

Thanks, as always, to our great team of 24 field observers and 26 feeder counters participating in the Waterloo Christmas Bird Count, held Thursday, Dec. 14, 2023. It was the 24<sup>th</sup> year of the count. Despite logging the lowest number of hours (57 plus seven hours of owling) and miles (367) in the past 13 years, we tallied 11,680 birds of 70 species (second highest; 78 species in 2012). (Interestingly, these two years, 2023 and 2012, were the warmest Decembers on record for Madison.) This was one of the warmest counts we've ever had, with the temperature up to 50 and sunshine and light winds all day.

With the lakes wide open for the fourth year in a row, we found a good variety of waterfowl and set THREE new records. Seven Green-winged Teal were found by Aaron S. and Nick W. (the only other sightings were one in 2000 and two in 2006). Karen H. and Jim K. spotted two White-winged Scoters (singles were tallied four other years). Seven Horned Grebes was far more than the single grebe found in 2012, the only other year one was seen. In addition, a Surf Scoter was found for the first time, but for "count week" only (count week is the three days prior to and three days post-count). Where was it hiding on count day? One had been seen frequently on Rock Lake since Nov. 18, then again after the count.

Of note, we set an additional FIVE new records, three of them for thrush species: 13 Eastern Bluebirds (12 in 2017), two Hermit Thrushes (singles seen four other years), and 86 American Robins (almost three times the next highest of 30 in 2002). The other two records were 10 Brown Creepers (9 in 2017) and 14 Red Crossbills (6 in 2020).

Since there wasn't any snow cover for the third year in a row, species that love wide-open country were again hard to come by. Found were two Horned Larks, a lone Snow Bunting (Aaron S. and Nick W.), and one Lapland Longspur (Bob V.).

Additional single birds sighted included Common Loon, Northern Harrier, Eastern Screech-Owl, Short-eared Owl, Carolina Wren (Aaron S. and Nick W.), Great Blue Heron (Karen H. and Liesa & Jim K.), Belted Kingfisher (Debbie L.), Pileated Woodpecker (Pat R. and Jim S.), and Yellow-rumped Warbler (Bob V.).

Two Northern Shrikes were found, one by the Faville Grove (Badgerland Bird Alliance) team, the other by Pat R. and Jim S. The Faville Grove team also found two of the three Golden-crowned Kinglets, the other found by Bob V.

The only Brown-headed Cowbirds (400, the second highest ever) and Purple Finches (two) tallied were by Jon R. Only two Pine Siskins were found, one by Aaron's team, the other at Mike N.'s feeder.

Of interest, maybe concern, was the low number of Mourning Doves. For the second year in a row, the lowest and second lowest number was found (88 this year, 87 last year). This compares with 192 in 2001 and 457 in 2020.

Thanks, everyone, for participating! We hope to see you again next year (the date has been set for **Sunday, Dec. 15, 2024**).

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Canada Goose – 2,183 (3<sup>rd</sup> highest)

Gadwall - 4

Mallard - 324

Amer. Black Duck - 4

Green-winged Teal - 7 (record high; only third time found: 2 in 2006, 1 in 2000)

Canvasback – 5

Ring-necked Duck - 4

Lesser Scaup – 25

Surf Scoter - cw (first time ever)

White-winged Scoter - 2 (record high; 1 seen four other years)

Bufflehead - 8

Com. Goldeneye - 557 (3<sup>rd</sup> highest)

Hooded Merganser - 20 (3<sup>rd</sup> highest)

Common Merganser - 8

Ruddy Duck - cw

Ring-necked Pheasant - 9

Wild Turkey – 105

Horned Grebe - 7 (new record, single seen one other year only, 2012)

Rock Pigeon – 344

Mourning Dove - 88 (second lowest, 87 in 2022)

Amer. Coot – 1,400

Ring-billed Gull - 250

Herring Gull – 50

Common Loon - 1 (seen 2 other years)

Great Blue Heron - 1

Bald Eagle - 9

N. Harrier – 1 (low)

Cooper's Hawk - 5 (same as 2021, 2022)

Red-tailed Hawk – 44

E. Screech-Owl - 1

Great Horned Owl - 3

Barred Owl – 3

Short-eared Owl - 1

Belted Kingfisher - 1

Red-bellied Woodpecker – 79 (matches record of 79 in 2022)

Downy Woodpecker – 105

Hairy Woodpecker – 30

Northern Flicker – 10 (second highest, 19 in 2015)

Pileated Woodpecker - 1

Amer. Kestrel - 8

Northern Shrike - 2

Blue Jay – 122

American Crow - 278 (matches 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest, 2022)

Horned Lark - 2

Black-capped Chickadee – 368

Tufted Titmouse - 16

Red-breasted Nuthatch – 17

White-breasted Nuthatch – 143

Brown Creeper - 10 (record high, 9 in 2017)

Carolina Wren - 1

Golden-crowned Kinglet – 3

Eastern Bluebird - 13 (record high; 12 in 2017)

Hermit Thrush - 2 (record high, single birds seen four other years)

Amer. Robin - 86 (record high! 30 in 2002)

European Starling – 1,817

Cedar Waxwing – 35

House Sparrow – 891

House Finch – 251

Purple Finch - 2

Red Crossbill - 14 (record high; 6 in 2020)

Pine Siskin - 2

American Goldfinch – 172

Lapland Longspur - 1

Snow Bunting - 1

Amer. Tree Sparrow - 402

Song Sparrow – 16 (3<sup>rd</sup> highest)

White-crowned Sparrow - 5 (3<sup>rd</sup> highest)

Dark-eyed Junco - 547

Red-winged Blackbird – 101

Brown-headed Cowbird – 400 (2<sup>nd</sup> highest; 501 in 2022)

Yellow-rumped Warbler - 1

Northern Cardinal - 152

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Karen

Count Coordinator