

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

December 5, 2023

Incidental Notes

Hi Everyone,

Enjoy these wonderful lists of observed birds.

The Block Island list is a little thin, but is in keeping with this time of year – between fall and winter birds.

The From Afar list is wonderfully varied with lists from the US west coast, Mexico and southern New England – enjoy the variety from Phainopepla and Scrub-Jays, to Kiskadees and Magnificent Frigatebirds, to Bluebirds and Great Horned Owls!

No matter where on earth you are, enjoy the birds and the day. Peace, Kim.

- 
- 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**

(30 species)

Canada Goose – 8

Mallard – 29

Ring-necked Duck – 40

Bufflehead – 6

Hooded Merganser – 5

Ring-necked Pheasant – 26

Double-crested/Great Cormorant – 16

Great Blue Heron – 1

Northern Harrier – 5

Red-tailed Hawk – 1

Herring Gull – 5

Great Black-backed Gull – 10

Gull species – 100

Rock Pigeon – 28

Mourning Dove – 54

Northern (Yellow-shafted) Flicker – 2

American Kestrel – 1

Merlin – 2

Blue Jay – 6

American Crow – 35

Fish Crow – 2

Common Raven – 1  
Black-capped Chickadee – 6  
Carolina Wren – 8  
American Robin – 23  
European Starling – 750  
Song Sparrow – 17  
Slate-colored Junco<sup>1</sup> – 3  
Northern Cardinal – 3  
Common Grackle – 1  
House Sparrow – 5

**From Afar:** South Kingston, Cumberland, and Exeter RI; Lyme, Colchester, Portland & Woodbury CT.; Teaneck, NJ; Joshua Tree National Park, CA. Roseburg, OR, Playa de Carmen, Mexico.  
(66 species)

Canada Goose – 74  
Mallard – 55+  
Scaup species – 200  
Bufflehead – 2  
Hooded Merganser – 5  
Ring-necked Pheasant – 1  
Pied-billed Grebe – 2  
Magnificent Frigatebird – 20  
Brown Pelican – 20  
Double-crested Cormorant – 6  
Great Blue Heron – 3  
Turkey Vulture – 1  
Osprey – 4  
Hawk species – 1  
Bald Eagle – 1  
Coopers Hawk – 1  
Red-tailed Hawk – 7  
Swainson's Hawk – 1  
Ruddy Turnstone – 7  
Bonaparte Gull – 15  
Ring-billed Gull – 30  
Caspian Tern – 1  
Eurasian Collard Dove – 4  
Social Flycatcher – 1  
Rock Dove – 6  
Mourning Dove – 15  
Great Horned Owl – 2  
Belted Kingfisher – 2  
Red-bellied Woodpecker – 3  
Downy Woodpecker – 4  
Hairy Woodpecker – 2  
Acorn Woodpecker – 1  
Great Kiskadee – 2  
Social Flycatcher – 1

California Scrub-Jay<sup>3</sup> – 3  
Blue Jay – 11  
American Crow – 9  
Fish Crow – 2  
Common Raven – 10  
UI Swallow – 20  
Black-capped Chickadee – 3  
Tufted Titmouse – 4  
White-breasted Nuthatch – 5  
Rock Wren – 6  
Carolina Wren – 5  
Rock Wren – 6  
Eastern Bluebird – 2  
American Robin – 53  
Gray Catbird – 1  
Northern Mockingbird – 10  
European Starling – 3  
Phainopepla – 1  
N. Parula – 1  
Yellow-throated Warbler – 1  
Spotted Towhee – 1  
Song Sparrow – 3  
Black-throated Sparrow – 5  
White-throated Sparrow – 6  
White-crowned Sparrow – 5  
Golden-crowned Sparrow – 1  
Slate-colored Junco<sup>1</sup> – 5  
Oregon Junco – 5  
Northern Cardinal – 4  
Greater Antillean Grackle – 50++  
Baltimore Oriole – 1  
Purple Finch – 1  
American Goldfinch – 7

Also seen: 3 Bever dens (GCO; 1 industrious Scrub Jay (PL)

**Amy Keeler & Susan Matheke** – December 5: Mitchell Lane Westside while riding horses. BC Chickadee 4, Pheasant 4 (2 on Corn Neck), Red-tailed Hawk (Mansion Rd.), Merlin 1, GBH 1, C. Grackle 1, Canada Geese 8, A. Crow 23, Kestrel 1, N. Harrier 3, Robin 18, E. Starling 700+, Mallard 12, M. Dove 22, Cormorant 16, Ring-necked Duck 20, Song sparrow 6, Carolina Wren 4, Fish Crow 2, Bufflehead 6, Pigeon 28, Hooded Merganser 2, Gull species 100+, Blue Jay 2, Cardinal 2.

**Annie Kurz** – Hi Kim, I'll send you the birds list later. Right now, I am bursting with joy at sighting a FOX in my back yard!!!! HE/she looked pretty healthy with a lovely bushy tail! I just hope he/she is car smart and doesn't get run over. Any ideas how to encourage it to stay around or visit again?

For Where-on-Earth: Aside from yesterday's amazing sighting of the fox, here are the birds I saw at my suet + peanut butter cages: 1 hairy woodpecker, 3 downy woodpeckers (maybe there were more but I could distinguish only 3), 1 red belly woodpecker, 1 carolina wren. Annie in Teaneck, NJ.

**Cathy Joyce & Nigel Grindley** – Hello Kim, Here is our bird list for yesterday (Dec 5th):

In our backyard: 8 mourning doves, 4 blue jays, 2 black-capped chickadees, 1 merlin, 1 northern cardinal.  
Warden's Pond: Pair of hooded mergansers (have seen them regularly for several days), 3 American crows, 2 mourning doves. At our son's house (Mansion Beach): 50 starlings, 30 mourning doves.  
As always, thanks for a terrific Coot-walk. Cheers, Cathy & Nigel.

**Crazy-as-a-Coot Bird Walkers** – Mitchell Lane, Washington, Rhode Island, US. Dec 5, 2023 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM.  
Protocol: Traveling 1.0 mile(s). Checklist Comments: Cloudy and chilly (35-40F), NW wind. Participants: Susan Matheke, Heather Hatfield, Chuck McMellon, Cathy Joyce, Nigel Grindley, Kim Sheridan, Cindy Davis, Anna, Rob, Jude, Lila & Ellis Grant, Anne & Carlos Salinas, John Formica, Amy Keeler, Judy Gray, & Kim G.  
13 species: Mallard 17, Ring-necked Duck 40, Hooded Merganser 1, Ring-necked Pheasant 2, Mourning Dove 7, Herring Gull 2, Great Black-backed Gull 10, Northern Harrier 2, American Crow 2, Common Raven 1, Carolina Wren 3, American Robin 5, Song Sparrow 10.

**Darcy Thurrott** – Hi Kim, Chilly n wind at 10 mph; 38°, rf: 32, 60 % humidity, so raw feeling. Bad time of day for birding, but glad to be able to be out & see who was around! Hi to Amy Keeler way back from days in Wilton!!  
Best, Darcy (Grimm) Thurrott 🐦🌲🐦

North Cemetary Woodbury, Connecticut, US. Dec 05, 2023, 12:10 PM. Traveling 2.18 miles. 76 minutes.  
All birds reported? Yes. Comments: 36 Canada Goose, 1 Red-bellied Woodpecker, 2 Blue Jay, 1 White-breasted Nuthatch, 1 Carolina Wren, 1 Northern Mockingbird, 2 Dark-eyed Junco, 1 Song Sparrow.

**Erica Anderson & Wade Thompson** – Hi Kim, We're reporting today from Joshua Tree National Park in Southern California. It's in the 70's, sunny with blue skies. Very dry and dusty here with Joshua Trees (Yucca brevifolia), Mojave Yucca and Juniper being the main vegetation. Lots of amazing rock formations made of giant boulders- imagine Bl's rock walls on steroids and stacked up by giants. Not a lot of birds moving around but here's our list from today. Western Scrub Jay 1, Common Raven 4, Rock wren 6, Black throated Sparrow 5, White crowned sparrow 5, Phainopepla 1. Erica & Wade.

**Gail & Shorty Cahill** – Hi from Connecticut! Miss walking with you and the other coots. We managed to find some birds this morning on our walk in Lyme with the Lyme Land Trust and then some afterwards as well. Gail and Shorty. Thach Property Lyme: 2 Canada Geese, 2 crows, 1 turkey buzzard, 1 hawk (heard). 3 Beaver dens. Hartman Property Lyme: 1 beaver den, 2 mallards. Colchester: 1 hawk red-tailed. Portland: 4 crows, 1 kingfisher, 1 Beaver den, 1 red-tailed hawk, 1 male ring-necked pheasant

**Kim Gaffett** – During a quick walk around Red Gate Farm: SC Junco 3, Carolina Wren 1, Mourning Dove 5, Herring Gull 3, A. Crow 7, Song Sparrow 1, N. Flicker 2.

**Penny Lapham** – Hi Kim. I was out searching for birds about 10 am. Came up from the river across the lawn and started across the driveway and at the end of the driveway 20-25 yards there was a hawk on the ground feasting on a pigeon. Think it was a Swainson's. We have a bunch of pigeons [bunch=6 -kg] that hang out on the telephone wires near the house. Took 2 videos. He/she was irritated that I was getting close so dragged the carcass into the bushes. If I send a bird report I decided to send the pigeon death separately.

Had also seen a Scrub Jay on the lawn hiding a Myrtle tree nut by covering the nut with a number of Sycamore leaves covering.

Crazy-as-a-Coot walk Roseburg, Oregon 12/5/23: 3 American Goldfinch, 2 Western scrub-jay, 5 Oregon Junco, 2 Black-capped Chickadee, 3 European Starling, 1 American Robin, 1 Acorn Woodpecker, 1 Golden-crowned Sparrow, 1 Spotted Towhee, 2 Great Blue Heron, 5 Hooded Merganser, 1 Common Merganser, 1 Belted Kingfisher, 6 Double-breasted [crested 😊] Cormorant, 45+ Mallard, 1 Pied-billed Grebe (not positive), 1 Swainson's Hawk

**Tim Mooney** – Hi Kim – Yes, I did get outside for bit. A short list again, but always something interesting out there...

Cumberland neighborhood – 3 Red-tailed Hawks, circling just about the treetops. (I heard one cry, looked up, and there were three of them, just getting going it seemed). 2 Fish Crows (hadn't heard one around here in weeks), 1 American Crow, 5 Blue Jays, 2 Carolina Wrens, 2 American Robins, and 1 Black-capped Chickadee. Later, 1 Great Blue Heron, flying over Dave's Marketplace as I was heading to the highway to drive to Exeter. Then Queen's River Preserve, Exeter – 2 Common Ravens.

Oh, and a Northern Mockingbird, greeting me from across the street as I stepped out the door. (I just heard it again out there, perched in the neighbor's tangle of bittersweet and multiflora rose. Not judging lol.)

**Tom Fetherston** – Hi Kim - Finally finished compiling the list from yesterday. A couple of surprises for you! Val Preler was at the seal release today, since the individual was from BI. She had on her Atlantic Shark Institute sweatshirt. 😊

05 Dec 2023. Hi Kim – Long day yesterday and a late addition to the list which I'll discuss, then was involved with Mystic for the release of "Cranberry", the female gray seal that was picked up on BI last summer. Had some hot soup for lunch, finally warming up enough to type 😊

Notes for this week:

- There was another large flock of scaup on the east side of the pond about a mile away. Probably greater scaup again, but without seeing them clearly will be listed as "scaup (sp.)"
- Birds at the feeders yesterday seemed particularly aggressive, fighting each other for position. Cold weather and diminishing food supplies perhaps? Numbers were important, then size of course. A purple finch and song sparrow got pushed out by a flock of goldfinches, who in turn were bumped by three doves. When a blue jay tried to scare them off, the doves puffed up to look larger and stood their ground. Finally, the jay brought in three of his friends and won the feeder till everybody got spooked and after a bit the smaller birds started the cycle again.
- Maggie and I took a trip across the pond in the morning to let her look for pheasants while I checked for different birds. The pond was oddly empty of waterfowl in the morning, only saw two buffleheads and a grebe but later in the afternoon there were scaup, geese and mallards. On the trail through the woods to the fields there were flocks of robins flying about, not as many as when I was on BI but still quite a few. Some raptors were looking for pheasants along with Maggie. She chased a pheasant for a long way through a hedgerow before it was able to crawl into a dense brier thicket. I never saw it so not on the list.
- Speaking of sighting birds, I don't typically put something on the list unless I've physically observed it. However, this time there are two species I added because of the clear evidence they were present.
  - Eastern bluebird (a surprise for me!) You may recall last summer bluebirds had nested in our yard, so they were a common sight, with the juveniles hanging around the trees and mealworm feeders. In September they disappeared, and although Merlin has occasionally made an acoustic detection, I hadn't seen one. Yesterday afternoon at 3:05 PM the "Bird Buddy" camera feeder caught two in a video; I've included a photo of one so think that could count?
  - Great horned owl Just after sunset last night I was at the woodpile when the owls started hooting. Unmistakable and nearby. It sounded as if one was in a tree on the west side of our yard, and the other further into the swamp where I saw the bobcats last week. The calls were different in pitch so male & female? They were loud enough I could hear them in the house!

Here's the list. Birds seen on or around Worden's Pond are annotated with WP. Birds seen in Great Swamp will have GS. Estimates noted with an asterisk \* Birds in the field or at the feeders were counted as singles unless present simultaneously or different sexes.

Red-tailed hawk (2) GS, Cooper's hawk GS, Bufflehead (2) WP, Pie-billed grebe WP, Ring-billed gull (30\*) WP, Tufted titmouse (4), Blue jay (4), Dark-eyed junco (3), White-breasted nuthatch (2), White-throated sparrow (6), Scaup sp. (200\*) WP, Mallard (8) WP, Song sparrow (2), Hairy woodpecker, Downy woodpecker, Red-bellied woodpecker, Carolina wren, Purple finch, American goldfinch (4), Northern cardinal (4), Mourning dove (15), Common raven (2) GS, American robin (50\*) GS, White-breasted nuthatch (2), American crow (2), Gray catbird GS, Bald eagle WP, Canada goose (36\*) WP, Eastern bluebird (2), Great horned owl (2).

I wonder if this is one of the individuals that fledged here and remembered the feeder? I used to add mealworms to the seed for them, after seeing this I put some in the tray. Cheers, Fether

Addendum:

Hi again Kim - Interesting side note. When the owls were calling there was a different vocalization mixed in. I looked in Sibley and he spelled it "guwaay", a female mating response. She was in the tree in our yard so heard that distinctly. I did more digging and great horned owls pair up in December - January. I was listening in on a date 😊  
Cheers, Fether



**Will & Penny Young** – Kim, Pen and I are in Mexico, Playa de Carmen on the Riviera Maya at a Wilco Festival. On a resort birding is not great but there are things around. Also Spider monkeys and Agutis which are related to the guinea pig.

Birds today: Northern Mocking bird 8, Greater Antillean Grackle 50++, UI Swallows 20, Bonaparte gull 15, Northern Parula 1, Yellow throated warbler 1, Great Kiskadee 2, Uraisian collard dove 4, Social flycatcher 1

Highlights from earlier in the week: Rudy turnstone 7, Brown Pelican 20, Osprey 4, Caspian tern 1, Baltimore Oriole 1, Magnificent frigate bird 20. Will.

- <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.