

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

February 15th, 2022

Incidental Notes.

Hi Everyone,

Here on Block Island we are definitely in late winter – and some days are COLD. Thanks to Susan Matheke – the only one to report BI birds, other than those seen on the “Coot Walk”. Wonderfully, 5 of the 6 species observed by Susan at Martha Ball’s farm were species that had not been seen on the group walk – thus Susan single-handed contributed 25% of the BI list.

The From Afar list, is incredibly varied with wonderful comments from the many observers. I hope you all enjoy these comments as much as I have.

Many thanks all!

- 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”.
- 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, +=10+, +++=10++.

Block Island

(21 species)

Canada Geese – 36+

Common Eider – 3

Black Scoter – 120

Red-breasted Merganser – 8

Common Loon – 1

Grebe species – 3

Great Cormorant – 3

Norther Harrier – 1

Killdeer – 3

Herring Gull – 3

Great Black-backed Gull – 2

Mourning Dove – 2

American Crow – 7

Black-capped Chickadee – 2

Carolina Wren – 2

American Robin – 1

European Starling – 17

Song Sparrow – 12
White-throated Sparrow – 3
Northern Cardinal – 6
House Sparrow – 8

From Afar South Kingston, & Providence, RI; Jamesport, NY; Sanibel & Sarasota, FL; Seattle, WA;
(92 species)

Canada Goose – 212+
Mute Swan – 29
Trumpeter Swan – 1
Mallard – 12
Blue-winged Teal – 7
Northern Shoveler – 3
Bufflehead – 4
Common Golden-eye – 6
Hooded Merganser – 8
Red-breasted Merganser – 42
Wild Turkey – 10
Pied-billed Grebe – 1
Brown Pelican – 10
American White Pelican – 110
Wood Stork – 2
Double-crested Cormorant – 20
Anhinga – 3
Least Bittern – 1
Great Blue Heron – 5
Great Egret – 45
Snowy Egret – 35
Little Blue Heron – 60
Tricolored Heron – 20
Reddish Egret – 4
Green Heron – 1
Yellow-crowned Night-heron – 7
White Ibis – 302
Roseate Spoonbill – 3
Turkey Vulture – 17
Black Vulture – 3
Osprey – 12
Bald Eagle – 6
Sharp-shinned Hawk – 1
Cooper's Hawk – 1
Purple Gallinule – 3
Common Gallinule – 11
Sandhill Crane – 2
Willetts – 30
Dunlin – 30
Short-bellied Dowitcher – 4

Wilson's Snipe – 1
Laughing Gull – 6
Ring-billed Gull - 16
Herring Gull – 68+
Great Black-backed Gull – 3
Gull species – 80
Royal Tern – 1
Mourning Dove – 5
Black-hooded Parakeets – 2
Eastern Screech Owl – 2
Great Horned Owl – 2
Anna's Hummingbird – Numerous! (10)
Belted Kingfisher – 1
Red-bellied Woodpecker – 6
Downy Woodpecker – 2
Hairy Woodpecker – 2
Pileated Woodpecker – 2
Northern Flicker – 1
Blue Jay – 6
American Crow – 81
Fish Crow – 1
Purple Martin – 10
Barn Swallow – 2
Tree Swallow – 2
Black-capped Chickadee – 2
Tufted Titmouse – 3
White-breasted Nuthatch – 2
Bewick's Wren – 1
Carolina Wren – 4
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher – 2
Ruby-crowned Kinglet – 1
American Robin – 34
Northern Mockingbird – 2
European Starling – 9
Black-and-white Warbler – 1
Pine Warbler – 2
Yellow-throated Warbler - 2
Myrtle/Yellow-rumped Warbler – 1
Spotted Towhee – 1
Amer. Tree Sparrow – 1
Song Sparrow – 7
White-throated Sparrow – 11
Slate-colored¹ Junco – 7
Northern Cardinal – 5
Painted Bunting – 3
Red-winged Blackbird – 23
Common Grackle – 1
Brown-headed Cowbird – 8
Boat-tail Grackle – 25

House Finch – 16
Pine Siskin – 10
American Goldfinch – 3
House Sparrow – 4

Crazy-as-a-Coot Bird Walkers Whale Swamp & SE Light Loop, Washington, Rhode Island, US. Feb 15, 2022
8:00 AM - 9:30 AM. Protocol: Traveling 0.75 mile(s) Checklist Comments: Cold & windy with about 3-4" snow on the ground. Temp. = 15F. Wind: NW approx. 10mph. Walk was a loop starting & ending at SE Light via Mohegan Trail - Whale Swamp Rd. - to bluff edge - along residential driveway to SE Light via J. Hapgood's (historical name) road. Participants: Susan Matheke, Heather Hatfield, Vicki Butlevska, Nigel Grindley, Cathy Joyce, Chuck McMellon, & Kim G.

15 species (+1 other taxa): Common Eider 3, Black Scoter 120, Red-breasted Merganser 8, grebe sp. 3, Herring Gull 3, Great Black-backed Gull 2, Common Loon 1, Great Cormorant 3, American Crow 7, Black-capped Chickadee 2, Carolina Wren 2, American Robin 1, House Sparrow 8, White-throated Sparrow 3, Song Sparrow 12, Northern Cardinal 4

Curt Milton Here is the report from Seattle: It was a nice, sunny day here with mostly clear skies and temps in the upper 40s. I went to the Union Bay Natural Area, as I always do. Seems like spring migration is beginning as there were more birds than two weeks ago, including a FLOCK of Anna's Hummingbirds!

Here is my list: American Robin: numerous, House Finch: 2, White-throated Sparrow: 1, Great Blue Heron: 1, Cooper's Hawk: 1, Anna's Hummingbird: numerous, American Crow: numerous, Mallards: numerous, Spotted Towhee: 1, Trumpeter Swan: 7, Pine Siskin: numerous, Bewick's Wren: 1, Red-winged Blackbird: 1, Song Sparrow: 1, Northern Shoveler: 3, Bufflehead: 1, Bald Eagle: 1, Ruby-crowned Kinglet: 1 Thanks for compiling our observations! Curt

Dan Kasuba – Hi Kim,

I just wanted to thank you for the "teachable moment" regarding black hooded parakeets. I saw 2 up close today at a bird feeder at the Audubon center, with some painted buntings. Quite a colorful display! I'm including yesterday and today as there were again some very interesting sightings. Hope that's OK 😊 Take care, Dan

2/16/22 Sarasota Audubon/celery fields nature preserve, 9:30-10:30 am: 2 Sandhill cranes, 3 painted buntings, 2 black hooded parakeets, 1 Wilson's snipe, 1 least bittern, 3 purple and 11 common gallinules, 7 blue winged teal, many purple martins, 2 ospreys and 1 GBH

2/15/22 Red Bug Slough, Sarasota noon- 1 pm: 3 bald eagles, 2 ospreys, 1 roseate spoonbill, 1 belted kingfisher, 20 American crows, 1 GBH, 2 little blue herons, 2 hooded mergansers, 5 snowy egrets, many turkey vultures, 2 pileated woodpeckers, 1 green heron, 2 anhingas, 2 mallards, 3 black vultures, 2 pine, 2 yellow throated and 1 black and white warbler, 2 blue gray gnatcatchers, 1 sharp shinned hawk, 2 white ibises, 2 tree swallows 2 house finches and 1 Eastern screech owl. Thanks ! Dan Kasuba

Lauren Miller-Donnelly – Hey Kim, on Feb 15th I had 12 Fish Crows and a Red-tailed Hawk over the Foundry campus on Promenade Street in Providence, where my office is located. The next evening, Feb 16th, I observed 88 American Crows & 4 Fish Crows from the same spot, presumably heading to their evening roost. And once I got on the road headed home I had a single observation of a Cooper's Hawk that I see very often sitting in a sumac tree over a scrubby patch of parking lot by the on-ramp exit (coincidentally I had seen the same bird on my way IN to work as well). Have a wonderful afternoon, enjoy the warmth! -Lauren

Maggie Komosinski – Hi Kim, Tuesday 15 Feb 2022 here was cold (28F), sunny with a good breeze. My bird report combines birds seen (and heard) on our morning and dusk-time dog walks through the neighborhood and camp grounds, a walk to the bay and along its beach, a trip to the nearby horse farm and a foray via car to the inlets along the back road in Aquebogue and Jamesport. I added one species seen today (2/16) on our drive to Orient Point ... couldn't resist having an adult Bald Eagle on my Where-on-Earth list! Maggie.

212+ Canada Goose, 29 Mute Swan, 3 Bufflehead, 42 Red-breasted Merganser, 10 Wild Turkey, 15 Mourning Dove, 80 Gull sp., 11 Ring-billed Gull, 18 Herring Gull, 3 Great Black-backed Gull, 1 Great Blue Heron, 1 Turkey Vulture, 1 Bald Eagle (adult seen overhead), 1 Eastern Screech-Owl (heard at dusk), 2 Great Horned Owl (a pair seen at dusk, flying from a woodlot), 4 Red-bellied Woodpecker, 1 Downy Woodpecker, 1 Northern Flicker, 4 Blue Jay, 1 American Crow, 2 Black-capped Chickadee, 3 Carolina Wren, 2 Northern Mockingbird, 7 European Starling, 24 American Robin, 4 House Sparrow, 12 House Finch, 3 American Goldfinch, 2 Dark-eyed Junco, 9 White-throated Sparrow, 5 Song Sparrow, 22 Red-winged Blackbird, 1 Yellow-rumped Warbler, 3 Northern Cardinal.

From a later email: "Did you note the large number of mute swan? They were all in one group along the open edge of an inlet; with the many inlets here, this species thrives ...

Our view of the two GH Owls was "right place/right time": we were walking the dogs through the camp grounds and heard the first, close and high up in a tree, then a second flew through and the first bumped.

I could have added more species if I had done a 2-day count: we drove to Orient Point yesterday and saw more TVs, a RT Hawk, a Merlin and numerous duck, including over 35 Black Duck, RB Merganser, LT duck and Bufflehead ..." [These species not in compilation. KG]

Megan McClellan – Feb.13, 2022. I know none of this counts for Tuesday's count, but thought I'd share a few cool experiences in the past few days. It is Bald Eagle season here on the Hudson River, and I sure hope to spot one on Tuesday to report. I saw a large one Thursday in a naked tree scanning the river for food near the MetroNorth train tracks on my commute into NYC. Today's unexpected snow storm brought a beautiful, large Red Tailed Hawk perched high in a tree near our top deck. It was patiently looking at all the little birds flitting around in naked trees and kicking up clouds of snow. (I wish I had a great camera to capture it!). Chris found evidence of one of the hawk's recent success stories in our front yard... Will keep our eyes peeled on Tuesday. Hope you have a wonderful walk! Best, Meg [Birds listed not in compilation (dates too unspecified) but, the report itself is too interesting not to include 😊-Kg.]

Polly & Sam Huntington – Hi Kim, Here is a list of birds we saw last Tuesday on the drive through Ding Darling. Happy Birding! Polly and Sam. Birds seen on February 15, 2022, J.N. Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge, Sanibel, FL: Hooded Merganser 6, Pied-billed Grebe 1, Double-crested Cormorant 20, Anhinga 1, American White Pelican 110, Brown Pelican 10, Wood Stork 2, Great Blue Heron 1, Great Egret 45, Snowy Egret 30, Little Blue Heron 60, Tricolored Heron 20, Reddish Egret 4, Yellow-crowned Night Heron 7, White Ibis 300, Roseate Spoonbill 2, Turkey Vulture 6, Osprey 8, Willett 30, Dunlin 30, Short-billed Dowitcher 4, Laughing Gull 6, Ring-billed Gull 5, *Royal Tern 1, Red-bellied Woodpecker 1, *American Crow - A murder of crows, Fish Crow 1, *Barn Swallow 2, *Boat-tailed Grackle 25 The large numbers are guesstimates

Susan Matheke – Going about the day: At Ball Farm, 3:30PM: 3 Killdeer (I think the little flock is staying around and numbers 5 or 6), 1 Northern Harrier - really big, 2 cardinals - male and female, 17 Starlings, 36 + Canada Geese, 2 Mourning Doves. Best, susan

Tom Fetherston Good evening Kim - One of the most fun aspects of doing this every couple of weeks is that even though for the most part I'm in the same location there is always something different to see. Yes, there are quite a few resident birds always present but no "watching day" is ever the same. Last time I had big mixed flocks of cowbirds and grackles. Today I could get an exact count: cowbirds 8, grackle 1. What caused that significant shift in distribution? On Sunday I was driving into town and just down Worden's Pond Road, in front of the campground was a beautiful adult bald eagle in a tree watching the snow fall. My fingers were crossed I'd see it today. Maggie and I went for a run at 1100 after it had warmed from 0 to 23 degrees 😊 We were scanning the trees along the shore without luck. Turned around, heading west towards home and from over the pond came another eagle, juvenile so different bird. It soared over us, did a circle and continued south. Made my day! The pond was mostly iced over but there were a few holes. The usual herring gull suspects were there but in one hole there were also goldeneyes! First ones I'd spotted out there this year. As usual birds on Worden's Pond will be noted with WP and estimates with * Birds at the feeders were counted as singles unless they were different sexes or present simultaneously.

Here's my list: Slate colored junco (5), Carolina wren, Song sparrow, White breasted nuthatch (2), Hairy woodpecker (2), Mourning dove (5), White throated sparrow, Red bellied woodpecker, Northern cardinal (2), Brown headed cowbird (8), Common grackle, European starling (2), Tufted titmouse (3), Blue jay (2), Tree sparrow, Downy woodpecker, Bald eagle (WP), Herring gull (50)* WP, Common goldeneye (6)* WP. Cheers, Fether