

# 55th Kingston Christmas Bird Count

The Kingston, NS Christmas Bird Count, held December 23, 2022, was a success despite the threatening weather and the completely snowless conditions in the Valley. The weather report, provided by John Ogletree, illustrates the conditions well: Overcast in early morning with occasional drizzle starting by mid-morning and then mix of drizzle and rain increasing through afternoon. Temperatures starting near -3 and steadily rising to +6 by late afternoon. Wind starting NE 15 km/h increasing and veering to E 30 gusting to 50 km/h. Hardly the best day for a bird count. And with about half the feeder watchers and several field parties protesting that there were almost no birds, you may be surprised by the results.

This year we have a compiler change. Most of you will be familiar with Wayne Neily, who, after completing his 19th time as compiler of our count, tying him for most compilations here with longtime former compiler Pat Giffen, retired to an advisory position. Wayne compiled the first official CBC for Kingston. I remember being in the field party with him that day and getting several lifers, including my first Northern Shrike. I remember it was much colder back then too. I ended up compiling the count the next year, and since we are doomed to repeat our mistakes, I ended up doing it for my 14th, but only recent, time this year. My first decisions as new compiler turned out to be good ones. Sheila Hulford volunteered to remain in charge of feeder operations and Lyall Bouchard to organize the field parties. I gratefully said "Yes please" to both. Kudos to each of them for doing excellent jobs! Lyall assembled the largest field crew we have ever had, 29 birders in 15 parties. Sheila was able to get the records of 58 feeder watchers at 37 feeders to me within a week of the count; that seems almost miraculous. A total of 84 people participated, 3 in dual roles, field and feeders.

We decided to follow the Audubon and eBird method for reporting distance. It was a bit difficult to find documentation as to the method to be used, in the end it was clear and logical that only one-way distances were to be reported. If you take 30 minutes to walk a 2 km trail and 10 minutes to return by the same trail, your effort is 40 minutes over 2 km (not 4 km). This method of calculating distance in regard to effort should be an important factor used by researchers to help make counts comparable and make the masses of data gathered by the Christmas Bird Counts more useful. There was also an effort to encourage field parties to use eBird Trip Report. We had 6 parties do this, 2 parties used single eBird checklists and 7 parties used paper reports. Below is a list of the Trip Reports and checklists and links to them, if anyone wishes to look at them. We have a few bugs to iron out, like the conflict between individual and group numbers, but it looks like we are going to continue using this tool. An online reporting tool is being developed as well. Lyall Bouchard rolled out a first version of it in Google Docs, based on the Wolfville count's spreadsheet and we used it experimentally this year. Next year it should be even better.

## Field Party Reports

Zone 1	Bouchard - <a href="https://ebird.org/tripreport/93953">https://ebird.org/tripreport/93953</a>
Zone 2	Penner - Paper report Braun - Paper report Stern - <a href="https://ebird.org/checklist/S124471474">https://ebird.org/checklist/S124471474</a>
Zone 3	Robar-DeCoste - Paper report Leblanc - <a href="https://ebird.org/tripreport/93775">https://ebird.org/tripreport/93775</a>
Zone 4	Diggins - Paper report Chute <a href="https://ebird.org/checklist/S124516870">https://ebird.org/checklist/S124516870</a> Neily - <a href="https://ebird.org/checklist/S124461399">https://ebird.org/checklist/S124461399</a>
Zone 5	Colville - Paper report
Zone 6	Ogletree - <a href="https://ebird.org/tripreport/94109">https://ebird.org/tripreport/94109</a>
Zone 7	Kelly - Paper report
Zone 8	Hulford - Paper report
Zone 9	Bates - <a href="https://ebird.org/tripreport/93257">https://ebird.org/tripreport/93257</a>
Zone 10	Barkman - <a href="https://ebird.org/tripreport/94096">https://ebird.org/tripreport/94096</a>



**The Penner party at Kirk's Brook, just west of Morden, in Zone 2. Photo taken by Richard Stern.**

We had 70 species on count day, eight more than the ten-year average, and the 2nd highest ever (72 in 2012-13 being the highest). With 8 additional Count Week species the Total Species was 78, a new high by a remarkable 5 species. The number of individuals was 10,712, about 2000 below the ten-year average, but well above last year. Most abundant species were European Starling, American Goldfinch, Black-capped Chickadee, American Crow, Dark-eyed Junco, and Blue Jay, in that order and much as expected. These and the other 35 "A-List" species (those seen on 90% or more of the last 10 counts) were all seen except for Purple Finch and Red-winged Blackbird. Among the less common species missed, Northern Goshawk, Barred Owl, Pine Grosbeak, Common Redpoll and Pine Warbler were ones that we have had 50% or more of the time in the past decade. Eight species, including 2 of the misses mentioned above, were seen in the count week but not on count day: Greater Scaup (new to count), Common Murre, Black Guillemot, Turkey Vulture, Rough-legged Hawk, Barred Owl, American Kestrel, and Pine Warbler.

We had 2 new Count Day species: Lesser Scaup and Eastern Phoebe, both at the Middleton Sewage Lagoons. Lesser Scaup have been seen several times at the Bridgetown Sewage Lagoons, so were not totally unexpected, but this was our 1st ever on the count. Our 1st ever Eastern Phoebe was a Count Week bird last year. This was our 1st for Count Day. Phoebes have been enticed by the warmer weather into staying in the province later in the past few years. We actually had another near Kingston, and though it was not seen during the count, it was seen into early January. The two new species bring our cumulative Count Day total to 132. There was also 1 new Count Week species, the aforementioned Greater Scaup, balanced by the transition from Count Week to Count Day by the phoebe. So, our cumulative total including Count Week species is 139. We also had our 3rd record of Northern Gannet, 2nd in the past 10 years.



**Lesser Scaup (left) and Eastern Phoebe (right) at the Middleton Sewage lagoons. Photos by Larry Neily.**

Record highs were found of 7 species. There were 17 Green-winged Teal, over 4 times the previous high. Three Peregrine Falcons were seen on this count, three times our former high. Savannah Sparrow had a



new high of 3 (2 before); and Song Sparrow tied its previous high of 48. The Northern Cardinal continues its successful invasion of our area with a new high this year of 78! Our first record on the count was of one in 1989, rising to 2 in 1998, 3 in 2004, 6 in 2006, 8 in 2007, 11 in 2008, 17 in 2010, 18 in 2012, 27 in 2013, 37 in 2015, then levelling off to 30 in 2019, then exploding to 62 in 2021 and this count's 78. And rounding out the new highs were the Lesser Scaup and Eastern Phoebe, being new, were both new highs of one.

Other high counts, though not records, were from Red-breasted Merganser, Red-necked Grebe and European Starling (the 4998 representing nearly half of all our birds - 46.7%). Low counts were recorded for American Black Duck, Pileated Woodpecker, American Crow (likely because the roost has moved) and Brown-headed Cowbird (likely because of open conditions). Some highlights of uncommon species found were 2 Common Goldeneye, 2 Hooded Merganser, Dovekie, 3 Black-legged Kittiwake, Iceland Gull, 2 Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Mockingbird and Baltimore Oriole. Anyone who enjoys data tables can get their fill at [Kingston CBC Results 1968 to 2022](#). There you will find the field/feeder/total compilation table from December's count and you can also find a complete table of the counts results from its inception in 1968 to the present.



**Baltimore Oriole coming to feeders on Acadia Street, Middleton. Photo taken Count Day by Jane White.**

A total of 10712 individuals of 70 species were seen on count day. Canada Goose 154, Mallard 200, American Black Duck 29, Green-winged Teal 17 (high), Lesser Scaup 1 (new), Common Eider 13, Surf Scoter 22, White-winged Scoter 4, Black Scoter 10, Long-tailed Duck 7, Common Goldeneye 2, Hooded Merganser 2, Common Merganser 1, Red-breasted Merganser 25, Ruffed Grouse 8, Ring-necked Pheasant 16, Red-necked Grebe 10, Rock Pigeon 244, Mourning Dove 374, Purple Sandpiper 3, Dovekie 1, Razorbill 3, Black-legged Kittiwake 3, Herring Gull 204, Iceland Gull 1, Great Black-backed Gull 3, gull, sp. 47, Red-throated Loon 1, Common Loon 9, Northern Gannet 2, Northern Harrier 1, Sharp-shinned Hawk 2, Bald Eagle 21, Red-tailed Hawk 17, hawk sp. 1, Red-bellied Woodpecker 2, Downy Woodpecker 62, Hairy Woodpecker 49, Pileated Woodpecker 2, Northern Flicker 2, woodpecker sp. 1, Merlin 1, Peregrine Falcon 3 (high), Eastern Phoebe 1 (new), Blue Jay 523, American Crow 717, Common Raven 144, Black-capped Chickadee 754, Horned Lark 17, Golden-crowned Kinglet 27, Red-breasted Nuthatch 24, White-breasted Nuthatch 75, Brown Creeper 6, European Starling 4,998, Northern Mockingbird 1, American Robin 5, Bohemian Waxwing 72, Cedar Waxwing 22, House Sparrow 49, Evening Grosbeak 182, crossbill, sp. 1, Pine Siskin 6, American Goldfinch 782, Snow Bunting 3, American Tree Sparrow 2, Dark-eyed Junco 542, White-throated Sparrow 33, Savannah Sparrow 3 (high), Song Sparrow 48 (high), Baltimore Oriole 1, Brown-headed Cowbird 14, Common Grackle 2, Northern Cardinal 78 (high).

Participants: John Antoniuk, Sandy Antoniuk, Leona Baker, Ron Baker, Sharon Baker, Brian Barkman, Andrew Bates, Lyall Bouchard, Victor Braun, Karen Campbell, Robert Campbell, Kathy Chapman, Tony Chaulk, Jake Chute, David Colville, Keegan Colville, Cathy Crook, John DeCoste, Linda Derry, Paul Despres, Valerie Despres, Sherry-Anne Deveau, Claire Diggins, Dan Diggins, David Diggins, Donna Elliott, Harold Elliott, Barbara Giffin, Patrick Giffin, Doris Glavine, Leo Glavine, Marlin Gould, Carol Gregory, Len Gregory, Sheila Gubernt, Janet Hatt, Arleen Healy, Donna Hill, Pat House, John Hudgins, Marilyn Hudgins, Sheila Hulford, Sibella Hulford, Mike Inkpen, Joseph Johnson, Ted Kajdas, Roseann Keddy, Russell Keddy, Patrick Kelly, Cathou Larocque, Josée Leblanc, Andrea Leeson, Richard McKay, Darrell Messom, Susan Messom, Larry Neily (compiler), Wayne Neily, Joanna Ogletree, John Ogletree, John Paull, Susan Paull, Daniel Penner, Dylon Penner, Kenley Penner, Marlon Penner, Sydney Penner, Emma Pinfeld, Noreen Reagh, Wayne Reiger, Twila Robar-DeCoste, Wendy Rodda, Howard Selig, Richard Stern, Charles Tye, Doris Tye, Judy Uhlman, Mac Uhlman, Jake Waldner, Margaret Waldner, Mel Waldner, Margaret Weeks, Jane White, Ann Young and Tara Zaleski. Thanks to all participants and good birding to all in 2023,

Larry Neily, Compiler

Lawrencetown, NS

January 2023