

Social Distance Crazy-as-a-Coot Bird Walks: December 1, 2020

Incidental Notes.

- I loved Erica's image of Pine Siskins swaying on a curtain of Christmas light strings; and, Laura's "roving robin and bevy of Blue Tits".
- For the Block Island list there were some notable misses: No Carolina Wren, American Robin or American Crow to name a few – I'm sure that will be rectified next time.
- Check out Faye's link for the Eurasian/Common Jay – that is a beautiful bird!

Northern Flicker is another species with differing eastern and western populations. Northern Flicker in the east is most often Yellow-shafted Flicker (under wings yellow); whereas western populations are most often Red-shafted Flicker (under wings reddish). Just to keep your birding interesting, remember either color variation could occasionally be seen on both U.S. coasts; and "cross pollination" is regularly seen in mid-country.

Since I have more experience with east coast populations, I am likely to list N. Flickers reported from east coast locations as Yellow-shafted. On the other hand, I am likely to list west coast reports as Northern Flicker (due to my lack of experience in the west regarding the likelihood of Yellow-shafted), or unless the observer confirms that it is a Red-shafted Flicker.

And then, there is the Gilded Flicker..... For more Flicker information see *The Sibley Guide to Birds* or your favorite bird guide.

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".

- 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]

Block Island

(32 species)

Canada Geese – 50+

American Wigeon – 2+

Mallard – 42
Common Eider – 14
Common Goldeneye – 20
Merganser sp. – 6
Red-breasted Merganser – 50+
Hooded Merganser – 20+
Ruddy Duck – 50+
Ring-necked Pheasant – 2
Loon sp. – 2
Great Egret – 1
Sanderling – 60+
Northern Harrier – 4
Sharp-shinned Hawk – 1
Herring Gull – 10
Great Black-backed Gull – 10
Gull sp. – 50+
Mourning Dove – 23
Belted-Kingfisher – 1
Downy Woodpecker – 1
Northern Flicker – 1
Blue Jay – 4
Black-capped Chickadee – 7
Red-breasted Nuthatch – 1
European Starling – 10+
Song Sparrow – 1
White-throated Sparrow – 2
Northern Cardinal – 3
Baltimore Oriole – 1
House Finch – 15
American Goldfinch – 3
Evening Grosbeak – 1
House Sparrow – 3

From Afar Narragansett, RI; Tiverton, RI; Surry, NH; Croton-on-Hudson, NY; Pleasant Hill & Roseberg, OR; Seattle, WA; Sedbergh, England; Drangedal, Norway
(49 species)

Canada Goose – 10+

Trumpeter Swan – 2

Wood Duck – 2

American Wigeon – 100+

Mallard – 11

Bufflehead – 10

Hooded Merganser – 15+

Double-crested Cormorant – 3

Great Blue Heron – 1

Turkey Vulture – 1

Northern Harrier – 1

Red-tailed Hawk – 1

Herring Gull – 10

Rock Dove – 10

Anna's Hummingbird – 1

Acorn Woodpecker – 1

Red-bellied Woodpecker – 8

Downy Woodpecker – 2

Hairy Woodpecker – 1

Northern Flicker – 6

Yellow-shafted/Northern Flicker – 1

Blue Jay - 5

Steller's Jay – 4

California Scrub-jay – 1

*Eurasian Jay – 5

*Magpie – 10

American Crow – 51+

*Raven – 1

Black-capped Chickadee – 31+

*Great Tit – 25

*Willow Tit – 4

*Coal Tit – 2

*Blue Tit – 8+

Tufted Titmouse – 15

White-breasted Nuthatch – 4

Carolina Wren – 3

Golden-crowned Kinglet – 1

Ruby-crowned Kinglet – 2

Eastern Bluebird – 16+

American Robin – 18

*Robin – 1

European Starling – 24

Spotted Towhee – 3

Savannah Sparrow – 1

Song Sparrow – 3

Slate-colored Junco – 12 / Dark-eyed Junco – 10 / Oregon Junco – 5

Northern Cardinal – 3

House Finch – 1

Pine Siskin – 19

American Goldfinch – 6

House Sparrow – 8

[Cathy Joyce & Nigel Grindley](#) - Here is our bird list from yesterday, around our backyard feeders. Fairly low numbers, probably because we were away for a few days and it takes the birds a while to realize that their fast-food restaurant is back up and running! B-C Chickadee: 4, Blue Jay: 2, House Finch: 4, Goldfinch: 3, Mourning Dove: 6, House Sparrow: 3 This morning [12/2] we had a sharp-shinned hawk perched on a branch for a long while, but he has just flown away (empty-handed). Hope you had a good Thanksgiving! Cheers, Cathy & Nigel

[Corrie Heinz](#) – 6:45am Beach Ave bridge GREG, BEKI; 7:30 Sachem, 20 + hooded merganser, 50 + ruddy ducks, 50 + mergansers (I forgot about the difference bc RB and Common) [listed as Red-breasted Merg., Common Merg. Are uncommon and usually seen as solo/single digit. -kg], 2 AMWI (male / female), 20 + ~~COGE~~ [COGO]; Cow Cove: 9 COEI male / female / immature (Big waves); North Pt Sanderlings 60 +/-; BIMI: 6 mergansers (sp?), 1 loon (sp?); Cormorant Cove: 5 COEI, 1 loon (sp?); Heinz Field/ Farm: 22 Mallards/11 pairs, 50 + ~~CAGO~~ [CANG], 50 + gulls (sp? I forgot to write down), 1 NOHA. It was a fun morning. I need to remember to write everything down bc I do forget. All over - HEGU, GBBG, MODO, EUST [“All over” was recorded as 10 per species. -kg]

[Curt Milton](#) Seattle, WA Good afternoon from sunny Seattle! It's a gorgeous day here with temps in the upper 40s and hardly a cloud in sight.

I'll mention the rare Seattle sighting of a snowy owl that has been exciting local birders for a couple of weeks now. From what I'm seeing online, I think it is still here, hanging out on rooftops in the city's Queen Anne neighborhood. I went to see it twice last week and it truly is a magnificent bird. Didn't go today so I'm not officially counting it ... but wanted to mention it. 😊

I returned to the Union Bay Natural Area today (which I learned used to be a garbage dump) and it was a fruitful visit. The bay was jammed with waterfowl. Here is my list: Crows: numerous, including a huge, squawking flock of 50 or more in a single tree (going to post a video on Facebook), Hooded merganser: (numerous ... 10+), Bufflehead ... numerous, Trumpeter swan: 2, Canada geese: numerous, Northern flicker: 2, Pine siskin: 6-8 ... hard to get an exact count, Anna's hummingbird, Ruby-crowned kinglet, Double-crested cormorant: 2, American wigeon: huge flock, maybe 100 or more, photo below ... which includes other species, Black-capped chickadees: numerous, Mallard: numerous, Rock pigeon: numerous. What fun! Thanks as always for making this happen ...

[Erica Anderson](#) – Pleasant Hill, OR. Hi Kim, Beautiful sparrow! So glad you got one more bird....

My report: Today was foggy and cold. It was supposed to clear up but never did. Took a walk in the park in the morning where American Robins and Northern Flickers were feeding in the grass but didn't see much else, too foggy. Most of the birding was at the feeders in my front and back yards. In the front I have up some christmas lights that are "curtain" lights, which means they have 5' strings hanging down from the roof. They are next to the feeder and the birds love to perch on the string while waiting to get into the feeder. Today it was all about the Pine Siskins as they seemed to have arrived in a great flock and mobbed the feeders on and off all day long. Spotted Towhee 2, Black Capped Chickadee 4, Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon) 5, Pine Siskin 12, Song Sparrow 4, White Breasted Nuthatch 1, Stellar Jay 2, Northern Flicker 4, American Robin 7.

[Faye Benedict](#) – Drangedal, Norway. Greetings Kim and Coots! My bird watch today at the icy bird feeder yielded the usual large number of tits (ca. 4 granmeis - Willow tit, and 25 kjøttmeis - *Parus major*, can't find English name right now. [Great Tit. -kg] Plus sighting of one raven and many (ca. 10) magpies. My "bird of the half month" is the Eurasian Jay [Also Jay or Common Jay. -kg] (nøtteskrike in Norwegian). 5 of them were here today, and they have been regular visitors to my bird feeder and apple trees recently. See map. It is very pretty considering that it is in the crow family. As its name, *Garrulus glandarius*, suggests, it is also noisy. The blue and buff coloration is beautiful and striking, but they are a little intense-looking and tend to be piggy, which reduces their charm. best from Faye.

<https://www.birdid.no/bird/eBook.php?specieID=1542>

[Gail & Shorty Cahill](#) – Bird Walk December 1st. Marsh Hawk Corn Neck just beyond town beach over by salt pond (while out and about driving) 20 or so pairs Mallards on sachem pond (same ride, this is what we could identify! there were many more species). Home in our yard: Marsh Hawk, 1 Chickadee, 1 Common [Northern] Flicker. Not too exciting of a list but at least we remembered it was Tuesday! Dec. 2: We were excited to see on sachem pond today ducks that we had no idea what they were. We looked up tonight and they were American wigeon. New to us!

[Heather Hatfield](#) – Back yard feeder, Old Town Road: Song Sparrow 1, White-throat 2, BC Chickadee 2, House Finch 11, Cardinal 3, Blue Jay 2, Mourning Dove 7, RB Nuthatch 1, Downy Woodpecker 1. At VR (Dorries Cove Rd.): Northern Harrier 1, Pheasant 2. Added bonuses this week, Female **Evening Grosbeak** on Saturday (12/5) and Sunday 912/6) and a **Baltimore Oriole** today!

[Kim Gaffett](#) – In Narragansett: Red-bellied Woodpecker 3, Herring Gull, 5+, Robin 1, Chickadee 1, White-br Nuthatch 1, Blue Jay 2, House sparrow 8, House Finch, Amer. Goldfinch 4

[Laura Rosenzweig](#) – Report #1 mid-morning — a solitary roving robin; a bevy of blue tits (at least 8) and a couple of coal tits. If I see anything else today I'll report back later :)

[Lauren Miller-Donnelly](#) – Last Thursday (12/3) I headed to Pardon Gray Reserve in Tiverton. I had picked up a poster of birds of Weetamoo Woods recently and was interested in getting there. *PGR abuts WW*. The first bird I saw was a Northern Harrier sitting on a bird box adjacent to the overgrown field patch in the center of the property. Then I flushed up a Savannah Sparrow nestled in the grasses on my way through the fields into the forest. Once in the forest I came

upon a "**dissimulation**" of titmice mixed with chickadees, nuthatches and blue jays. That group of birds was very active even popping into the trail foraging off the ground. Here is my list:

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|-------------------------|---|
| Herring Gull | 5 |
| Northern Harrier | 1 |
| Red-bellied Woodpecker | 4 |
| Downy Woodpecker | 1 |
| Blue Jay | 2 |
| American Crow | 1 |
| Black-capped Chickadee | 2 |
| Tufted Titmouse | 9 |
| Golden-crowned Kinglet | 1 |
| White-breasted Nuthatch | 1 |
| Carolina Wren | 3 |
| European Starling | 4 |
| Eastern Bluebird | 8 |
| White-throated Sparrow | 8 |
| Savannah Sparrow | 1 |
| Song Sparrow | 3 |
| Northern Cardinal | 2 |

[Megan & Ann McClellan](#)– Croton-on-Hudson, NY, Our lunchtime observation: 11 Chickadees, 1 Red Tailed Hawk, 1 Turkey Vulture, 11 Juncos (not sure what kind), 1 Cardinal (photo below). All from either bird feeder or flying over our backyard (vulture/hawk).

[Penny Lapham](#)– A cold, gray day with an air stagnation advisory. A walk around the house to see the winter birds on the trees and the river. Northern Flicker Yellow-Shafted – 1, Steller’s Jay – 2, Spotted Towhee – 1, California scrub-jay 1, Mallard – 1, Hooded Merganser – 5, Wood Duck – 2, Great Blue Heron – 1, Double-crested Cormorant – 1, Ruby-crowned Kinglet – 1, Robin – 10, Dark-eyed Junco – 10, White-breasted Nuthatch – 1, Black-capped Chickadee – 1, Acorn Woodpecker – 1, European Starling – 20.

[Stephanie Baute](#)– Hi Kim today it is a calm after the storm. This is a snapshot of what was at my feeder and on the roof and shrubs around the feeder at 11 o’clock am. I watched for 5 minutes – 6 titmice, 8 bluebirds, 1 downy woodpecker, 1 hairy woodpecker, 1 junco, 1 blue jay, 1 male red bellied woodpecker, 2 goldfinch, 2 chickadees. I have three bluebird feeders with mealworms, 2 suet feeders, 2 feeders with sunflower kernels. Thanks. Your write ups are great. I love reading about what others are seeing. It is about 58 degrees with darkening skies.

