

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

November 7, 2023

Incidental Notes

Hi Everyone,

It was a dreary, rainy morning on BI so we changed our venue to Settlers' Rock – with low expectations – where we could scope the ocean and Sachem Pond, and then quickly scurry into our vehicles.

To our delight we had two wonderful diversions. First, Faye B. raised the question about the origin of the saying “Birds of a feather flock together”. The answer was quickly found on the internet – of course. The axiom was attribute to Aristotle (350 B.C.E) and is related to friendship: perfectly aligned with our current activity of bird walking, which at its core is all about friendship and camaraderie. [[The Internet Classics Archive | Nicomachean Ethics by Aristotle \(mit.edu\)](#) – jump to the 3rd paragraph]. Thank you Faye for raising the question and doing the research.

Our second diversion was the discovery of 2 American Pipits flitting around the grassy edge of the rocks along the road (not yet seen on any Crazy-as-a-Coot Bird Walks). What fun to be rained upon (see Crazy-as-a-Coot photo below) while seeing a species that was new to most of us.

American Pipit https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/American_Pipit/overview



Pipit *Tilark* ANTHUS PIPITENS, var. *Phoebe subulata*

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

(39 species)

Canada Goose – 6
Mute Swan – 1
American Wigeon – 6
Mallard – 27
Green-winged Teal – 2
White-winged Scoter – 1
Bufflehead – 24
Hooded Merganser – 1
Ruddy Duck – 50
Ring-necked Pheasant – 1
Wild Turkey (feral) – 1
Common Loon – 4
Northern Gannet – 10
Double-crested/Great Cormorant – 15
Great Cormorant – 1
Great Blue Heron – 2
Northern Harrier – 6
Sharp-shinned Hawk – 1
Cooper's Hawk – 1
Herring Gull – 50
Great Black-backed Gull – 100
Gull species – 80+
Rock Pigeon – 30+
Mourning Dove – 56
Yellow-billed Cuckoo – 1
Northern (Yellow-shafted) Flicker – 3
Blue Jay – 7
American Crow – 7
Fish Crow – 2
Black-capped Chickadee – 2
Carolina Wren – 1
American Robin – 30
Gray Catbird – 1
European Starling – 250+
American Pipit – 2
Song Sparrow – 5
White-throated Sparrow – 2
Northern Cardinal – 6
Common Grackle – 1
House Sparrow – 10

Also seen: 3" Snapping Turtle

From Afar: Cumberland, South Kingston & Charlestown, RI; Woodbury CT.

(32 species)

Canada Goose – 13
Mute Swan – 1
Mallard – 8
Greater Scaup – 200
Horned Grebe – 1
Turkey Vulture – 1
American Coot – 7
Herring Gull – 26
Belted Kingfisher – 1
Downy Woodpecker – 6
Hairy Woodpecker – 1
Northern (Yellow-shafted) Flicker – 3
Blue Jay – 4
American Crow – 4
Common Raven – 3
Black-capped Chickadee – 2
Tufted Titmouse – 6
White-breasted Nuthatch – 4
Winter Wren – 1
Carolina Wren – 3
Ruby-crowned Kinglet – 2
Golden-crowned Kinglet – 9
American Robin – 95
Gray Catbird – 1
European Starling – 190
Song Sparrow – 5
White-throated Sparrow – 14
Slate-colored Junco¹ – 8
Northern Cardinal – 4
Red-winged Blackbird – 2
House Finch – 52
House Sparrow – 1

Amy Keeler – Amy Keeler's list, 11/7 2023 Out + About. Mitchell Lane Area: 1 Great Blue Heron, 23 Bufflehead, 8 Mallard, 2 Bluejay, 2 Cardinal, 100+ Starling, 5 American Crow, 2 Fish Crow, 10 House Sparrow, 2 Chickadee, 4 Song Sparrow, 1 Grackle, 1 Flicker, 6 Mourning Dove, 2 Northern Harrier

Annie Kurz – Heard but did not see so cannot assume any number other than 1 or maybe 2. because there seemed to be a call and response. • crows • flickers • white throated sparrows • various warblers (don't know songs enough to name them). Saw and heard: • 1male cardinal • 6 robins.

Mansion Road: • accipiter, probably sharp shinned (seemed to be smaller than 14-20") • two pheasants (maybe more -- shriekings from the cover of brush) • 3 doves • 3 blue jays • 10 (?) robins.

One siting was at the juncture of Old Mill Road and West Side Road: a wild turkey. Photo attached.



Old Mill Rd, BI

Crazy-as-a-Coot Bird Walkers –Sachem Pond & environs, Washington, Rhode Island, US

Nov 7, 2023 8:00 AM - 8:45 AM. Protocol: Stationary. Checklist Comments: Cloudy & rainy, 58F, SW wind. Because it was raining (light-moderate in waves) we opted for a stationary "walk" at Sachem Pond that



provided views of Sachem Pond & Cow Cove to Sandy Point. Participants: Chuck McMellon, Nigel Grindley, Cathy Joyce, Heather Hatfield, Susan Matheke, Amy Keeler, Christin & Jake Scarcello, Judy Gray, Faye Benedict, Annie Kurz, John Formica & Kim G. 12 species (+1 other taxa). Canada Goose 6, Mute Swan 1, American Wigeon 6, White-winged Scoter 1, Hooded Merganser 1, Ruddy Duck 50, Herring Gull 50, Great Black-backed Gull 100, Common Loon 4, Northern Gannet 10, Great/Double-crested Cormorant 15, American Pipit 2, Song Sparrow 1.



Christin & Jake Scarcello – Hi Kim, Thanks for a fun morning. I'm emailing to avoid a late text!

At Jakes request, we went back to the front of Odd Fellows so he could drop more bread crumbs for the birds. He counted 12 sparrows there (barn sparrows??) [House Sparrows – kg] My untrained eye thought I saw 2 loons floating and fishing in the water off crescent beach. [Yes, very likely. Good ID – kg]. And, we found this guy on the beach at Dories Cove (I attached a pic). I've seen plenty of dead gulls but not these. Is it a cormorant? [Yes, a Cormorant. I'm not sure if it is Double-crested or Great Cormorant. I'm leaning towards Double-crested, but will list it as "Double-crested/Great". -kg] Christin 😊

Chuck McMellon – [In answer to the question "what do you think is the spookiest bird?"] From afar - the Great Potoo a.k.a Ghost Bird <https://ebird.org/species/grepot1>; and, on BI the Raven.

Curt Milton – Hi Kim, I didn't get out. Weather was rotten. 😞

Darcy Thurrott – Hi Kim, Know I walked that day, but didn't keep a list..pretty dull I guess. Sorry! I did notice [counted 3 for each species for the list -kg] song sparrows & cardinals & juncos at bath near sundown tho. White throats consistently chipping at roosting time...for years.. Do you know why that is???..in pines & our hemlocks. [Actually many birds chip & cluck as they settle down to roost for the night. I don't know why – maybe it is their way of saying good night a la the old TV program The Waltons ... "Goodnight John Boy". 😊 Or maybe to stake out territory – check out <https://www.wikihow.com/Why-Do-Birds-Chirp-at-Night#:~:text=Roosting%20males%20will%20chirp%20loudly,do%20their%20breeding%20and%20nesting> -kg] Chilly out there now?? Be well, Darcy 🍁🐦🐱

Faye Benedict – My "going about my day" list: A flock of 35 doves (the usual kind) [Mourning Doves] counted picking (presumably) seeds from my lawn and driveway. Great walk today Kim, Faye.

Heather Hatfield – Nov. 7, 2023, 54F, Rainy & Cloudy. At Sprague pit, West Side Rd.: Mallards 18, Bufflehead 1. At Vin Ryan's, off Dorries Cove Rd.: Great Blue Heron 1, Mourning Dove 12, Bufflehead 3, Song Sparrow 4, N. Cardinal 3, Green-winged Teal 2, Catbird 1, Carolina Wren 1, N. Harrier 1, and a 3" Snapping Turtle. And on 11/8: Another YB Cuckoo over here at Vins!

Kim Gaffett – Going about my day. Along Corn Neck Rd: Marsh Hawk 1, E. Starling 150+, American Robin 6. In town & office: 1 Gr. Cormorant, Rock Pigeon 30+.

Lauren Miller-Donnelly – Hi Kim, I was reminded that it was a Crazy Coot bird walk day so I eagerly dropped all that I was doing and counted some birds out back before the early sunset. I had a Belted Kingfisher which I have heard before in our neighborhood, but this time I actually saw it. Another highlight was the high #'s of House Finches flying together (~40 birds) presumably to their evening roost site, accompanied by about 50 Robins. Nov. 7: Canada Goose 12, Herring Gull 1, Belted Kingfisher 1, Downy Woodpecker 2, Hairy Woodpecker 1, Northern Flicker 3, Blue Jay 2, Black-capped Chickadee 1, Tufted Titmouse 4, Ruby-crowned Kinglet 2, Golden-crowned Kinglet 3, White-breasted Nuthatch 2, Winter Wren 1, Carolina Wren 2, European Starling 190, Gray Catbird 1, American Robin 80, House Sparrow 1, House Finch 52, Dark-eyed Junco 2, White-throated Sparrow 7, Song Sparrow 1, Red-winged Blackbird 2, Northern Cardinal 1. -Lauren

Nancy Greenaway – While on a walk: 1 Pheasant, male, 1 Marsh Hawk. Seen from my dining room windows, near Andy's Way: 80+ gulls, 8 Robins, 1 Mallard, 0 Partridges in Pear Tree.

Nigel Grindley & Cathy Joyce – Hi Kim. Meager viewings yesterday. Cooper's Hawk 1, Northern Harrier 2 (1m, 1f) (seen from Corn Neck Road over the dunes north of the Beach House), Blue Jay 2, Chickadee 2

Tim Mooney – Thanks Kim. A slim list this week, but every bird counts, right? The Raven was the highlight of the day. It's been in and out of my Cumberland neighborhood for a couple weeks. Best, Tim.

Mallard – 3, Common Raven – 1, American Crow – 1, Blue Jay – 1, Carolina Wren – 1, Tufted Titmouse – 2, Black-capped Chickadee – 1, Downy Woodpecker – 3, White-throated Sparrow – 2, Slate-colored Junco – 1, and American Robin – 5.

Tom Fetherston – Good morning Kim - Here's yesterday's list. Some of the regulars (cardinals, chickadees) weren't around to be counted? It had been raining first thing so I think that may have kept a number of birds hanging in cover till after it passed. Cheers, Fether.

7 Nov 2023. Today's list is observations made from the yard and the dock; I didn't go out on the pond in the canoe. One exception is a turkey vulture I saw in Charlestown on the way to a friend's house. As usual I had Merlin running several times to try and correlate acoustic detections with sightings.

This week's observations:

- The juncos have arrived! Not a lot yet but there are several that regularly visit the areas under the feeders.
- Golden crowned kinglets are still here. Merlin picks them up, but I'll often have trouble locating the actual birds. They seem to move about in a small flock, going around the yard so suddenly the oak near the side porch has kinglets hopping all over the place for a while where I can see them then they depart.
- A horned grebe popped up at the dock when Maggie and I went down to take her swimming. Kid of startling, it was on a dive and suddenly surfaced 20' in front of us. The grebe & Maggie locked eyeballs, it dove away, and I had to keep the Lab from following 😊
- There was a big flock of scaup on the pond, again too far to identify the species or this time get a reasonable estimate. While watching them a bass boat went roaring by and the ducks flushed. There were so many it looked like smoke coming off the water. A small group (5-6) swung past close enough

to see they were greater scaup before swinging out to rejoin the greater flock as they settled to the west.

Here's the list. 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. Tufted titmouse (2), Blue jay, Dark-eyed junco (2), White-breasted nuthatch (2), Common raven (2), White-throated sparrow (2), Greater scaup (200*) WP, Mallard (5) WP, Mute swan (WP), Canada goose (WP), Horned grebe (WP), Herring gull (25*) WP, American robin (10*), Song sparrow, American crow (3), Golden-crowned kinglet (6*), Downy woodpecker, Carolina wren, American coot (7) WP, Turkey vulture. Cheers, Fether

- 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.