

Intrepid Birders March Through the Gloom to a Great Result

This year's annual Hackensack/Ridgewood Christmas Bird Count was facing a forbidding weather forecast: all day rain instead of last year's fresh snowfall. I worried whether our volunteer squad would come out under such unfavorable conditions. But at the same time, I was pleased that we were not faced by ice or snow. As the day unfolded, we did have intermittent drizzle through the morning, with a very brief respite at midday before the rain resumed. Temperatures remained steady at about 40 degrees, but the air was often foggy and there was little reason for any bird to take flight. So cancel the raptors or any duck migrations, and hope that we could still identify the smaller birds in the gloom.

I am pleased to report that over 40 volunteers braved the wet conditions, travelling in 20 small groups to cover our whole count circle pretty thoroughly. And luckily, the birds were there to meet us. We actually finished with a record high total of 96 species, exactly matching the previous high total from 2020! As you will see on the full list, many species were found in rather low numbers (especially hawks and some waterfowl), and there were fewer winter species (few finches or siskins, no redpolls or grosbeaks) than a typical December count. But the late fall was unusually warm, so we found a wide variety of holdouts from summer populations. These birds may eventually wish that they had migrated sooner, as true winter weather is finally setting in now. A Great Egret was the biggest surprise, still hanging out in the meadows near Overpeck Creek. One Snow Bunting showed up inside the fences at the BCUA. Most of our groups ran into some Kinglets. Woodpeckers, Brown Creepers and Winter Wrens were relatively easy to find. Fish Crows and Ravens were found almost everywhere. Yellow-rumped Warblers were still around in good numbers, plus one Orange-crowned Warbler.

Our group leaders were stellar, and all of our volunteers helped to make this a very successful event. I thank them all. I am also grateful to BCAS members who reported the birds from their feeders and from their yards. Those included the only Cowbird and only Baltimore Oriole for the event, plus a friendly Merlin that was being seen daily from out the kitchen window! Some groups had more success than others, but almost all contributed something special to the total.

Looking forward for 2022 to turn out even better (some day). Enjoy the winter and come out on a field trip with us.

Happy New Year!

DAVE HALL

Pied-billed Grebe	6
Dbl-crested Cormorant	228 H!
Great Cormorant	2
Great Blue Heron	72
Great Egret	1
Blk-crowned Night Heron	1
Mute Swan	3
Canada Goose	5292
Wood Duck	12
Blue-winged Teal	2
Green-winged Teal	66
Am. Black Duck	48 L
Mallard	955
Northern Shoveler	15
Gadwall	20
American Widgeon	4
Ring-necked Duck	28
Greater Scaup	2
Lesser Scaup	140 H
Com Goldeneye	1
Bufflehead	34
Hooded Merganser	201
Common Merganser	4344
Red-br Merganser	1
Ruddy Duck	3817 H
Turkey Vulture	5
Black Vulture	7
Bald Eagle	44
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4
Cooper's Hawk	11
Red-shouldered Hawk	1
Red-tailed Hawk	25 L
American Kestrel	1
Merlin	5 H
Peregrine Falcon	4
Wild Turkey	5 L
Killdeer	2
American Woodcock	1
Ring-billed Gull	1471 L
Herring Gull	60 L
Gr.Black-backed Gull	11 L
Rock Dove	1070
Mourning Dove	879
East. Screech Owl	11

Great-horned Owl	6
Belted Kingfisher	21
Red-headed Woodpecker	1
Red-bel. Woodpecker	240 H
Yellow-b. Sapsucker	17
Downy Woodpecker	162
Hairy Woodpecker	45
Northern Flicker	42 H
Pileated Woodpecker	8 H
Blue Jay	383
Common Raven	24 H
American Crow	353
Fish Crow	430 H
Bl-cap Chickadee	129
Tufted Titmouse	58 L
Red-br. Nuthatch	2
White-br Nuthatch	71
Brown Creeper	11 H
Carolina Wren	45
Winter Wren	10 H
Golden-crd Kinglet	13
Ruby-crnd Kinglet	12 H
Eastern Bluebird	8
Hermit Thrush	2
American Robin	454 H
Gray Catbird	4 H
N. Mockingbird	54
Cedar Waxwing	74 H
European Starling	2129
Orange-cr Warbler	1
Yellow-rump Warbler	32 H
Northern Cardinal	217
Eastern Towhee	7
Am Tree Sparrow	4 L
Chipping Sparrow	2
Field Sparrow	2

Fox Sparrow	23
Song Sparrow	206
Lincoln Sparrow	1
Swamp Sparrow	1
White-thr Sparrow	1063 H
Dark-eyed Junco	615
Snow Bunting	1
Red-winged Blackbird	124
Rusty Blackbird	29
Common Grackle	5793 H
Purple Finch	4
House Finch	190
Pine Siskin	2
Am. Goldfinch	211
House Sparrow	560
Monk Parakeet	32

96 different species; 32,840 total birds

Count Period Species: Brown-headed Cowbird, Baltimore Oriole

H (relatively high number); L (relatively low); **bold** (unusual on our count)