

Chequamegon Chirps



January 20, 2020 Volume 39 Number 1

Third Monday of the month, 7:00 P.M. at the Medford Library. Unless the weather messes things up as it has the previous two Januaries, we are good to go. The third time is the charm, right? The meeting will be a combination of information from the recently completed Christmas Bird Counts, the upcoming Great Backyard Bird Count, a possible field trip and a few other details.

2019 Audubon Christmas Bird Counts

With reduced bird feeder activity, there was speculation that the 120th Audubon Christmas counts would be way down this year. Four of the six counts were down from last year. However, two counts were up, one by a bit and the other by a bunch. Total numbers of all birds this year for the six counts was 17,720 this year accomplished with 253 party hours and 52 species identified. Last year 20,478 was the six circle total or a 14% reduction this year. Fog, wind, rain, snow or any combination of extreme weather can cause such reductions.

Another factor (This is something I think is a potential factor, but I have nothing what so ever to back it up) is three species of barnyard birds that make up over 50% of the total numbers. These are starlings, rock pigeons and house sparrows. Last year and again this year these three species made up 54% of the total birds recorded in the six circles. I believe all three species have declining numbers which doesn't yet concern me. As individual dairy and mink farm numbers decline, there is much greater concentration of starlings at the large operations. Some farms try to eliminate these pests as they eat grains in silage, contaminate feed and carry diseases. These flocks can number in the thousands which can distort Christmas Count data. Sometimes flocks are active and in the open and other times they are in barns or behind feed bunks and not apparent at all. Going back over the last five years of counts, Clam Lake has not recorded one individual of these three species. Here are the totals this year for the circles minus the three species. Clam Lake 608; Gilman 1,219; Medford 1,710; Owen 1,671; Spencer 1,660 Willard 1,352. Again, these numbers aren't that significant, just the fooling around of someone at his laptop. The highlight bird this year was a Black-backed Woodpecker on the Medford count. An extremely rare bird in this area.

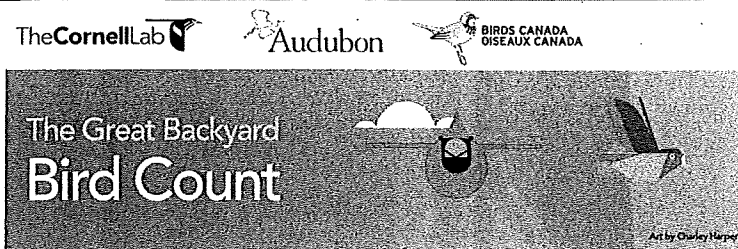
2019 Audubon Christmas Bird Counts organized by local compilers

Summary 2019	Clam Lake 12-20	Gilman 01-01	Medford 12-28	Owen 12-15	Spencer 12-22	Willard 12-29
Party Hours	36.75	44	38.25	37.75	58.5	37
Total Species	27	29	42	33	37	30
Total Individuals	608	1806	2767	3514	6388	2637
Canada Goose	1		1			
Wood Duck			1			
Mallard			69		1	
Common Goldeneye	1					
Ring-necked Pheasant			3		6	
Ruffed Grouse	3	8	21	16		8
Wild Turkey	13	38	151	81	191	49
Bald Eagle	1	19	8	16	16	19
Sharp-shinned Hawk				1		
Cooper's Hawk			1	1	1	1
Northern Goshawk	1	1			1	
Accipiter species				1		
Red-tailed Hawk		3	4	10	17	10
Rough-legged Hawk		15	16	8	4	10
American Kestrel		1	3	2	4	
Hawk sp.		1				
Rock Pigeon		85	416	319	1032	251
Mourning Dove	2	64	288	147	336	195
Great Horned Owl			7			
Barred Owl	1		3		1	3
Belted Kingfisher				1		
Red-headed Woodpecker					4	2
Red-bellied Woodpecker		16	23	26	19	21
Downy Woodpecker	8	41	55	68	35	32
Hairy Woodpecker	16	27	34	36	20	9
Black-backed Woodpecker			1			
Pileated Woodpecker	6	5	15	3	5	1
Woodpecker species		1			1	1
Northern Shrike	2	8	5	5	4	5
Blue Jay	110	173	113	171	107	170
American Crow	22	172	128	326	385	296
Common Raven	30	63	14	4	4	14
Horned Lark				2	4	
Black-capped Chickadee	198	323	357	338	276	265
Red-breasted Nuthatch	75	14	29	2	2	4
White-breasted Nuthatch	4	46	63	49	78	43
Brown Creeper	1		3			
Golden-crowned Kinglet	10				3	
American Robin		1	14	CW	9	21
European Starling		399	536	1181	3337	580
Cedar Waxwing	17		126			1
American Tree Sparrow	17	12	5	9	5	4
Song Sparrow					1	
White-throated Sparrow			1			
Dark-eyed Junco	9	69	30	63	41	78
Snow Bunting		5	79	231	12	
Northern Cardinal		7	22	14	25	49
Common Grackle		1				
Purple Finch	46		1	9	1	
House Finch			5	26	36	2
Red Crossbill	3					
Common Redpoll			2			
Pine Siskin	3		1			
American Goldfinch	8	85	9	5	5	39
House Sparrow		103	105	343	359	454

Final 2019 State Field Checklist by club members

Forty new species turned in since the last newsletter bring the yearly total to 234. The recently added species are Greater White-fronted Goose, Ross's Goose, Canvasback, Greater Scaup, Surf Scoter, Red-breasted Merganser, Greater Prairie Chicken, Red-necked Grebe, Virginia Rail, Common Gallinule, American Avocet, Black-bellied Plover, Willet, Ruddy Turnstone, Stilt Sandpiper, Dunlin, Baird's Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Long-billed Dowitcher, Red-necked Phalarope, Wilson's Phalarope, Bonaparte's Gull, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Philadelphia Flycatcher, Swainson's Thrush, American Pipit, Warblers-Tennessee, Orange Crowned, Cape May, Bay-breasted, Palm, Tanager-Summer, Western, Lapland Longspur, Orchard Oriole, Pine Grosbeak. Thanks to all who contributed to this list.

The Great Backyard Bird Count



Great Backyard Bird Count Data Form

PLEASE USE THIS OPTIONAL FORM ONLY TO KEEP TRACK OF BIRDS DURING YOUR COUNT. Complete one form for each checklist and enter the data online at www.birdcount.org.

Where did you make your observations?

You will choose this location if it already exists in your eBird/GBBC account or name and plot this location on a map if it is a new site for you.

Location: _____

Observation date and details

Use a separate form for each day and each new location. Do not add counts from different days or locations together.

This list is for: Friday Saturday Sunday Monday

Count start time: _____ A.M./P.M. Total time: _____ hours _____ minutes

I AM reporting every species I saw _____ I am NOT reporting every species I saw _____

How many people participated in collecting the information you are reporting? _____

Bird Counts

Please write down your best estimate of the number of birds of each species that you saw. You may write the bird species names and counts on a separate sheet of paper attached to this form. Be sure to use the full species name (example: "White-crowned Sparrow," not "Sparrow.") Check a field guide if you need help with identification. If you still cannot identify the species, do not report it. Thank you for participating in the Great Backyard Bird Count!

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Club Contacts

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January and February events

Full moons January 10 and February 9

Horned Larks will soon start to arrive

Great Horned Owls soon to lay eggs

Days are noticeably longer already

Bear cubs born

January thaw or winter vortex?

Good snow for outdoor activities

Feeder Fodder

How much do feeders attract birds?

While not official, Christmas bird data count numbers are greatly enhanced by filled feeders. No feed, no birds is a good rule of thumb. Different feeds attract different birds. Little Niger seed consumed this winter.