

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

**October 31, 2023**

Incidental Notes

Hi Everyone,

I hope you all had fun on your Halloween bird walks.

To go along with the Halloween theme of shifting identities check out this recent NPR story about the soon to be changing bird names.

The American Ornithological Society made a major announcement yesterday, committing to rename 70-80 North American birds that are now named for people or whose names are otherwise offensive. Rather than pick and choose which named person did bad enough things to have their name dropped, AOS is just changing all the eponymous bird names.

<https://www.npr.org/2023/11/01/1209660753/these-american-birds-and-dozens-more-will-be-renamed-to-remove-human-monikers>

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

Peace, Kim

- <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”.
- 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.
- 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, Flock = 15+

## Block Island

( 51 species)

Canada Goose – 28

Wood Duck – 3

American Wigeon – 4

Mallard – 36+

Ring-necked Duck – 1

Common Eider – 3

White-winged Scoter – ~200

Black Scoter – ~300

Bufflehead – 1

Hooded Merganser – 2  
Ring-necked Pheasant – 3  
Double-crested Cormorant – 22  
Cormorant species – 150+  
Great Blue Heron – 3  
Black-crowned Night Heron – 3  
Northern Harrier – 2  
Cooper's Hawk – 3  
Herring Gull – 25  
Great Black-backed Gull – 5  
Gull species – 15  
Mourning Dove – 32+  
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker – 2  
Red-bellied Woodpecker – 1  
Northern (Yellow-shafted) Flicker – 4  
Merlin – 3  
Peregrine Falcon – 1  
Eastern Phoebe – 2  
Blue Jay – 9  
American Crow – 33  
Fish Crow – 2  
C. Raven – 1  
Black-capped Chickadee – 7  
Brown Creeper – 1  
Carolina Wren – 12  
Golden-crowned Kinglet – 23  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet – 5  
Kinglet species – 2  
Hermit Thrush – 2  
American Robin – 62  
Gray Catbird – 1  
Northern Mockingbird – 2  
European Starling – 70+  
Common Yellowthroat – 1  
Myrtle<sup>2</sup>/Yellow-rumped Warbler – 21  
Song Sparrow – 49  
White-throated Sparrow – 15  
Slate-colored Junco\* – 48  
Northern Cardinal – 7  
Common Grackle – 10  
Brown-headed Cowbird – 4  
House Finch – 1  
American Goldfinch – 1  
House Sparrow – 5

**From Afar:** Cumberland & South Kingston, RI; Seekonk, MA; Woodbury CT; Seattle, WA.  
(41 species)

Canada Goose – 122  
Mute Swan – 2

Wood Duck – 2  
Gadwall – 25  
Eurasian Wigeon – 1  
American Wigeon – 60  
Mallard – 18  
American Black Duck – 1  
Northern Pintail – 3  
Green-winged Teal – 2  
Scaup species – 15  
Pied-billed Grebe – 1  
Turkey Vulture – 1  
Cooper's Hawk – 2  
Mourning Dove – 5  
Anna's Hummingbird – 1  
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker – 1  
Red-bellied Woodpecker – 1  
Downy Woodpecker – 3  
Hairy Woodpecker – 1  
Northern (Red-shafted) Flicker – 1  
Blue Jay – 13  
American Crow – 7  
Common Raven – 4  
Black-capped Chickadee – 6  
Tufted Titmouse – 6  
White-breasted Nuthatch – 5  
Carolina Wren – 3  
Golden-crowned Kinglet – 4  
Eastern Bluebird – 5  
American Robin – 17  
Northern Mockingbird – 1  
European Starling – 3  
Song Sparrow – 1  
White-throated Sparrow – 8  
Slate-colored Junco<sup>1</sup> – 10  
Northern Cardinal – 1  
Red-winged Blackbird – 6  
Common Grackle – 1  
House Finch – 3  
House Sparrow – 5

**Amy Keeler** – Amy Keeler 10/31/2023. 1 Raven, 2 Great Blue Heron, 30+ Mallard Duck, 7 Song Sparrow, 4 House Sparrow, 2 Blue Jay, 2 Kinglet species, 3 Cardinals, 50+ Starling, 4 Mourning Dove, 1 Goldfinch, 1 Grackle, 6 American Crow, 5 Gull species, 2 Carolina Wren. All in the vicinity of Seneca Swamp.

**Crazy-as-a-Coot Bird Walkers** – Corn Neck Sheffield cemetery & environs, Washington, Rhode Island, US Oct 31, 2023 8:00 AM - 9:30 AM. Protocol: Traveling 1.25 mile(s). Checklist Comments: Cloudy, cool - 45-50F with NNE wind. Happy Halloween: started at Sheffield Cemetery off Corn Neck Rd. and rambled as far as Garden Pond and on to Merck's. Participants: John Formica, Emily Sessa, Cindy Davis, Nigel Grindley, Cathy Joyce, Heather Hatfield, Amy Keeler, Judy Gray, Socha Cohen, Craig Nelson, Susan Matheke & Kim G. 21 species (+2 other taxa): Canada Goose 11, Ring-necked Pheasant 2, Herring Gull 4

gull sp. 10, Great/Double-crested Cormorant 150 several large flocks of cormorant flew in V formation overhead. Vertical distance was too high for confirmation. 150 individuals is a very conservative number. Great Blue Heron 1, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 2, Merlin 1, Blue Jay 1, American Crow 15, Fish Crow 2, Black-capped Chickadee 2, Golden-crowned Kinglet 5, Carolina Wren 4, European Starling 20, American Robin 20, Dark-eyed Junco 24, White-throated Sparrow 6, Song Sparrow 15, Brown-headed Cowbird 4, Common Grackle 9, Yellow-rumped Warbler 10, Northern Cardinal 1.

**Cathy Joyce & Nigel Grindley** – Hi Kim, Here's our bird list for yesterday. 1) Around the yard: Cooper's Hawk 1, Mourning Dove 11, Northern Flicker 1, Eastern Phoebe 2, Blue jay 4, American crow 1, Black-capped chickadee 4, Carolina Wren 3, Golden-crowned Kinglet 2, American robin 12, Gray catbird 1, Yellow-rumped warbler 1, Song sparrow 1, White-throated sparrow 7, Northern cardinal 2, House Finch 1, House Sparrow 1. 2) Walk to and in Rodman's Hollow: Common Eider 3, White-winged Scoter ~200, Black Scoter ~300 (The scoters were all in a long, loose raft. We saw a whole sub-flock take off, so it was simple to make the WW species call for a good fraction of the total.), Double-crested Cormorant 22, Cooper's Hawk 1, Herring Gull 18, Great Black-backed Gull 4, Blue Jay 1, American Crow 8, Carolina Wren 2, Ruby-crowned Kinglet 5, Yellow-rumped Warbler 4, Song Sparrow 20, Dark-eyed Junco 20, Northern cardinal 1. Thanks for the lovely walk in the morning. Cheers, Nigel & Cathy.

**Chris Blane** – 1 Coopers hawk, 2 Mockingbirds, 3 Wood Ducks, 1 Carolina Wren, 1 Peregrine Falcon, 3 Black Crowned Night Herons, 2 Merlins. Also, a pair of Hooded Mergansers in the Georgian Swamp Sunday.

**Curt Milton** – Hi Kim, I was walking to get coffee this morning when I heard a bird call in the big fir outside my building. Turned out to be a flicker (red shafted, of course). Have also seen the resident Anna's hummingbird a couple of times lately, which is pretty amazing considering how cold it has been.

**Darcy Thurrott** – Hi Kim, Sorry for the late reply. We had 4 bluebirds at our bluebird box sort-of fighting for occupancy I guess. Chickadees too. Blue Jays, Crows, Piper heard 2 **Spooky ravens!** Yellow bellied sapsucker, Juncos, White throats, House finch. I think Halloween threw me off a bit. We had over 150 goblins!!! Sorry for the delay and messy list. [recorded 3 for each species, except recorded 1 for YBSA-kg] Take care 🐦🐦, Darcy.

**Erica Anderson** – Hi Kim, The **Spookiest** bird is absolutely a Great Blue Heron. I meat one on the dock in the dark one night when I lived in the marina. It was half as tall as me and it made that squawk they do and flapped off. Scared the complete beejesus out of me! I miss those days....Here's to a scare free Halloween!

**Heather Hatfield** – Oct. 31: 46F, chilly, sunny. At Sprague Pit: Canada Geese 17, Mallard 6, A. Wigeon 4. Vin's: GCKinglet 9, Myrtle Warbler 6, Ring-necked Duck 1, Bufflehead 1, Mourning Dove 15+, N. Harrier 1, Song Sp. 5.

**Lauren Miller-Donnelly** – Hi Kim, On the 31<sup>st</sup> I stopped by a small pond in Seekonk MA that has had an Eurasian Wigeon this fall (Miller Street Pond). It was about 4:30 and the neighborhood was getting ready for Halloween. The sounds of leaf blowers and lawn mowers thwarted my ability to hear many passerines, unfortunately. (Coincidentally this is neighborhood we used to visit as kids because the houses are close together, so lots of fond memories as I approached the birding location). Here is my list: Canada Goose 120, Mute Swan 2, Gadwall 25, **Eurasian Wigeon 1**, American Wigeon 60, Mallard 12, American Black Duck 1, Northern Pintail 3, Green-winged Teal 2, Pied-billed Grebe 1, Black-capped Chickadee 1. Nice to see you yesterday! Lauren.

**Tim Mooney** – Yes! I wasn't sure about my **Spookiest** bird, but then it showed up for me yesterday: the Turkey Vulture. I was walking around the neighborhood in the morning and suddenly it appeared, like a phantom but

draped in black. It came from behind a house, barely clearing the electric wires, then with a couple big wings flaps, it was gone. So there's my answer!

Cumberland, RI – Suburban neighborhood and Cumberland monastery (500-acre park); 2.75 miles total: Wood Duck – 2, Mallard – 6, Canada Goose – 2, Turkey Vulture – 1, Cooper's Hawk – 2 (flying overhead together), Common Grackle – 1, Red-winged Blackbird – 6 (singing males), European Starling – 3, American Robin – 17, Eastern Bluebird – 1, Northern Mockingbird – 1, Blue Jay – 9, American Crow – 4, Red-bellied Woodpecker – 1, Downy Woodpecker – 3, Hairy Woodpecker – 1, White-breasted Nuthatch – 1, House Sparrow – 5, Song Sparrow – 1, Slate-colored Junco – 7, White-throated Sparrow – 4, Carolina Wren – 3, Tufted Titmouse – 3, Black-capped Chickadee – 1, Golden-crowned Kinglet – 4, Northern Cardinal – 1, and Mourning Dove – 2.

**Tom Fetherston** – Hi Kim, as you know this is a split list. I started at my house / Wordens Pond [South Kingston, RI] then ended up at your stomping grounds at Clay Head Trail, Block Island.

This week's observations:

- White throated sparrows have become more numerous in my yard, but I haven't seen any juncos yet. However, the juncos were certainly present on Block Island!
- While hiking back and forth through the woods to Upper Quarter (BI), there were American robins everywhere. What is the proper term for such a gathering? A riot of robins? I also saw two or three Northern flickers together at a time.
- While sitting (and shivering) in the deer stand, a small group of golden crowned kinglets flew into the tree next to me. One male in particular was checking me out quite closely, hopping within a few feet of my head cheeping away. Probably wondering what that silly human was doing intruding on his lunch.
- I noticed a couple of olive birds with russet tails flitting out of my way while walking. Finally, one faced me, and I could see the spotted breast: hermit thrush. First one I'd observed in a few years.

Here's the list. I'll split it into two sections, one for South Kingstown and one for Block Island. Birds seen on or around Worden's Pond are annotated with WP. Estimates noted with an asterisk \* Birds in the field or at the feeders were counted as singles unless present simultaneously or different sexes.

SOUTH KINGSTOWN: Tufted titmouse (3), Blue jay, Mourning dove (3), White-breasted nuthatch (2), Black capped chickadee, Common raven (2) WP, White-throated sparrow, Scaup (sp.) (15\*) WP

CLAY HEAD TRAIL, BLOCK ISLAND: Great Black-backed gull, Herring gull (3), Black-capped chickadee, American robin (a riot of them) [recorded "riot" as a conservative 30], Northern flicker (3), Common yellowthroat, Song sparrow, Ring-necked pheasant, Mourning dove (2), American crow (3), Brown creeper, Hermit thrush (2), White-throated sparrow (2), Red-bellied woodpecker, Slate-colored junco (4), Golden-crowned kinglet (8\*), Blue jay, Marsh hawk. Cheers, Fether