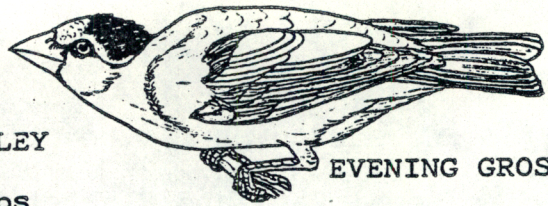


HILLSBOROUGH COUNT

BY ROSEMARY CURLEY



EVENING GROSBEAK

Fourteen observers in five groups noted 5354 individuals of 38 species on the Hillsborough Christmas Bird Count held December 28, 1985. The species total was about average, and little unusual was recorded, but the large number of individuals and the prevailing good weather combined to make the count a pleasant experience for those involved.

Species were recorded as follows: American black duck, 691; Mallard, 2; Oldsquaw, 2; Common goldeneye, 201; Barrows goldeneye, 5; Common Merganser, 236; Red-breasted merganser, 2; Sharp-shinned hawk, 3; Rough-legged hawk, 1; Gray partridge, 25; Ruffed grouse, 3; Ring-billed gull, 3; Herring gull, 591; Iceland gull, 4; Great black-backed gull, 390; Rock dove, 171; Mourning dove, 1; Downy woodpecker, 5; Hairy woodpecker, 3; Horned lark, 3; Blue jay, 61; American crow, 492; Common raven, 9; Black-capped chickadee, 74; Boreal chickadee, 10; Red-breasted nuthatch, 3; Golden-crowned kinglet, 10; European starling, 1628; American tree sparrow, 1; Song sparrow, 5; White-throated sparrow, 4; Lapland longspur, 12; Snow bunting, 430; Brown-headed cowbird, 90; Pine grosbeak, 4; Common redpoll, 20; Evening grosbeak, 11; House sparrow, 150. Seen during the count week but not on the count day: Common grackle, 1.

Following 26 hours of hard birding, the observers arrived with food in hand at the home of count compiler Rosemary Curley to replenish their energy reserves and brag about their sightings.

Thanks to the following observers: Lenore Andrew, Bill Bowerbank, Jamie Burton, David K. Cairns, Rosemary Curley, Geoff Hogan, Norah Longworth, Gerald MacDonald, Ann MacPhail, Dan McAskill, Dan McAskill Jr., Terry Power, David Wake, Winifred Wake. A special thanks to the following who also contributed to the success of the day: Jack Beaton, Jason Bevan, Ann Charlotte Kelly and Thelma Murchison.

IN DEFENCE OF CORMORANTS

A letter to the editor in defence of cormorants recently appeared in the Jan. 16 Guardian-Patriot. The writer was Natural History Society member Evelyn Meader of Crossroads, and I think her letter bears reprinting in this issue for those who may not have read it.

"The story on Page 2 of the Guardian, Thur. Jan. 9, "Cormorants Hurting Fishery, Liberal MLA calls for action", calls for comment on the type of action.

"It seems to me that all these people complaining that the cormorants are eating "their" fish, assume that the earth belongs to human beings only. Imagine the nerve of a cormorant actually eating trout in its process of survival. By eating fish to live he denies a sport fisherman the thrill of a catch.

"Who has the right to assume the world's resources belong to man alone? Look what man does with his offshore trawlers. Fish is taken by the shipload - not just a cormorant-sized stomach full.

"Are the fish in decline because of the cormorant's hunger or man's greed? Lucky for humans, the cormorants can't organize a people shoot!

"Ah well, someone will shoot the cormorants anyway because the strength of man seems to give him some misguided right to destroy the natural world.

"Gilbert Clements is right when he says it's time for action. However, the action should involve a chance for ALL living creatures to share the earth's bounty and strive for harmony on our beautiful planet."