey, 4 Carolina Wren, 65 Canadian Geese, 12 Mallards, 4 Bufflehead, 2 Ringneck Duck, 4 Cardinals, 6 Cowbirds, 1 Song Sparrow, 12 House Sparrow, 4 House Finch, 1Catbird, 2 Mockingbird, 2 Fish Crow, 12 American Crow, 1 Downy Woodpecker (f), 23 Black-backed Gull, 1 Herring Gull, 48 RW Blackbird, 50+ Starling, 4 Grackle, 3 Pheasant (m), 4 Great Egret(1 Seneca 4 Beane), 2 Chickadee, 34 American Robin, 6 Mourning Dove

Barby Michel & Grace B. No osprey but we saw 2 Downy woodpeckers, 2 turkey vultures, gulls, crows, robins, Canada geese, 2 black ducks at Ball O'Brien park this morning. [Where no number is stated I have estimated, and recorded a conservative 5. -kg]

Crazy-as-a-Coot Bird Walkers – Block Island: Grace's Cove Rd. loop over Dunn's Cartway and back to West Side Rd. via cross lots by Lisa Sprague. Northwest wind, sunny, cool to start but warmed to about 50F. Participants: Susan Matheke, Dianne King, Cathy Joyce, Nigel Grindley, Heather Hatfield, Gail & Shorty Cahill, Socha Cohen, Kim Bubko & Kim Gaffett. Red-wing Blackbirds were many - listed as 50+ (but in eBird list as 50)

27 species (+1 other taxa). Canada Goose 6, Mallard 15, Ring-necked Duck 4, Common Eider 5, White-winged Scoter 9, Red-breasted Merganser 17, Ring-necked Pheasant 3, Horned Grebe 4, Mourning Dove 6, Herring Gull 3, Great Black-backed Gull 20, Common Loon 3, hawk sp. 1, Downy Woodpecker 3, Blue Jay 3, American Crow 9, Fish Crow 5, Black-capped Chickadee 8, Carolina Wren 10, European Starling 3, American Robin 25, House Sparrow 6,

House Finch 2, Song Sparrow 15, Red-winged Blackbird 50+, Brown-headed Cowbird 9, Common Grackle 2, Northern Cardinal 7

Curt Milton & Margaret Portelance – Seattle, WA. **Good afternoon!** My sister-in-law, Margaret Portelance, joined me for the Seattle Crazy As A Coot walk today at Union Bay Natural Area. Weather was sunny and clear with temperatures in the mid-50s. Great birding today with lots of species to be seen. I'll put numbers where I was able to count. Otherwise, there were numerous birds for each species, usually 5-10 or more. Here is our list: Pie-billed Grebe: 2; Great Blue Heron: 3; Double-crested Cormorant: 2; Coots: numerous; Song Sparrow: numerous; Bald Eagle: 1; Anna's Hummingbird: numerous; Steller's Jay: 3; Black-capped Chickadee: numerous; Northern Flicker: numerous; Robins: numerous; Red-winged Blackbird: 2 male, 2 female; Bufflehead: numerous; Canada Goose: 3; Osprey: 1; Cooper's Hawk: 2; Northern Shoveler: numerous; Yellow-rumped Warblers: numerous Myrtles and one Audubon's; Mallards: numerous; Hooded Merganser: 4 or 5; Golden-crowned Sparrow: numerous; Common Merganser: 1; American Wigeon: numerous. We also spotted an Anna's Hummingbird building a nest. I'll attach a photo below. Thanks as always for organizing this!



Erica Anderson – Pleasant Hill, OR. Hi Kim, Beautiful spring weather here in Oregon, it's sunny, getting up towards the 60's. The maple trees have blossoms on them and getting ready to put out their leaves, which seems to attract all kinds of birds I don't normally see. This morning the Red-shafted Flickers are drumming on the gutters and the Red-breasted Sapsucker is drumming on the telephone transformer plate - must be spring! I didn't see it today but a beautiful Pileated Woodpecker has been working on the dead snags around our house for the past few weeks. Such a striking bird. Turkey Vulture – 1, Red-shafted Flicker – 1, Yellow-rumped Warbler – 4, American Robin – 5, Stellar Jay – 4, American Gold Finch – 1, Great Blue Heron – 1, Song Sparrow – 1, White Breasted Nuthatch – 1, Black-capped Chickadee – 2, Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon) – 1, House Finch – 3, Brown Creeper – 1

Faye Benedict – Drangedal, Norway. Hi Kim, there is an icy cold wind preventing me from going outside today to look for the few birds that might venture out into it. Next time! best from Faye

Laura Rosenzweig - Sedbergh, England. 4/12: For you and your TIC & BIC colleagues — the value of nature recording and "citizen science" <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/apr/10/a-bugs-life-how-a-volunteer-army-is-putting-uk-wildlife-on-the-record-aoe>

I didn't know we had burying beetles in the UK but I suppose it stands to reason, it's not just the crows that eat carrion. Next time I see a dead badger by the side of the road I might peg my nose, wave away the army of bluebottles and take a closer look!

Snow overnight here. We haven't had snow this late in the year for several years. Mum and Matt had a proper snowstorm with 4" settling up in Knoydart; we had about an inch on the hilltops and a dusting at ground level (which didn't melt straight away) after some heavy hail showers in the afternoon. It even snowed in London I gather!

Saw a solitary song thrush this morning. Blackbirds (another thrush) are also casing the joint, looking for nesting sites.

Tim Mooney - Cumberland, RI. Hi Kim, I look forward to the first and third Tuesdays, because I have a reason to look UP! I did look up from my suburban backyard on Tuesday evening – way up – and watched 2 graceful Great Blue Herons flying in tandem to the northeast, high above. One gave a short croak as it passed over. It made my day. Best, Tim
Great Blue Heron – 2, Cooper's Hawk – 1, American Crow – 1, Blue Jay – 6, Common Grackle – 7, Brown-headed Cowbird – 2, Red-winged Blackbird – 1, Northern Cardinal – 3, House Finch – 1, Carolina Wren – 2, White-throated Sparrow – 1,

Song Sparrow – 4 (one with nest material), Dark-eyed Junco – 2, House Sparrow – 10, Rock Pigeon – 4, Mourning Dove – 2, American Robin – 3, Red-bellied Woodpecker – 1, and Downy Woodpecker – 1. **And one very large Eastern Cottontail.**