

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

December 2, 2025

## Incidental Notes

Hi Everyone,

On Block Island December 2<sup>nd</sup> Block Island (as well as southern NE) was a poor day to be outside birding. Although the Crazy-as-a-Coot walkers had a nice walk, the rain started shortly after we made our list. As a result, I broadened the reporting time to include Darcy's Woodbury, CT (12/3) and Tim's Cumberland, RI (12/4) observations.

Although I did not include the below observation from Lauren in the From Afar list (a week seemed too far removed) I did want to share her observation from Dec. 9 – after all these walks are about sharing excitement and camaraderie among people, not just about seeing birds.

~ Hey Kim, Bird story for you.

Monday (12/9) afternoon I was alerted to a Ross's Goose that had been seen in RI over the last week had moved into BRISTOL COUNTY, so Tuesday morning I drove by the spot on the North Attleboro/Pawtucket line to see if I could locate it. It was so far away I couldn't tell whether it was a Snow Goose or a Ross's Goose so I took pictures and headed to work.

Turns out it likely WAS a Ross's Goose, the bill was not a bright red as the individual I had seen last year in Dartmouth, so I wasn't sure .... but given many folks saw it after me that morning and there was no Snow Geese observed with the group this day at all, I am pretty sure. [https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Rosss\\_Goose/species-compare/](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Rosss_Goose/species-compare/) I was hoping it was a Crazy as a Coot Tuesday but even though it was not I will share my excitement with you anyway. Lauren

~ The identifications of Nigel & Cathy's Nov. 18. 2025 have been corrected and updated.

~ Curt had a very unusual bird in his “backyard” see photo below. Check out *Owls of the Eastern Ice: a quest to find and save the world's largest bird*, for a little holiday reading.

<https://afonet.org/2022/03/owls-of-the-eastern-ice/>

**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

(30 species)

Canada Goose – 1+

Mallard – 45+

Norther Shoveler – 4

Green-winged Teal – 3

Ring-necked Duck – 3

Bufflehead – 14

Common Goldeneye – 2

Double-cr. Cormorant – 27

Great Blue Heron – 1

Great Egret – 1

Marsh Hawk (aka Northern Harrier) – 1

American Herring Gull – 3+

Great Black-back'd Gull – 4+

Gull species – 65+

Mourning Dove – 44

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Red-bellied Woodpecker – 2  
Blue Jay – 19  
American Crow – 10+  
Common Raven – 1  
Black-backed Chickadee – 12  
Carolina Wren – 7

Northern Mockingbird – 1  
E. Starling – 9+  
Myrtle Warbler – 8  
Rufus-sided Towhee – 1  
Song Sparrow – 13  
White-throated Sparrow – 6

Northern Cardinal – 7  
Red-winged Blackbird – 3  
House Finch – 15  
American Goldfinch – 2

**From Afar** South Kingstown, Cumberland, RI; Woodbury, CT; Westport, MA; Teaneck, NJ; London, England; somewhere in the Seychelles/Madagascar region.  
(35 species)

Canada Goose – 6  
Pied-billed Grebe – 1  
Bald Eagle – 1  
Cooper's Hawk - 1  
American Coot – 7  
Amer. Herring Gull – 60  
Mourning Dove – 25  
Barred Owl – 1  
Red-bellied Woodpecker – 3  
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker – 1  
Downy Woodpecker – 7  
Hairy Woodpecker – 1

Northern Flicker – 2  
Pileated Woodpecker – 1  
Blue Jay – 18  
American Crow – 7  
Fish Crow – 1  
Common Raven – 1  
Black-capped Chickadee – 6  
Tufted Titmouse – 10  
White-breasted Nuthatch – 5  
Carolina Wren – 6  
Eastern Bluebird – 6  
European Starling – 41+

Eastern Towhee – 1  
Fox Sparrow – 2  
Song Sparrow – 4  
White-throated Sparrow – 10  
Slate-colored<sup>1</sup> Junco – 33  
Northern Cardinal – 12  
Red-winged Blackbird – 12  
Common Grackle – 12  
House Finch – 10  
American Goldfinch – 1  
House Sparrow – 17

**Annie Kurz** – This is what I observed at my feeders, all repeats: a pair of cardinals (male and female), a chickadee, my usual loud female red-belly woodpecker, my usual female (probably) hairy woodpecker, my usual three downy argumentative woodpeckers. Even though they are repeats, I thrill each time I see them at my suet/peanut butter cages, filling themselves up. I do not count the house sparrows who try to eat b/c I have "trained" them not to. [I included House Sparrow (3) in your tally – you may be annoyed by them, but they are birds that you see and thus ought to be counted 😊 -kg]

**Curt Milton** – Didn't make it out today. I'm volunteering for the **Bird Note** 25th anniversary event right now. There is a Eurasian Eagle Owl here! [FYI, Bird Note is a podcast & radio program <https://www.birdnote.org/> or <https://www.birdnote.org/listen/podcasts/threatened/block-island> Thanks Curt for your volunteerism for many worthy programs from Bird Note to food banks to impromptu photographer, and so much more. -kg]

**Crazy-as-a-Coot bird walkers** – Mitchell Lane, Washington, Rhode Island, US. Dec 2, 2025 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM.  
Protocol: Traveling 0.75 mile(s). Checklist Comments: Cloudy, 46F, SE wind - 15mph. Participants: Cindy Davis, Cathy Joyce, Nigel Grindley, Heather Hatfield, Susan Matheke, Ellen Davis,



Amy Keeler, Margaret Haight, Chuck McMellon, Nancy Miles, and Kim G. 20 species (+1 other taxa): Canada Goose 1, Mallard 26, Green-winged Teal 3, Ring-necked Duck 70, Ring-necked Pheasant 3, Mourning Dove 20, Amer. Herring Gull 1, Great Black-backed Gull 3, gull sp. 65, Double-cr. Cormorant 1, Northern Harrier 1, Red-bellied Woodpecker 1, Downy Woodpecker 1, Blue Jay 9, American Crow 10, Black-capped Chickadee 6, Carolina Wren 7, European Starling 9, Northern Mockingbird 1, White-throated Sparrow 1, Song Sparrow 1.

**Darcy Thurrott** – Hi Kim. List from today's [Dec. 3] walk in cemetery, my usual 2.25 loop. Weather better than yesterday when I did NOT walk. Not a great list, but was very happy to hear pileated, which I initially mistook for flicker. Also the raven, which I have heard almost daily; am wishing for a second one as perhaps a mate! Anyway, get ready for the final full supermoon & Cold! Cheers, Darcy

Wed 3 Dec 2025 11:26 AM. Location: North Cemetery, Woodbury, Connecticut, US (41.553, -73.21). Owner Darcy Thurrott, Protocol: Traveling; Observers: 1; Duration: 53 min; Distance: 1.03 mi. Totals: 15 species. Canada Goose 6, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 1, Red-bellied Woodpecker 1, Downy Woodpecker 1, N. Flicker 1, Blue Jay 3, American Crow 4, Common Raven 1, Black-capped Chickadee 2, Tufted Titmouse 2, White-breasted Nuthatch 1, Carolina Wren 3, Eastern Bluebird 2, Dark-eyed Junco 12, White-throated Sparrow 3.

**Heather Hatfield** – Dec. 2, Overcast, 47F. Sprague's pit: Mallard 5, N. Shoveler 4; VR off Dories Cove Rd.: Common Golden-eye 2, Bufflehead 3, Song Sparrow 9; Dunn's Cartway: Mallards 9; Beach Ave. bridge: Great Egret 1; Old Town Rd.: Mourning Dove 22, BC Chickadee 4, House Finch 14, RB Woodpecker 1, Blue Jay 3, Cardinal 3, RW Blackbird 3, Goldfinch 2, White-thr. Sparrow 4, Song Sp. 2.

**Kim Gaffett** – Going about my day – short walk at Old Mill Rd/Enchanted forest loop: Song Sparrow 1, N. Cardinal 1, Carolina Wren 2, Myrtle Warbler 8; Beach Ave bridge: Herring Gull 2, Bufflehead 9; beach opening near BeachHead: Bufflehead 2, GBBG 1, DC Cormorant 26 on breakwater; at home: C. Raven 1, Mallards 5+, Great Blue Heron 1.

**Lauren Miller-Donnelly** – Hi Kim, This is just a quick backyard list from Dec 2. Juncos in big #s to over 20 this week and tons of house finches as well around feeders. Mourning Dove 4, American Herring Gull 2, Red-bellied Woodpecker 1, Downy Woodpecker 1, Blue Jay 6, Fish Crow 1, Black-capped Chickadee 1, Tufted Titmouse 1, European Starling 40, House Sparrow 10, House Finch 8, Dark-eyed Junco 12, White-throated Sparrow 1, Song Sparrow 1, Northern Cardinal 2. Have a great weekend, Lauren

**Nigel Grindley & Cathy Joyce** – Hi Kim. Here's today's bird list - rather brief and all seen around our feeders: Mourning Dove 2, Blue Jay 7, Black-capped Chickadee 2, Eastern Towhee 1, White-throated Sparrow 1, Northern Cardinal 3, House Finch 1. Great to be back with Coots (despite the weather). Cheers, Nigel & Cathy

*The ID's of the Malagasy birds in the last compilation (and below) are: Aldabra Fody (m & f); Red-footed Booby; Greater or Lesser Frigatebird chick (Booby chick has black face and bill); White-tailed Tropicbird; White-throated Rail (Aldabra Rail - a flightless subspecies); Crab-plover.*





**Tim Mooney** – Hi Kim! Dec 2 was damp and gray here, but I got out for a neighborhood walk ahead of the wind and rain. As my dog and I were finishing our loop, I was looking at my phone, getting a jump on the emails that awaited my return to my laptop. When I put my phone in my pocket and looked up, a Cooper's Hawk (adult female, guessing by size) landed in the road, about 200 feet away, with a still struggling prey. We froze on the spot (well, I froze... Daisy wanted to see what it was) and after a minute the hawk flew off with its breakfast. I couldn't tell what it had captured... bigger than a sparrow but smaller than a Blue Jay. You never know what you'll find when you leave the house! [emphasis mine -kg]

Cumberland, RI Neighborhood Walk: Cooper's Hawk -1, House Sparrow – 4, Dark-eyed Junco – 7, Tufted Titmouse – 2, Black-capped Chickadee – 3, Northern Cardinal - 4 (2 male/female pairs, viewed together in a group), House Finch – 1, American Goldfinch – 1, Blue Jay – 3, American Crow – 2, European Starling – 1, Mourning Dove – 1, Northern Flicker – 1, Downy Woodpecker – 2, White-breasted Nuthatch – 3, Carolina Wren – 2. On December 4, I saw a Barred Owl on a low perch at the Cumberland Monastery. It was magical! Also 1 Eastern Towhee heard as I was watching the owl. Will check out that film! Best, Tim

**Tom Fetherston** – 03 December 2025. Good morning Kim – Finally, time to compile yesterday's list. I received a call to assist in the retrieval and necropsy of a common dolphin from Mystic Aquarium and had to leave for the beach at Watch Hill by 0800. That gave limited opportunity to watch birds in the morning, although there were quite a few around the yard and pond. By the time I got out of the necropsy room it was raining hard and upon arriving home in the afternoon few birds were about.

Notes for this week:

- You may recall I had a pair of bluebirds nest in the yard, then the house wrens cleaned out their box and took over. Bluebirds still showed up at the mealworm feeder for a while but disappeared late in August. Around two weeks ago, a flock of them descended on the feeder, and have visited every day. Are they new migrants that arrived from the north for the winter?
- The usual suspects were in the yard. It seems the number of jays, doves and "blackbirds" have been increasing. Yesterday morning when I went out to the trash cans a large flock of doves and another big flock of blackbirds (grackles & red-winged) exploded into the air from beneath the feeders, giving me a start! For the purposes of the count, I estimated the size of both flocks and split the blackbird species 50/50.

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 (60\*) WP, American coot (5) WP, Pie-billed grebe WP, Bald eagle WP, American crow WP, White-throated sparrow (6), Fox sparrow (2), Song sparrow (3), Dark-eyed junco (2), House finch, Eastern bluebird (4), Northern cardinal (4), Tufted titmouse (5), Blue jay (6), White-breasted nuthatch, Carolina wren, Mourning dove (20\*), Red-winged blackbird (12\*), Common grackle (12\*), Downy woodpecker. Cheers, Fether

- <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.