2025 Christmas Bird Count

Submitted by Elizabeth Link

The 2025 Christmas Count was held on Saturday, December 20. The weather was cold to start out, with a low of 30, but otherwise the day was pleasant, partly sunny with a high of 53 and light winds.

We tallied 92 species, and a total of 13,485 birds, both of which are in the average range for us. Highlights of the count were a Merlin, found by Ann Steighner's group, which we have had only one other time in the last 50 years, and a Common Merganser on Lake Brandt, which we've had 5 other times in the last 50 years. We also had a surprising Green Heron, which we have had 9 times in the last 50 years. We have previously had Gray Catbird 17 times since 1974, but always only one. This year we had three.

We beat our previous record for Red-headed Woodpecker (44) by one bird, and Red-bellied Woodpecker were one bird short of our previous record (148). We had our second-largest count of Hermit Thrushes at 40 – the most we've had was 43 in 2023. We don't always get Purple Finches, and when we do it's usually single digits, but this year we had 16.

The large number of Double-crested Cormorants that have inhabited the lakes for the last 4 winters showed up again, but not quite at the 2022 high number of 1,737. Still, given that the previous high before 2022 was 729, they made a good showing.

The American Coot was once a staple of the count, found every year, but we had none this year. No Common Loon, either. We've usually had at least one Great Horned Owl on the count, but not this year. We've had Baltimore Oriole almost every year for the last ten, but none this year.

And I always have to comment on the Vultures. While the overall Vulture numbers were down a bit from our average (perhaps not the best soaring weather), the Black Vultures did **not** outnumber the Turkey Vultures, as they have done for most of the last 10 years.

The total list is below.

We had 44 counters in the field, and 3 doing Feeder Watches. Altogether they put in 128 party hours of birding, walked 58 miles and drove 190 miles. Many thanks to the birders who made this count happen:

Rick Bardolph, Heather Buttonow, Anna Craft, Angela Craven, Robert Craven, Doug DeNeve, Pam DeNeve, Dan Dery, Tom Gaffney, Jim Gant, Robin Gitlin, Linda Golden, Lynne Gray, Amy Hanson, Susie Hodnett, Doug Hodgson, Carol Jones, Todd Kilb, Christina Leslie, Ann Lindberg, Elizabeth Link, Kim Luper, Clarence Mattocks, Lynn Moseley, Phil Moseley, Roberta Newton, Lane Oldham, Sandy Post, Anne Presnell, Emily Reeve, Judy Roy, Melanie Stadler, Ann Steighner, Linda Sumner, Paul Sumner, Gale Sykes, Emily Talbert, Ann Van Sant, Wallace Sills, Lou Skrabec, Courtney Vass, Anita Vigorito, Matt Wangerin, Stella Wear, Tom Wear, George Wheaton, and Melissa Whitmire.

Species Count

Common name	Number
Canada Goose	813
Wood Duck	5
Gadwall	33
American Wigeon	69
American Black Duck	11
Mallard	780
Northern Shoveler	31
Northern Pintail	4
Green-winged Teal	8
Ring-necked Duck	158
Bufflehead	150
Hooded Merganser	192
Common Merganser	1
Red-breasted Merganser	4
Ruddy Duck	45
Wild Turkey	1
Pied-billed Grebe	26
Horned Grebe	40
Rock Pigeon	25
Mourning Dove	110
Killdeer	10
Wilson's Snipe	3
Bonaparte's Gull	126
Ring-billed Gull	2998
Herring Gull	4
Dble-crested Cormorant	1436
Green Heron	1
Great Egret	2
Great Blue Heron	96
Black Vulture	51
Turkey Vulture	102
Bald Eagle	8
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2
Cooper's Hawk	5
Red-shouldered Hawk	28
Red-tailed Hawk	21
Barred Owl	2
Belted Kingfisher	13
Red-headed Woodpecker	45
Red-bellied Woodpecker	147
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	50
Downy Woodpecker	70
Hairy Woodpecker	12
Northern Flicker	59
Pileated Woodpecker	13
Eastern Phoebe	28
American Kestrel	3
Merlin	1
Blue Jay	142
American Crow	708
Fish Crow	126
Common Raven	2
Carolina Chickadee	287
Tufted Titmouse	162
Red-breasted Nuthatch	2
White-breasted Nuthatch	74
Brown-headed Nuthatch	63
Brown Creeper	17
Gray Catbird	3
House Wren	1
Winter Wren	14
Carolina Wren	170
Golden-crowned Kinglet	66
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	76
Eastern Bluebird	258
Hermit Thrush	40
American Robin	282
Brown Thrasher	32
Northern Mockingbird	79
European Starling	419
House Sparrow	21
Cedar Waxwing	299
House Finch	137
Purple Finch	16

American Goldfinch	90
Pine Warbler	18
Yellow-rumped Warbler	155
Eastern Towhee	85
Chipping Sparrow	44
Field Sparrow	30
Savannah Sparrow	23
Fox Sparrow	8
Song Sparrow	94
Swamp Sparrow	11

White-throated Sparrow	646
Dark-eyed Junco	435
Northern Cardinal	250
Red-winged Blackbird	171
Eastern Meadowlark	52
Rusty Blackbird	6
Common Grackle	10
Brown-headed Cowbird	2
92 species	
Total birds	**13,468**