

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

January 3, 2023

Incidental Notes.

Hi Everyone,

What an interesting day January 3 was for our various bird walks.

First, Laura's report from northern England lists several species that sound familiar, but are often quite different from US species. For instance, there are several crow species in England; I suspect the one reported is Carrion Crow (but it could be Hooded Crow, Jack Daw or Cough). The English Robin is much "cuter" than the US American Robin; Wren is known in the US as Winter Wren, and Pheasant here is Ring-necked Pheasant. It is always fun to consider the European species names relative to the US names.

Darcy's reference to NYT's column on Slow Birding <https://www.nytimes.com/column/in-the-garden-real-estate> strikes a nice chord with me. I hope you have noticed that my approach to these bird walks is all about the people and taking the time to appreciate time afield observing the ways of birds – and whatever else crosses our paths. Identification is secondary, and mostly an opportunity to learn and communicate. My apologies if you can not get beyond the NYT paywall, you may just want to check out "Slow Birding: The Art and Science of Enjoying the Birds in Your Own Backyard" by, Joan E. Strassmann.

And wow! The Block Island list benefitted immensely from the contributions of visitor, Martin Kaehrle. Since some of Martin's observations came from Sagem Pond, I used my best guess to take care not to unreasonable over count species seen by both Martin and the "Coot walkers". Generally, the weather on BI on January 3<sup>rd</sup> was drear and observations were low. Martin's contribution – especially of ducks who don't seem to mind a little "fowl" weather – were really fun to note. Other BI observers really came through with the few land bird reports. And, of course we were all thrilled to see a mature Bald Eagle hunting the West Beach dunes – even if at a distance. This eagle, coming at the end of the Crazy-as-a-Coot Bird Walk's 13<sup>th</sup> year, was a new species for the cumulative group list. Note: first Crazy-as-a-Coot Bird Walk was on January 20, 2009.

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).
- <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".
- 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

(52 species)

Snow Goose – 2

Canada Goose – 42  
Mute Swan – 2  
Gadwall – 15  
American Wigeon – 56  
American Black Duck – 3  
Mallard – 57  
Northern Shoveler – 2  
Northern Pintail – 2  
Redhead – 5  
Ring-necked Duck – 82  
Greater Scaup – 45  
Lesser Scaup – 1  
Greater/Lesser Scaup – 41  
Common Eider – 35  
White-winged Scoter – 13  
Black Scoter – 6  
Long-tailed Duck – 2  
Bufflehead – 61  
Common Goldeneye – 38  
Hooded Merganser – 16  
Red-breasted Merganser – 30  
Ruddy Duck – 35  
Ring-necked Pheasant – 6  
Common Loon – 13  
Horned Grebe – 2  
Northern Gannet – 5  
Great Cormorant – 9  
Double-crested Cormorant – 8  
Bald Eagle – 1  
American Coot – 7  
Sanderling – 1  
Purple Sandpiper – 16  
Razorbill – 1  
Unidentified Alcids – 6  
Herring Gull – 155  
Iceland Gull – 1  
Great Black-backed Gull – 360  
Mourning Dove – 6  
Rock Pigeon – 40+  
Peregrine Falcon – 1  
Blue Jay – 6  
American Crow – 34  
Fish Crow – 2  
Common Raven – 1  
Black-capped Chickadee – 3  
Carolina Wren – 8  
American Robin – 6  
Northern Mockingbird – 1  
European Starling – 110

Song Sparrow – 8  
Swamp Sparrow – 2  
Northern Cardinal – 2  
Red-winged Blackbird – 3

**From Afar:** South Kingston, RI; Westport, MA; Woodbury, CT; Sarasota, FL; Seattle, WA; Pleasant Hill, OR;  
Sedbergh, England;  
(82 species)

Canada Goose – 61  
Mute Swan – 12  
Wood Duck – 1  
Mallard – 1  
American Black Duck – 5  
Ring-necked Duck – 3  
Common Eider -15  
White-winged Scoter – 6  
Black Scoter – 2  
Bufflehead – 15  
Common Goldeneye – 2  
Hooded Merganser – 4  
Pheasant\* – 3  
Red-throated Loon – 3  
Common Loon – 10  
Anhinga – 5  
Cormorant species 1  
Double-crested Cormorant -1  
Great Blue Heron – 6  
Great Egret – 6  
Snowy Egret – 4  
Little Blue Heron – 2  
Tricolored Heron – 4  
Cattle Egret – 31  
White Ibis – 8  
Glossy Ibis – 30  
Black Vulture – 4  
Turkey Vulture – 15  
Bald Eagle – 1  
Unidentified raptor – 1  
Northern Harrier – 1  
Red-shouldered Hawk – 1  
Common Moorhen (Gallinule) – 22  
Gray-headed Swamphen – 2  
American Coot – 5  
Sand Hill Crane – 5  
Killdeer – 1  
Herring Gull – 40  
Bonaparte's Gull – 5  
Ring-billed Gull – 21

Great Black-backed Gull – 4  
Mourning Dove – 12  
Rock Pigeon – 48  
Wood Pigeon\* – 5  
Nanday (Black-hooded) Parakeet – 38  
Red-bellied Woodpecker – 2  
Downy Woodpecker – 2  
Hairy Woodpecker – 1  
Pileated Woodpecker – 1  
Black Phoebe – 1  
Loggerhead Shrike – 3  
Blue Jay – 3  
Steller's Jay – 1  
Crow\* species – 3  
American Crow – 12  
Common Raven – 2  
Black-capped Chickadee – 14  
Tufted Titmouse – 5  
White-breasted Nuthatch – 2  
Red-breasted Nuthatch – 9  
Wren\* - 2  
Carolina Wren – 2  
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher – 9  
E. Bluebird – 2  
Robin\* – 1  
American Robin – 25  
Gray Catbird – 1  
Northern Mockingbird – 1  
Common Yellowthroat – 1  
Pine Warbler – 28  
Yellow-rumped Warbler – 22  
American Tree Sparrow – 1  
Song Sparrow – 9  
White-throated Sparrow – 5  
Slate-colored Junco – 30  
Oregon Junco<sup>1</sup> – 5  
Northern Cardinal – 7  
Painted Bunting – 1  
Red-winged Blackbird – 10  
Common Grackle – 24  
Boat-tailed Grackle – 16  
Brown-headed Cowbird – 14  
House Finch – 7  
American Goldfinch – 1

\*European species.

[Cathy Joyce & Nigel Grindley](#) – Hello Kim, here is our bird list for yesterday: At our backyard feeders, very few visitors - 5 American Crows, and 1 male cardinal. On Warden's Pond: 10 Hooded Mergansers - 1 adult male; the others a mix of females, and males transitioning to adult plumage. Cheers, Cathy & Nigel

[Chuck McMellon](#) – Kim: the rain/wind/fog conditions around my feeder produce no birds today. Although I did spot a Horned Larkspur on a wire on the home. Yes a larkspur because I looked it up. [After further consultation we concluded that it was a Northern Mockingbird. -kg] Also, the usual suspects do appear at my feeder most days are: 2 Blue Jays, 1 cardinal, 3 Doves. I suspect you can't use this even though I gave it the ole college try. [Of course I can use this – kg]

[Crazy-as-a-Coot Bird Walkers](#) – Breed ROW - Corn Neck to West Beach, Washington, Rhode Island, US  
Jan 3, 2023 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM. Protocol: Traveling. 0.75 mile(s). Checklist Comments: Cloudy, 41F, SSE, rain coming. Participants: Judy Gray, Sarah Gray & daughter M. Miller, Nigel Grindley, Cathy Joyce, Heather Hatfield, Chuck McMellon, Brooke, Anna Perenia, Aurelian, Cassander Santamaria, Susan Matheke, Susan MacDougall, Molly Fitzpatrick, Viki & Georgia Butlevska, & Kim G.

18 species. Canada Goose 24, American Wigeon 4, Mallard 10, Common Eider 10, Bufflehead 10, Common Goldeneye 23, Hooded Merganser 2, Red-breasted Merganser 4, Ruddy Duck 15, Ring-necked Pheasant 2, Herring Gull 12, Great Black-backed Gull 25, Common Loon 3, Bald Eagle 1, American Crow 5, Carolina Wren 2, European Starling 16, American Robin 2.

[Curt Milton](#) – I made it out for the walk! Took a short walk around my neighborhood along Lake Union around 2:30 p.m. Temperature in the mid-40s under clear skies. Here is what I saw: American Robin: numerous; House Finch: 4; American Crow: numerous; Rock Pigeon: 2; Black-capped Chickadee: 2; Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon variant): several; Mallard: 6; Double-crested cormorant: 1; Hooded Merganser: 2 (male and female pair); American Coot: 5

[Dan Kasuba](#) – Hello Kim, I was again at Celery Fields/Sarasota Audubon on 1/3 in the early am for 2 hrs. It was once again time well spent! I saw one each of the following: bald eagle, Northern harrier, wood duck, painted bunting, killdeer, Red shouldered hawk, catbird, common yellowthroat, red bellied woodpecker, pileated wood pecker. Also, herons: 4 tricolor, 3 GBHs, and 2 little blue herons. Egrets: 4 snowy, 6 great and 31 cattle, 24 common and 16 boat tailed grackles, 10 red winged blackbirds, and 14 brown headed cowbirds, 38 black hooded parakeets, 12 American robins, 30 glossy and 8 white ibises, 28 pine and 6 yellow rumped warblers, 9 blue gray gnat catchers, 3 loggerhead shrikes, 5 anhingas, 46 rock doves, 6 mourning doves, 15 turkey and 4 black vultures, 2 gray headed swamp hens, 22 common galinules, and 5 sand hill cranes. Thanks so much, Dan.

[Darcy Thurrott](#) – Hi Kim, Wishing you a peaceful and healthy new year ..happy to boot!  
Today a crazy warm springlike day on January 4! Not a lot of birds, but all were welcomed, loving birdbaths that weren't frozen!

"Slow birding" is pretty much what I've always practiced, regardless of NYT trend. Why hurry and scurry to far away places....minding one's footprint may be better. Hope your day was great and perhaps enjoyed mild weather also. Darcy 🐦

14 Linden Road, Woodbury, Connecticut, US (41.553, -73.21). Jan 04, 2023. Stationary, 190 minutes  
All birds reported? Yes. Comments: Amazing mild day up to 60° with a slight bit of breeze, partly cloudy.  
1 Red-bellied Woodpecker -- Female at hot pepper suet in lilac, 2 Downy Woodpecker -- Male feeding on real beef suet, Female feeding on hot pepper suet in lilac near heated birdbath, 2 Common Raven, 2 Black-capped Chickadee -- Feeding on safflower, 2 Tufted Titmouse -- Feeding on safflower seeds in tubular feeder in apple tree, 1 White-breasted Nuthatch, 1 Northern Mockingbird -- Bathing in birdbath at 2pm. splashy at 56°, 2 Eastern Bluebird -- Heard, not seen, 3 Dark-eyed Junco, 2 White-throated Sparrow, 1 Song Sparrow -- Bathing in birdbath in 1 of our gardens at 55°! 2 Northern Cardinal -- Male in birdbath splashing like crazy at 55°  
January 4!

[Dave Chatowsky](#) – This morning I may have seen a northern shoveler drake and hen in the small pond behind the mechanic shop across the street from the Depot. [The Sinclair Pond, Ocean Ave., Block Island.]

[Erica Anderson](#)

– Hi Kim, Wade and I did some camping and bird watching in Northern California last week at the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge. Well known for the Snow & Ross'



geese stopping on their way by. See attached pics of some of the things we saw. See you soon! Erica

Bird report 1/3/23 (my grandmother [Elise Lapham] would have been 111 today!) The weather was overcast but not too rainy this morning. Birding at my back yard feeders as there was lots of activity. Black Phoebe (this is my first year ever seeing them in the Willamette Valley instead of the coast): 8 Black Capped Chickadees, 2 Yellow Rumped Warblers (first time every seeing them at the feeders), 2 Song Sparrows, 1 Stellar Jay, 3 House Finches.

[Kim Gaffett](#)– Going-about-my-day. Old Harbor: Rock Dove 25+ [concluded that these are a subset of Martin K's count of 40], at home Blue Jay 3, Song Sparrow 1, A. Crow 7, C. Raven 1, Red-winged Blackbird 3.

[Laura Rosenzweig](#) – Yorkshire, UK. Hi Kim and Happy New Year! Apart from one sunny day on Jan 2nd we've had day after day of rain and grey clouds. Pretty miserable weather. I haven't seen many birds but yesterday a little wren perched briefly on my workshop doorstep as I was getting ready to go home, and another one greeted me as I arrived home (twelve miles away so not the same bird!). Also yesterday (1/3/23) — crows and wood pigeons in the trees, one Robin at the bird table, pheasants in the fields. And a small raptor like bird I'm hoping to see again because I'm intrigued and want to identify it. I think perhaps a Merlin but not sure. That's it. Will try to get out more this year and turn this into a habit 😊

[Lauren Miller-Donnelly](#) – Hi Kim, On Jan 3<sup>rd</sup> I headed down to the shore in Westport for a count of the birds before work. Here is my list: Canada Goose 37, Mute Swan 12, American Black Duck 5, Common Eider 15, White-winged Scoter 6, Black Scoter 2, Bufflehead 15, Common Goldeneye 2, Hooded Merganser 2, Bonaparte's Gull 5, Ring-billed Gull 21, Great Black-backed Gull 4, Red-throated Loon 3, Common Loon 10, cormorant sp. 1, Great Blue Heron 1, Black-capped Chickadee 1, Red-breasted Nuthatch 9, Carolina Wren 1, American Robin 3, Dark-eyed Junco 14, Song Sparrow 4, Yellow-rumped Warbler 3, Northern Cardinal 1. Happy birding! Lauren

[Martin Kaehrle](#) – Hi Kim. Thank you so much for the information. Would you like a full list of species from today, or just some of the highlights? Got outside for a couple hours in the rain. Tomorrow I'll try to track down the Snowy or the eagles. It's great to be back on the island! Best, Martin.

Species for January 3: Canada Goose – 18, Mute Swan – 2, Gadwall – 15, American Wigeon – 52, Mallard – 47, American Black Duck – 3, Northern Pintail – 2, Redhead - 5 - 3 males with Scaup on Sachem Pond, later 2 males with Scaup on Middle Pond (probably the same birds), Ring-necked Duck - 82 - all on Peckham Pond, Greater Scaup – 45, Lesser Scaup – 1, Greater/Lesser Scaup – 41, Common Eider – 25, White-winged Scoter –

13, Black Scoter – 6, Long-tailed Duck – 2, Bufflehead – 51, Common Goldeneye – 15, Hooded Merganser – 4, Red-breasted Merganser – 30, Ruddy Duck – 25, Ring-necked Pheasant – 6, Horned Grebe - 2 - Dump Beach, Rock Pigeon – 40, American Coot - 7 – Sachem, Sanderling - 1 - Old Harbor, Purple Sandpiper - 16 - Old Harbor, Dovekie - 5 (1 North Light, 4 Old Harbor off breakwater), Razorbill - 1 - Old Harbor, Unidentified alcid sp. - 6 - North Light & Old Harbor, Herring Gull – 155, Iceland Gull - 1 (dark-eyed adult - odd for east coast - Old Harbor), Great Black-backed Gull – 360, Common Loon – 10, Northern Gannet - 5 (North Light, also one dead on beach), Great Cormorant – 9, Double-crested Cormorant – 8, Peregrine Falcon – 1, Blue Jay – 1, American Crow – 6, Fish Crow – 2, Black-capped Chickadee – 3, Carolina Wren – 6, European Starling – 94, American Robin – 4, Song Sparrow – 8, Swamp Sparrow - 1

[Molly Fitzpatrick](#) – Hi, Kim - I flushed 6 mourning doves on Tuesday and saw about 11 American crows but forget the other birds I may have seen. Molly

[Susan Matheke](#) – A pair of beautiful snow geese in Martha's/ horse pasture, too foggy for a picture ❤️

[Tom Fetherston](#) – Good evening Kim! A fairly slow day. I'm guessing the approach of a front then rain restricted the movement of some species. I covered the yard, Worden's Pond and made a loop with Maggie in Great Swamp Area 3. I broke a channel through the remaining shoreline ice yesterday & launched the canoe so Maggie and I could make our usual circuit through the southernmost fields at Great Swamp. I started the day watching the feeders in the yard, Maggie and I crossed the pond around 0745 and returned at 0930. The rain started in earnest shortly thereafter; having covered 3 miles in the Swamp I didn't run Brownie on the road, she would have hated getting soaked anyway.

Crossing the pond, it was flat clam, ducks were spooking at long range but before we got underway I was able to positively identify both mallards and ringnecks. Once in the Swamp there were no birds visible on the hike through the woods to the fields. We typically see robins overhead, the occasional woodpecker and smaller birds but it was empty. Once in the fields, Maggie did cut a few fresh pheasant trails, but the birds that have survived to this point are experts at running into the most impenetrable brier fortresses ahead of the dog. I didn't want her getting torn up so called her back when that happened. She did flush small birds from the brush ahead of her. What I could see well enough were juncos and an American tree sparrow. While in the field an odd sighting, two great blue herons flew overhead, seemingly from the impoundment on a course for Worden's Pond. Back home the feeders were largely empty when the rain was moderate to heavy, but during breaks got swarmed. Multiple individuals of several species were present. One caught my eye. There is at least one song sparrow resident I see all the time. It's heavily streaked, but today there was one with a mostly clear breast, streaking at the sides but did have the central spot. I checked the field guides and couldn't see what else it may have been so added it to the song sparrow count.

Here's the list. Birds seen on or around Worden's Pond are annotated with WP; and those in Great Swamp GS. Estimates noted with an asterisk \* Birds at the feeders were counted as singles unless present simultaneously or different sexes. American crow 2, Herring gull 40\* (WP), Blue jay 3, Cardinal 4, Mourning dove 6, Mallard 7 (WP), Hairy woodpecker, Slate-colored junco 3, Black-capped chickadee, Tufted titmouse 3, White-breasted nuthatch, Carolina wren, American goldfinch, Song sparrow 2, White throated sparrow 3, Ringneck duck 3 (WP), Great blue heron 2 (GS), Slate colored junco 10\* (yard & GS), American tree sparrow (GS), Canada goose 24\* (GS). Cheers, Fether