

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

January 20, 2026

## Incidental Notes

Hi Everyone,

It looks like “the cold!” was affecting a great many of us; including those of us reporting from Michigan, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and North Carolina. Brrrrr, the most obvious affect was low numbers of birds detected. Although Curt in Washington didn’t comment specifically on the cold, high 30sF is not exactly warm.

Tim’s observations on the 20<sup>th</sup> were brief – likely due to the cold. But is off-day report from Florida was fun to see and “feel” the warmth of southern birds. I always think of Blue-gray Gnatcatcher as a first spring migrant, so I was interested to hear that they are still in their wintering grounds. And, I love hearing about Tim’s “also seen” list of warm-blooded reptiles – such interesting names.

One last observation is the number of Northern Cardinals on BI versus the number from all of the From Afar observations combined. Wow! 23 cardinals on BI (16 of which were seen at one time at Cathy and Nigel’s feeders), and 8 total in all of the other 8 locations.

**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**

(32 species)

Canada Goose – 25+

Gadwall – 13

American Wigeon – 2

Mallard – 67+

Common Eider – 10

Black Scoter – 7

Bufflehead – 88+

Common Goldeneye – 1

Red-breasted Merganser – 2

Common Loon – 1

Great Blue Heron – 1

Marsh Hawk (aka Northern Harrier) – 1

American Herring Gull – 19+

Great Black-backed Gull – 3+

Mourning Dove – 47

Red-bellied Woodpecker – 1

Downy Woodpecker – 1

Blue Jay – 4

American Crow – 9+

Common Raven – 1

Black-backed Chickadee – 13

White-breasted Nuthatch – 1

Carolina Wren – 2

E. Starling – 42+

American Robin – 2

Gray Catbird – 1

Eastern Towhee – 1

Song Sparrow – 15

White-throated Sparrow – 14

Northern Cardinal – 23

Red-winged Blackbird – 1

House Finch – 37

## **From Afar** South Kingstown, Cumberland, RI; Woodbury, CT; Westport & Seekonk, MA;

Raleigh, NC; eastern shore, VA; Escanaba, MI (UP); Seattle, WA.

(47 species)

Canada Goose – 204+

Mute Swan – 2

Tundra Swan – 3

Wood Duck – 3

Mallard – 251+

American Black Duck – 33

Common Merganser – 2	American Crow – 13	Fox Sparrow – 2
Greater Scaup – 2	Common Raven – 1	Song Sparrow – 4
Black Vulture – 8	Black-capped Chickadee – 6	Swamp Sparrow – 1
Turkey Vulture – 30	Tufted Titmouse – 7	White-throated Sparrow – 7
Bald Eagle – 2	Brown-headed Nuthatch – 1	White-crowned Sparrow – 1
Red-tailed Hawk – 2	White-breasted Nuthatch – 1	Dark-eyed <sup>1</sup> Junco – 30
Amer. Herring Gull – 200+	Carolina Wren – 5	Northern Cardinal – 8
Rock Pigeon – 5	European Starling – 23+	Red-winged Blackbird – 20
Mourning Dove – 18	Eastern Bluebird – 12	Brown-headed Cowbird – 20
Anna's Hummingbird – 1	Amer. Robin – 6+	Purple Finch – 2
Red-bellied Woodpecker – 3	Northern Mockingbird – 1	House Finch – 9
Downy Woodpecker – 3	Palm Warbler – 1	American Goldfinch – 4
Hairy Woodpecker – 1	Pine Warbler – 1	House Sparrow – 22
Blue Jay – 13	Spotted Towhee – 1	

[Amy Keeler](#) – Bird sightings while out and about Jan. 20, 2025. Most are seen at the feeders on Mitchell Ln. 8 Chickadee, 50+ Mallard Duck, 6 Cardinal, 40+ Starling, 20+ Mourning Dove, 14 House Finch, 1 Blackbird, 1 Downy Woodpecker, 1 Red Bellied Woodpecker, 2 White-throated Sparrow, 12 Song Sparrow, 4 Bufflehead.

[Cathy Joyce & Nigel Grindley](#) – Hi Kim. Here's today's Where-on-Earth bird list — we did a bit better than this morning's frigid walk! Our sightings are from the yard (Feeder Watch rules) plus a brisk walk to Cooneymus Swamp and Beach; our feeders were mobbed!! Gadwall 9, Mallard 11, Common Goldeneye 1, Bufflehead 8, Northern Harrier 1, American Herring Gull 3, Mourning Dove 17, Blue Jay 2, American Crow 8, Black-capped Chickadee 5, White-breasted Nuthatch 1, Carolina Wren 1, American Robin 2, European Starling 2, Eastern Towhee 1, Song Sparrow 3, White-throated Sparrow 11, Northern Cardinal 16, House Finch 22. Many thanks for a fun walk and breakfast. Cheers, Cathy & Nigel.

[Crazy-as-a-Coot bird walkers](#) – Ministers Lot Rd.-Tinker Ln. loop, Washington, Rhode Island, US Jan 20, 2026 8:00 AM - 9:15 AM. Protocol: Traveling 0.75 mile(s). Checklist Comments: [Sunny, 22F, 10-15 mph WNW](#), Ministers Lot road to the beach and back to Corn Neck Rd. via backyards north side of Dee's Tug Hole (not Tinker Lane which, is on the south side of Dee's Tg Hole). Participants: Nigel Grindley, Cathy Joyce, Susan Matheke, Amy Keeler, Judy Gray, Cindy Davis, Mena Hautau, Nancy Miles, and Kim G. 15 species: Mallard 4, Black Scoter 7, Bufflehead 50, Mourning Dove 10, American Herring Gull 1, Great Black-backed Gull 1, Common Loon 1, Great Blue Heron 1, Blue Jay 2, American Crow 1, Carolina Wren 1, Gray Catbird 1, House Finch 1, White-throated Sparrow 1, Northern Cardinal 1

[Curt Milton](#) – I made it out ... twice! Not a lot of birds around but a couple of these surprised me. Here's my report: Seattle, weather: skies sunny, temps from the upper 30s in the morning to upper 40s in the afternoon. I saw a few birds on my walk to get coffee this morning in my neighborhood of **Eastlake**: Anna's Hummingbird 1, American Robin 5, House Sparrow numerous (I could hear them in a rhododendron but didn't see them). After lunch (about 2 p.m.) at **Union Bay Natural Area, Yesler Swamp**: American Crow numerous, Wood Duck 3, Black-capped Chickadee 1, Spotted Towhee 1, Dark-eyed junco 1, Red-winged blackbirds several (heard them but didn't see them), Tundra Swan 3, Song Sparrow 1, Mallard (female) 1. That's the news from here! Curt

[Dan Kasuba](#) – I was in the Raleigh NC area on 1/20 where similarly to New England, the recent weather has been **unusually cold, days starting out in the mid-teens** but getting into the mid-40s. Bird sightings were similar to Up North with a few pleasant surprises.

2 Eastern bluebirds, 1 red [breasted bellied] and one downy woodpecker, 1 mourning and 1 common ground dove, 1 palm and 1 pine warbler, 4 chickadees, 2 titmice, 6 juncos, 2 purple finches, 8 black and

approximately 30 turkey vultures, 30 Canada geese, 1 mockingbird, 2 red tailed hawks, 15 starlings, 1 brown headed nuthatch, 1 cardinal, and 1 Carolina wren. Thanks and enjoy!

Darcy Thurrott – Hi Kim, **Cold cold cold brisk walk** in wind & sun just now. Not many birds. Cold there too?? Will send my ebird list. Darcy. Location: North Cemetery Woodbury, Connecticut. Protocol: Traveling. Canada Goose 48, Red-bellied Woodpecker 1, Blue Jay 5, American Crow 4, Black-capped Chickadee 1.

Kim Gaffett – Going about my day – At home: raven 1, Herring gull 5+, GBBG 2; Hog Pen: Bufflehead 8, Herring gull 10+, C. eider 9, Corn Neck at BeachHead opening (very low tide with fowl apparently eating seaweed on rocks): Canada geese 25, Bufflehead 12, C. eider 1, RB Merganser 2, Amer. Wigeon 2, Gadwall 4 or 5; Beach Ave. bridge: bufflehead 6, mallard 2.

Lauren Miller-Donnelly – Hi Kim, Tuesday was **brutally cold** I had some time before work and counted only a few birds at the feeders in my backyard of Westport: Mourning Dove 13, Red-bellied Woodpecker 1, Blue Jay 3, European Starling 4, Eastern Bluebird 4, House Finch 3, Dark-eyed Junco 8.

In the afternoon it was still light enough so on my way home I stopped at Miller Street Pond in Seekonk. The wind was straight at my face which felt like it was going to freeze off. It was pretty dark so I wasn't able to see as well as I had hoped. Canada Goose 26, Mute Swan 2, Mallard 250, American Black Duck 33, Hooded Merganser 3, American Robin 1, White-throated Sparrow 1  
Good luck with the snow on BI and to everyone else in the line. I don't remember ever having this much warning ahead of time and with so much certainty that we will get a foot of snow!!!!  
Take care, Lauren

Sandy Clifton – Hi Kim, Sandy Clifton here on the ESVA, eastern shore of VA. I saw this eagle having breakfast today and thought I would share with y'all. I'll be on BI for the month of February and hope to see you then.

Best to all,  Sandy

Tim Mooney – Hi Kim, I have a short list from an afternoon walk on Tuesday... Cumberland Monastery: Carolina Wren – 2, Northern Cardinal – 2, Tufted Titmouse – 1, Downy Woodpecker - 1

We were in South Miami Beach from Jan 7 to Jan 13, and that's always interesting, even in a heavily developed area. Here are some highlights, just for fun... Laughing Gull, Fish Crow, Boat-tailed Grackle, European Starling, Eurasian Collared-Dove and Rock Pigeon — numerous every day. Osprey – 1, Brown Pelican - 25 (most seen at one time - in flight), Magnificent Frigatebird – 1, Lesser Black-backed Gull – 1, Royal Tern 2, Great Blue Heron - 1 (at a marina), Great Egret - 6 (along the highway on the ride back to the Fort Lauderdale airport), Northern Mockingbird – 8, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher – 3, House Sparrow - 10 (at restaurant patios and hotel entrances), Palm Warbler – 1, Monk Parakeet - 21 (most seen at one time, foraging on the ground).

Also seen: Green Iguana, Peter's Rock Agama (lizard), Northern (?) Curly-tailed Lizard and Brown (?) Anole. And a school of about 20 needlefish in the inlet to the port of Miami.



Tom Fetherston – Here you go! 20 January 2026 Good evening, Kim – A **cold** day, started in the low teens and never got above the mid-twenties. Wind, rain and warmer temperatures last week opened the pond up quite a bit but the recent chill re-froze much of it. However, there were sections of open water towards the middle. Most birds in the yard didn't get moving until after sunrise. Still managed a respectable list  
Notes for this week:

- When I checked the pond this morning there was a huge flock of gulls near the western shore in open water. North of them there was a good-sized gaggle of Canada geese, but otherwise few birds on the water. A lone eagle soaring overhead agitating the geese, a pair of common mergansers and a brace of greater scaup were all that I could see.
- The “blackbirds” were largely segregated by species rather than occurring in the usual mixed flocks for some reason. Only the odd starling, and the bluebird squadron was easily able to keep them away from the mealworm feeder.
- I hadn’t seen fox sparrows since the last bird day, thought they may have moved elsewhere but today a pair of them were digging around under the feeder. I really like those birds!

Here’s the list. Birds seen around Wordens 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 (200\*) WP, Bald eagle WP, American crow (2) WP, Canada goose (100\*) WP, Greater scaup (2) WP, Common merganser (2) WP, Common raven WP, White-throated sparrow (6), Fox sparrow (2), Song sparrow (3), Swamp sparrow, Dark-eyed junco (3), Eastern bluebird (6), Northern cardinal (5), Tufted titmouse (4), Blue jay (5), White-breasted nuthatch, Carolina wren (2), American goldfinch, Mourning dove (5), European starling (2), Brown-headed cowbird (20\*), Red-winged blackbird (15\*), Downy woodpecker, Hairy woodpecker. Cheers, Fether

**Valerie Heemstra** – Here’s another report from Escanaba in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The report is for today, 1/20, when it was **-15 degrees F** with the wind chill early (before 8 am) and got up to an actual +1 degree F at noon (and finally rose to a blistering 10 degrees at 3 pm) with snow drifts that measured well over 3 feet (and that’s before the plows added to them). What I am leading up to is there weren’t many birds around even when the sun came out, and fewer than usual at my feeders.

I had: 1 White-crowned Sparrow (he or she has been sticking around for several weeks. Most welcome!, 5 Rock Pigeons, 12 Dark-eyed Juncos, 2 European Starlings, 12 House Sparrows, 3 American Goldfinches, 6 House Finches. And that was it! Val.

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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.