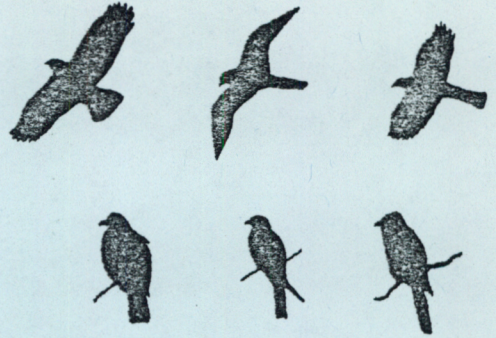


CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT REPORT 1979



Once again the Natural History Society organized two highly successful Christmas Bird Counts in the local area. The unusually mild and open weather of late fall had led to high hopes that a greater than usual number of species might remain in the province to be counted. However the very cold and blustery weather which set in the week prior to the commencement of the official count period quickly dashed expectations for record numbers of species or individuals.

December 15, the day of the National Park count, began with intermittent snow squalls but by mid day had become a lovely sunny winter afternoon. The 36 species observed equalled last year's species total and is about average for the eight counts held since 1971. (The highest count was the 1973 one with 43 species reported; lowest was 1972 with 29.) The total of 4392 individuals is slightly below the eight year average of about 4300 birds (high of 9641 in 1973 and low of 3008 in 1972). Three new species were added to the count: Red-tailed Hawk, Ring-billed Gull and American Goldfinch. Ruddy duck, Greater Scaup, Brown Creeper, Common Grackle and Brown-headed Cowbird all appear on the list again after an absence of several years. The six Hairy Woodpecker reported are an encouraging indication that the species is recovering well from the low numbers of several years ago.

The Hillsborough Count on December 22 followed a week of somewhat erratic weather during which most of the salt water became iced in. Nevertheless the species total of 35 was up considerably from last year's count low of 28 (high of 43 in 1971). The individual total of 4797 falls slightly below the nine-year count average of about 5000 birds (high of 9509 in 1974 and low of 2624 in 1975). New species to the count were Red-tailed Hawk, Merlin, Ring-billed Gull, and Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker. The total of 9 hawks reported seems to indicate an unusually good hawk year. Several species were reported again after an absence of a few years: Great Blue Heron, Common Eider, Iceland Gull, Mourning Dove, Hairy Woodpecker and Common Grackle.

Thank-you to all participants for helping to make the counts so successful. Special thanks to Ruth Ross and to George and Elizabeth Cairns for welcoming the tired and hungry crews into their homes for the after-count gatherings.

