

A SUMMARY OF THE 55th CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT IN NEW YORK STATE

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This paper summarizes the Christmas Bird Counts in New York State conducted from December 24, 1954 to January 2, 1955 as part of the nationwide count sponsored by the National Audubon Society (See 1955 Audubon Field Notes 9 (2):84-97). This is the first paper in what is hoped will be a regular series. It is the purpose of this project to make this record available annually. Each year it will indicate the number and kinds of birds found in New York State in mid-winter; as a continuing record it may show fluctuations in populations in the state. (Ed. Note: Present plans call for subsequent summaries to appear in the July issue each year.)

In this report Long Island counts are considered separately because of the difference in populations and species occurrence. For each species two figures are given, first the number of counts on which it was reported, second the total number of birds seen. An uncommon record is indicated by small figures in either category.

New York ornithologists are invited to contact the author if they have comments about or suggestions for this project.

LONG ISLAND — Temperature on the eight counts varied from 25° to 51°F. 187 individuals cooperated, varying from one to 44 observers per count. 655 hours were spent in the field, 116 in cars, 520 afoot, 13 on boats, 6 on bicycles. 1529 miles were traveled, 981 by car, 470 afoot, 66 by boat, 12 by bicycle. Total species: 154; total birds 193,678.

Common Loon 9, 119; Red-throated Loon 8, 58; Red-necked Grebe 3, 7; Horned Grebe 8, 1296; Pied-billed Grebe 7, 216; Gannet 7, 246; European Cormorant 3, 33; Double-crested Cormorant 2, 2; Great Blue Heron 7, 196; Black-crowned Night Heron 7, 163; American Bittern 5, 14; Mute Swan 7, 298; Canada Goose 6, 882; Brant 4, 5321; Mallard 7, 1784; Black Duck 9, 16660; Garwall 2, 77; European Widgeon 2, 2; American Widgeon 6, 1398; Pintail 6, 634; European Teal 1, 1; Green-winged Teal 5, 349; Shoveller 2, 40; Redhead 5, 21; Ring-necked Duck 5, 209; Canvasback 5, 3978; Greater Scaup Duck 9, 47646; Lesser Scaup Duck 5, 143; American Goldeneye 8, 1251; Bufflehead 7, 786; Old-squaw 9, 837; Harlequin Duck 1, 2; Common Eider 1, 2; King Eider 1, 2; White-winged Scoter 7, 6840; Surf Scoter 4, 1129; American Scoter 4, 152; Ruddy Duck 6, 248; Hooded Merganser 5, 176; American Merganser 6, 543; Red-breasted Merganser 9, 1917; Goshawk 1, 1 (ed.: no details); Sharp-shinned Hawk 5, 8; Cooper's Hawk 2, 4; Red-tailed Hawk 3, 8; Red-shouldered Hawk 3, 6; Rough-legged Hawk 1, 1; Marsh Hawk 7, 64; Peregrine Falcon 2, 2; Sparrow Hawk 7, 97; Ruffed Grouse 1, 1; Bob-white 3, 36; Ring-necked Pheasant 5, 91; Clapper Rail 5, 48; Virginia Rail 1, 6; Sora 1, 1; Florida Gallinule 4, 7; American Coot 8, 787; Piping Plover 1, 2; Ringed Plover 1, 2; Killdeer 4, 159; Black-bellied Plover 4, 101; Woodcock 1, 1; Wilson's Snipe 5, 16; Greater Yellow-legs 2, 4; Purple Sandpiper 4, 119; Red-backed Sandpiper 5, 813; Sanderling 6, 551; Glaucous Gull 2, 2; Iceland Gull 1, 1; Great Black-backed Gull 9, 2815; Herring Gull 9, 43536; Ring-billed Gull 9, 1967; Black-headed Gull 1, 1; Laughing Gull 3, 8; Bonaparte's Gull 7, 1794; Black-legged Kittiwake 1, 1; Black Skimmer 1, 4; Dovekie 1, 1.

Mourning Dove 7, 314; Barn Owl 1, 2; Screech Owl 3, 17; Horned Owl 2, 2; Snowy Owl 2, 5; Long-eared Owl 2, 3; Short-eared Owl 3, 17; Belted Kingfisher 7, 26; Yellow-shafted Flicker 8, 81; Hairy Woodpecker 7, 40; Downy Woodpecker 8, 167; Western Kingbird 1, 1; Eastern Phoebe 1, 1 (ed.: no details); Horned Lark 5, 586; Tree Swallow 1, 7; Blue Jay 8, 531; American Crow 8, 2407; Fish Crow 5, 23; Black-capped Chickadee 8, 1094; Brown-capped Chickadee 2, 4; White-breasted Nuthatch 7, 198; Red-breasted Nuthatch 7, 131; Brown Creeper 5, 17; Winter Wren 6, 14; Carolina Wren 6, 24; Long-billed Marsh Wren 6, 22; Short-billed Marsh

Wren 1, 1; Mockingbird 1, 1; Catbird 4, 14; Brown Thrasher 3, 7; American Robin 7, 202; Hermit Thrush 5, 10; Eastern Bluebird 1, 63; Golden-crowned Kinglet 6, 48; Ruby-crowned Kinglet 1, 1; American Pipit 2, 23; Cedar Waxwing 3, 37; Gray Shrike 2, 5; Loggerhead Shrike 4, 7; Common Starling 8, 18840; Myrtle Warbler 8, 3342; Pine Warbler 1, 2; Palm Warbler 1, 1; House Sparrow 8, 5084; Eastern Meadowlark 8, 317; Red-winged Blackbird 7, 760; Rusty Blackbird 5, 33; Purple Grackle 3, 41; Brown-headed Cowbird 7, 959; Cardinal 5, 37; Purple Finch 7, 45; Goldfinch 7, 330; Common Redpoll 2, 18; Pine Siskin 8, 327; House Finch 3, 49; Red Crossbill 3, 120; White-winged Crossbill 3, 198; Eastern Towhee 4, 13; Ipswich Sparrow 3, 8; Savannah Sparrow 7, 400; Sharp-tailed Sparrow 6, 20; Seaside Sparrow 3, 11; Vesper Sparrow 1, 2; Slate-colored Junco 7, 1990; Oregon Junco 1, 1; Tree Sparrow 8, 1683; Chipping Sparrow 1, 2; Field Sparrow 7, 199; White-crowned Sparrow 1, 1; White-throated Sparrow 8, 2182; Fox Sparrow 7, 59; Swamp Sparrow 8, 96; Song Sparrow 8, 1428; Lapland Longspur 3, 12; Snow Bunting 5, 171.

MAINLAND NEW YORK — Temperature on the thirty-one counts varied from 6° to 50°F. 669 individuals cooperated, varying from one to 75 observers per count. 1355 hours were spent in the field, 823 afoot, 532 in cars, 11 on boats. 7079 miles were traveled, 1324 afoot, 5755 by car, 70 by boat. Total species: 152; total birds 332,475.

Common Loon 4, 24; Red-throated Loon 3, 12; Red-necked Grebe 1, 4; Horned Grebe 11, 459; Pied-billed Grebe 12, 60; European Cormorant 2, 23; Double-crested Cormorant 2, 6; Great Blue Heron 9, 100; Black-crowned Night Heron 5, 115; American Bittern 2, 4; Mute Swan 4, 55; Whistling Swan 1, 1; Canada Goose 4, 336; Snow Goose 1, 1; Blue Goose 1, 4; Mallard 16, 2023; Black Duck 21, 8723; Gadwall 3, 7; European Widgeon 2, 4; American Widgeon 6, 178; Pintail 6, 40; Green-winged Teal 3, 26; Shoveller 1, 2; Wood Duck 3, 6; Redhead 9, 2149; Ring-necked Duck 8, 173; Canvasback 13, 16235; Greater Scaup Duck 14, 21828; Lesser Scaup Duck 8, 707; American Golden-eye 19, 3816; Bufflehead 9, 633; Oldsquaw 8, 1083; White-winged Scoter 7, 440; Surf Scoter 3, 37; American Scoter 4, 11; Ruddy Duck 3, 397; Hooded Merganser 11, 134; American Merganser 19, 3018; Red-breasted Merganser 11, 1239; Turkey Vulture 1, 3 (ed.: no details); Sharp-shinned Hawk 8, 15; Cooper's Hawk 15, 22; Red-tailed Hawk 17, 106; Red-shouldered Hawk 6, 42; Rough-legged Hawk 6, 16; Bald Eagle 7, 12; Marsh Hawk 9, 22; Osprey 1, 1 (Ed.: no details); Peregrine Falcon 3, 3; Pigeon Hawk 1, 1; Sparrow Hawk 22, 226; Ruffed Grouse 20, 77; Ring-necked Pheasant 23, 871; Clapper Rail 3, 7; Virginia Rail 2, 5; American Coot 13, 323; Killdeer 4, 152; Wilson's Snipe 2, 6; Lesser Yellow-legs 1, 1; Purple Sandpiper 2, 166; Sanderling 1, 47; Glaucous Gull 1, 9; Iceland Gull 3, 10; Great Black-backed Gull 14, 497; Herring Gull 24, 57433; Ring-billed Gull 18, 3387; Laughing Gull 4, 17; Black-headed Gull 1, 3; Bonaparte's Gull 5, 4500; Little Gull 1, 2.

Mourning Dove 15, 460; Barn Owl 2, 2; Screech Owl 13, 44; Horned Owl 9, 22; Snowy Owl 2, 4; Barred Owl 7, 12; Long-eared Owl 5, 7; Short-eared Owl 3, 7; Saw-whet Owl 1, 1; Belted Kingfisher 21, 64; Yellow-shafted Flicker 13, 54; Pileated Woodpecker 13, 35; Red-bellied Woodpecker 2, 4 (ed.: no details); Red-headed Woodpecker 1, 2; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 3, 4; Hairy Woodpecker 29, 413; Downy Woodpecker 30, 906; Eastern Phoebe 1, 1; Horned Lark 6, 107; Blue Jay 31, 2120; American Crow 28, 11370; Fish Crow 3, 28; Black-capped Chickadee 30, 5442; Brown-capped Chickadee 6, 6; Tufted Titmouse 9, 182; White-breasted Nuthatch 31, 979; Red-breasted Nuthatch 20, 145; Brown Creeper 24, 104; Winter Wren 8, 16; Carolina Wren 8, 12; Long-billed Marsh Wren 3, 6; Mockingbird 2, 2; Catbird 3, 6; Brown Thrasher 3, 3; American Robin 15, 108; Hermit Thrush 7, 13; Olive-backed Thrush 2, 2; Eastern Bluebird 7, 166; Golden-crowned Kinglet 15, 148; Ruby-crowned Kinglet 3, 7; American Pipit 1, 2; Cedar Waxwing 9, 342; Gray Shrike 14, 47; Loggerhead Shrike 1, 1; Common Starling 31, 145453; Myrtle Warbler 7, 431; Palm Warbler 1, 2; Common Yellowthroat 1, 1; Yellow-breasted Chat 1, 1; House Sparrow 31, 14023; Eastern Meadowlark 8, 88; Red-winged Blackbird 11, 667; Baltimore Oriole 1, 1 (ed.: no details); Rusty Blackbird 6, 15; Purple Grackle 6, 66; Brown-headed Cowbird 11, 559; Cardinal 23, 443; Dickcissel 1, 1; Evening Grosbeak 14, 436; Purple Finch 7, 167; House Finch 1, 50; Pine Grosbeak 18, 502; Common Redpoll 11, 337; Pine Siskin 13, 801; American Goldfinch 22, 1086; Red Crossbill 2, 16; White-winged Crossbill 4, 31; Eastern Towhee 5, 13; Savannah Sparrow 4, 67; Sharp-tailed Sparrow 1, 2; Seaside Sparrow 1, 2; Vesper Sparrow 3, 6; Slate-colored Junco 29, 2892; Tree Sparrow 31, 4815; Chipping Sparrow 2, 9; Field Sparrow 7, 199; White-throated Sparrow 13, 895; Fox Sparrow

5, 29; Swamp Sparrow 10, 65; Song Sparrow 26, 948; Lapland Longspur 5, 22; Snow Bunting 12, 1833.

Totals for entire state: 178 species; 526,153 individuals.

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CLUB NEWS

SASSAFRAS BIRD CLUB

The Sassafras Bird Club like many others in the state has long realized the need for furthering conservation practices. On a limited budget, however, it has been necessary to weigh the matter of how best to serve this fine cause. The club decided several years ago to sponsor a two week scholarship to the Audubon Camp in Maine. The only requirement the club made was that each student share his knowledge and experience by serving as leader of Nature Activities at a local boy scout, girl scout, 4-H or day camp for one season. These organizations have rotated assignment of an able student as the project has continued on an annual basis.

The staff of the Audubon Camp has been pleased with the type of scholarship student sent and welcomes word that another is to come this summer.

As years pass former students have spoken often of the broadening experience gained and the fine friendships formed while at camp. It is impossible to recount the many advantages of such an experience, but if nature study is continued as a vocation or an avocation, surely a sound basic understanding of ecology places a person in a fine position in this field. One of the students remarked that all through his life he would cherish memories and enjoy the out-of-doors the more for his better understanding of how to help preserve it.

Sassafras Bird Club members point with pride to this fulfillment of community responsibility and they urge other clubs to try out this idea.