

1996-97 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS:

by J. Dan McAskill & Ruth Richman

The winter of 1996-97 marked the 97th year that participants have gone to their portion of a count circle to participate in the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Counts. For many of us, it has become a yearly tradition that allows us to have one, two, or three pleasant days out with friends counting birds. The benefit to all North American's is often forgotten during the spirit of the occasion. These counts offer valuable information on the population trends of many species.

This year, 66 participants went to the field and 35 families watched their feeders. The Montague contingent edged out the Hillsborough counters by one species with a total of 48 on the count day. Montague counters added another three during the three day period before and after the count. The PEI National Park count despite a slow start to the day ended up with a respectable 34 species. In total, the three counts recorded 72 species and a total of 20,596 birds.

The reports by area are provided below.

Observations	Number in Count Area			Total	Observations	Number in Count Area			Total
	National Park	Hillsborough	Montague			National Park	Hillsborough	Montague	
Northern Gannet			1	1	Cedar Waxwing			17	17
Double-crested Cormorant		1	1	2	Northern Shrike	1			1
Great Blue Heron	2	1	2	5	European Starling	382	5702	1050	7134
Canada Geese	421	428	90	939	Pine Warbler			1	1
Mallard	2	16		18	Ovenbird		1		1
Black Duck	238	1176	684	2098	House Sparrow	12	149	173	334
Northern Pintail	1		2	3	Red-winged Blackbird			6	6
Ducks UID			6	6	Common Grackle			1	1
Common Goldeneye	46	101	488	635	Evening Grosbeak	33	2	129	164
Barrow's Goldeneye			8	8	Common Redpoll		19		19
Oldsquaw	33	3	457	493	Pine Siskin		19	10	29
Elder			40	40	American Goldfinch	23	107	461	591
White-winged Scoter		1		1	Lark Sparrow			1	1
Common Merganser	20	57	415	492	Dark-eyed (Northern) Junco	2	12	68	82
Red-breasted Merganser	1	3		4	American Tree Sparrow		3	31	34
Sharp-shinned Hawk		1		1	Swamp Sparrow			2	2
Red-tailed Hawk	1			1	Song Sparrow		1	2	3
Rough-legged Hawk		3	1	4	Sparrow spp	1		12	13
Bald Eagle	3	6	20	29	Lapland Longspur	1			1
Northern Harrier	1	1		2	Snow Bunting	80	93		173
Hawk spp		1	1	2	Total Birds	2557	10897	7143	20597
Ruffed Grouse	2	4	2	8	Total Species	34	47		81
Bob-white Quail		1		1	Count Period Species				3
Glaucous Gull			2	2	Date:	Dec. 21/96	Dec. 28/96	Jan. 4/97	
Island Gull	1	9		10	Participants: Field	18	19	31	68
Great Black-backed Gull	70	331	77	478	Feeders	0	11	24	35
Lesser Black-backed Gull	1			1	Mammals:				
Herring Gull	423	953	504	1880	Red Squirrel	2			
Ring-billed Gull	15	11		26	Seals	0	2		
Bonaparte's Gull		12		12	Walked: Km	20.2	25.1	32	77.3
Gull spp.	8	2	88	98	Hours	10	13.3	10	33.3
Rock Dove	69	143	553	765	Driven: Km	519.6	323.2	335.6	1178.40
Mourning Dove	6	19	49	74	Hours	29.17	32.8	357.5	419.47
Belted Kingfisher		1	3	4	Earliest Start	805	800		
Northern Flicker			5	5	Latest Ending	1545	1700		
Hairy Woodpecker		11	7	18	Total Party Hours	38.17	31.3	45.75	115.22
Downy Woodpecker	1	12	21	34	Owing Hours	0	0	0	0
Black-backed Woodpecker			1	1	Owing Kilometers	0	0	0	0
Woodpecker spp.		1	5	6	Snow Cover - aver. cm.	0	5		
Horned Lark		142		142	Salt Water Bays - % frozen	30	50	100	
Eastern Phoebe			1	1	Salt Water - % frozen	0	10	20	
Blue Jay	57	375	521	953	Fresh Water - % frozen	50	75	100	
Common Raven	28	90	70	186	Weather:				
American Crow	430	548	698	1676	Bright Sunshine (hrs)	3	2		
Black-capped Chickadee	119	275	336	730	Precipitation	0.2	trace	Flurries	
Boreal Chickadee	18	15	1	34	Cloud %	variable	variable	0-100	
White-breasted Nuthatch		1		1	Temperature C.	-5.7	-4.6	-4	
Red-breasted Nuthatch		5	7	12	Wind Speed - aver km/hr	14.7	10.4	very low	
Brown Creeper		2	2	4	Prevail. wind direction	west	west		
American Robin			2	2	Max. Wind Speed	37	19		
Golden-crowned Kinglet	7	15	8	30	Max. Wind Prev. Dir.	WSW	SSE		
Bohemian Waxwing		12		12					

A special thanks to Ruth Richman and Gary Schneider who compiled the Montague Counts, to Ben Hoteling who assisted with the Hillsborough Count, and to Maurice Roy of the PEI National Park who provided the Dalvay Interpretive Centre and stoked the fire for the potluck! Thanks also to the many participants, namely:

Lenore Andrews; Graeme & Molly Armstrong; Ron Arvidson; Suzanne Barnes; Gwen Beck; Eileen Best; Bill Bowerbank; Lenice Brandon; Mary & Fred Bradley; Pat and Cathy Chan; Donna Collings; Ray Cooke; Rosemary Curley; Wanda Curley; Emery Downing; Liz Driscoll; Susanne Essensa; Chris & Blair Fraser; Beth and David Grant; Don & Jane