

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

March 17, 2026

Incidental Notes

Hi Everyone,

It was not a good day for Block Island birding. It was the second day of weather so fiercely blustery that there was no boat, and it was quite chilly, i.e. not a day to be outside.

For the sake of documenting that there are still winter-time sea ducks around, here are the observations that Nigel and Cathy made on the following day (March 18) during a seal count walk between Cooneymus Cove and Dorries Cove: “1 seal, presumably a grey, in the water at Cooneymus, then no more all the way to Dorrie’s Cove. 100s of scoters, mostly black but also white winged and surf, dozens of grebes, plus eiders, golden eye, red-breasted mergansers and bufflehead—excellent bird walk!”

As for the From Afar observations: so great to compare Valerie’s wintertime, northern Michigan list with Barby and Doug’s warm water list from Virgin Gorda, BVI ... 😊

Happy first day of spring everyone, and get ready for shifts of bird species, song and brightening plumages. To get you in the mood, checkout this short audio announcing the beginning of early arrivals in our southern NE range. <https://www.capeandislands.org/podcast/weekly-bird-report>

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

(27 species)

Canada Goose – 61+	Marsh Hawk (N. Harrier) – 1	Common Raven – 1
American Black Duck – 1	American Oystercatcher – 2	Black-backed Chickadee – 4
Mallard – 14+	Black-bellied Plover – 2	E. Starling – 40+
Common Eider – 3	Sanderling – 13	American Robin – 3
Black Scoter – 2	American Herring Gull – 87+	White-throated Sparrow – 4
Bufflehead – 21	Great Black-backed Gull – 3+	Northern Cardinal – 12
Red-breasted Merganser – 2	Rock Pigeon – 6	Red-winged Blackbird – 24+
Ring-necked Pheasant – 3	Mourning Dove – 3	Common Grackle – 6
Common Loon – 1	American Crow – 6+	House Finch – 14

From Afar South Kingstown & Cumberland RI; Dalton & Westport, MA; Woodbury CT; Escanaba, MI; Venice & Naples, FL; Virgin Gorda, BVI;

(69 species)

Canada Goose – 38	Hairy Woodpecker – 1	House Finch – 3
Wood Duck – 2	Northern Flicker – 1	American Goldfinch – 7
Mallard – 8	Blue Jay – 12	House Sparrow – 33+
Greater Scaup – 30	American Crow – 26	<u>VIRGIN GORDA, BVI</u>
Bufflehead – 30	Fish Crow – 7	Smooth billed ani
Common Goldeneye – 2	Black-capped Chickadee – 6	Gray kingbird
Wild Turkey – 3	Tufted Titmouse – 10	Pearly-eyed thrasher
Pied-billed Grebe – 1	White-breasted Nuthatch – 2	Bananaquit
Double-crested Cormorant – 3	Carolina Wren – 3	Kestrel
Anhinga – 2	European Starling – 47	Frigate Bird
Brown Pelican – 18	Eastern Bluebird – 6	Brown pelican
White Ibis – 15+	Amer. Robin – 13	Common tern
Great Blue Heron – 3	Northern Mockingbird – 7	Common ground dove
Great Egret – 2	Eastern Towhee – 1	Northern mockingbird
Snowy Egret - 6	American Tree Sparrow – 1	Green-thr. Carib hummingbird
Green Heron – 1	Fox Sparrow – 1	Green parrot
Black-crowned Night-heron – 1	Swamp Sparrow – 1	Red jungle fowl
Turkey Vulture – 6	Song Sparrow – 6	Hawk species
Osprey – 3	White-throated Sparrow – 7	Also seen:
Red-Shouldered Hawk – 1	White-crowned Sparrow – 1	½ mile long pod of Dolphins!,
Red-tailed Hawk – 1	Dark-eyed ¹ Junco – 17	small bats, wild chickens
Amer. Herring Gull – 205+	Northern Cardinal – 5	
Mourning Dove – 17	Red-winged Blackbird – 12	
Rock Pigeon – 15	Common Grackle – 24	
Red-bellied Woodpecker – 2	Boat-tailed Grackle – 8	
Downy Woodpecker – 1	Brown-headed Cowbird – 21	

Amy Keeler – Amy Keeler's Out-and-About List. Tuesday, March 17, 2023. Greetings from Venice and Naples Florida. Lots of Birds here. I had to look some up 🐦. 15+ White Ibis, 1 Green Heron, 1 Black Crown Night Heron, 4 Turkey Vulture, 2 Great Egret, 6 Snowy Egret, 7 Fish Crow, 3 American Crow, 3 Osprey, 18 Pelican, 3 DC Cormorant, 2 Anhinga, 2 RB Woodpecker, 12 Starling, 20+Sparrow sp., I think House, 8 Boat Tail Grackle, 7 Common Grackle, 12 Mourning Dove, 7 Mockingbird. 2 Bluejay, 3 Cardinal. No Hummers 😞 And, 2 GB Heron

Barby & Doug Michel Hi Kim, as in other years, we are in the BVI and are loving seeing and hearing our usual birds. Smooth billed ani, Gray kingbird, Pearly-eyed thrasher, Bananaquit, Kestrel, Frigate Bird, Brown pelican, Common tern, Common ground dove, Northern mockingbird, Green throated carib hummingbird, Green parrot, Red jungle fowl (Merlin's name our house rooster) We also saw a mid-sized brown hawk but it was hard to identify. Other animals: A .5 mile long pod of dolphins. Small bats. Wild chickens.....

Cathy Joyce & Nigel Grindley – Hi Kim. Here is our list from yesterday [March 17]: Around our yard: Canada Goose 1, Northern Harrier 1, Mourning Dove 3, American Crow 3, Black-capped Chickadee 4, White-throated Sparrow 4, Red-winged Blackbird 4, Northern Cardinal 12, House Finch 14. During a walk down Coastguard Road and Cormorant Cove: Canada Goose 45, American Black Duck 1, Mallard 2, Common Eider 1, Bufflehead 10, Common Loon 1, Black-bellied Plover 2, American Oyster Catcher 2, Herring Gull 50, American Crow 3.

Spectacular waves compensated for the paucity of birds at Mansion Beach - thanks for a beautiful walk!
Cheers, Cathy & Nigel

Crazy-as-a-Coot bird walkers – Mansion Beach only, Washington, Rhode Island, US. Mar 17, 2026
12:30 PM - 1:30 PM. Protocol: Traveling 0.1 mile(s). Checklist Comments: **It was low tide & high surf!** A short walk north to beginning of Pots & Kettles where the beach became too cobbled to traverse. West wind at 20-25 mph with gusts to 30; 40F; sunny; very high, thunderous surf. Difficult birding. Participants: Heather Hatfield, Cathy Joyce, Nigel Grindley, Nancy Miles, Pat Saylor, Mena Hautau, Jessie Edwards, Judy Gray, Susan Matheke, Cindy Davis, Anne & Carlos Salinas, Margaret Haight, and Kim G. 10 species: Common Eider 2, Black Scoter 2, Bufflehead 11, Red-breasted Merganser 2, Ring-necked Pheasant 1, American Herring Gull 35, Great Black-backed Gull 3, American Robin 1, Red-winged Blackbird 6, Common Grackle 5.

Dan Kasuba Hi Kim. With the blustery cold winds we all experienced on 3/17 the birds seemed to also be hunkering down for most of the day. But a sudden influx of birds appeared around 5 pm, when the ground softened a bit. Dalton MA- throughout the day: 1 European starling, 1 red tailed hawk, 13 American crows, 1 Eastern towhee (1st of the season), 10 juncos, 1 tufted titmouse, 2 American robins, 4 common grackles, 2 Eastern bluebirds, 4 black capped chickadees, and 2 Canada geese. Thanks and enjoy!

Darcy Thurrott – Hi Kim, I Hope you made it home safely & ferries running, tho it was very windy here today. [I made it home on plane in time for 12:30 Coot Walk. A second no-boat day. -kg]
I did take that Middlebury trail walk with 13 others, so not conducive for ebirding. I did however see a red shoulder screaming overhead. Also a titmouse. And 2-3 crows heard. Also 2 turkey vultures floating over. And 2 bluebirds going to our birdhouse. Carolina wren out of our window box in a.m.
That's it for now, sorry not more birds. Thanks, take care. Happy St. Patrick's Day! Darcy

John Formica – I likely will not be able to make this walk but will plan to get going again for the next walk. BTW I saw a male pheasant in our yard this morning. JF



Kim Gaffett – Going about my day. at home: Raven, Mallards 12, Red-wings 5+, pheasant 1; at the office: Canada Geese 15ish, Rock Pigeon 6, Starling 20+, Robin 1, Red-wings 6, C. Grackle 1; at Nancy Greenaway's: Herring Gull 2, Red-wings calling 3, A. Robin 1; along various streets: Starlings 20+,

Lauren Miller-Donnelly – [Wrote on March 19] Hi Kim, I am thrilled that Spring is arriving tomorrow . Tomorrow afternoon actually will be an especially low tide (-6) so my plan is to head to the beach to experience it at the end of the day and maybe get some shorebirds or *if I am lucky a Razorbill* because I still need one for the year.

[March 17 observations in Westport:] Wild Turkey 3, Northern Flicker 1, Blue Jay 4, American Crow 2, Tufted Titmouse 2, White-breasted Nuthatch 1, European Starling 9, American Robin 2, House Sparrow 2, American Goldfinch 2, Dark-eyed Junco 4, Song Sparrow 1, Red-winged Blackbird 2, Brown-headed Cowbird 1. Take care! Lauren

Pat Saylor – At Scotch this afternoon, 13 sanderlings (photo left); and, one dead cormorant? between scotch beach and beach pavilion.

Tim Mooney – Hi Kim - Oh, I'd love to go back to South Beach to see those green parakeets on St. Patrick's Day! The morning of March 17 was still pretty windy here, and the neighborhood birds were hunkered down. Nevertheless, sharing what I found. Some seasonal firsts in Cumberland: Red-winged Blackbird (March 6), Common Grackle (March 9), Brown-headed Cowbird (March 10). And 2 Ospreys in N. Kingstown (3/18).

March 17: Common Grackle – 3, American Crow – 1, Blue Jay – 3, American Robin – 1, Northern Cardinal – 2, House Finch – 2, Tufted Titmouse – 3, Black-capped Chickadee – 1, Song Sparrow – 2, House Sparrow – 6.

Tom Fetherston – Good afternoon, Kim – Ice-out occurred on Worden’s Pond in the last week, and waterfowl have returned, some undoubtedly on their journeys north. There was a flock of geese by the dock when Vesper and I finished our run. She couldn’t resist jumping in and chasing them, which caused the geese to string out and make counting easy 😊 Lots of buffleheads, there was a close group of 14, but other flocks further out bobbing in the waves which precluded getting an exact number. Had a pair of golden eyes nearby, a distant flock of scaup too far for a positive ID initially, but a half dozen flew in by the dock and were greater scaup. Birds in the yard were the usual crowd, with one odd incidence of a pair of house sparrows, very rarely observed out here.

Notes for this week:

- I continue to count the “blackbirds” by using estimates for numbers of each species that reflect their relative abundance in the flocks.
- Two interesting sightings during the week, neither of which showed up today. On Saturday there were four juvenile bald eagles alternately soaring and roosting along the shore while there was still some ice along the fringes of the pond. Using Sibley, one was first year, the other three were second through fourth year. I’d seen six together on the pond in the fall, looked like some of the same group.
- There has been a pileated woodpecker hanging around in the vicinity of the yard. A few days ago, it was hammering away on a tree in the swamp about 200 yds east of the house. Yesterday it was by the dock and flew into our back woodlot when Vesper and I walked down there. It was a no-show today, unfortunately.

Here’s the list. Birds seen around Worden’s 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. American herring gull (200*) WP, American crow (3) WP, Pie-billed grebe WP, Canada goose (36) WP, Common goldeneye (2) WP, Mallard (8) WP, Bufflehead (30*) WP, Greater scaup (30*) WP, Wood duck (2) WP, Great blue heron WP, White-throated sparrow (7), Tree sparrow, Fox sparrow, Song sparrow (3), Swamp sparrow, House sparrow (2), Dark-eyed junco (3), Eastern bluebird (2), House finch, American goldfinch, Northern cardinal (4), Tufted titmouse (3), Blue jay (3), White-breasted nuthatch, Carolina wren (2), Black-capped chickadee, Mourning dove (4), Europ. starling (10*), Brown-headed cowbird (20*), Red-winged blackbird (10*), Common grackle (10*), Downy woodpecker, Hairy woodpecker. Cheers, Fether



Valerie Heemstra – Hi Kim. Shoveling out from our blizzard I noted the following birds today in Escanaba, MI: a flock of 8 American Robins flying just over the rooftops; 1 Mourning Dove; 2 American Crows; several Herring Gulls: about 15 European Starlings; about the same numbers of Rock Pigeons; 4 American Goldfinches; 1 White-crowned Sparrow; 3 House Sparrows. We had more than two feet of snow, winds of 50 mph, and drifting that filled up my picket-fenced yard solidly with snow about 3.5-4 feet deep. Photo attached taken just before dawn after three hours of shoveling. Almost no green in sight, even though it is St. Paddy's Day. Val

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- 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. What fun it will be if we get reports of one of the other Juncos which are generally seen in limited areas “mid-country”.

- ²Q. What is a ²**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.