



## WESTERN CUYAHOGA AUDUBON SOCIETY

CONNECT > EDUCATE > CONSERVE

### Christmas Bird Count 2024 - Winter's Not So Bad

By Nancy Howell, Compiler for the Lakewood Circle Christmas Bird Count

I may sound like a broken record as some of the Christmas Bird Count 2024 information is similar to the CBC of 2023. All participants - those who had a walking route, driving route, or feeder watching - deserve a **thank you!** As noted in the 2023 write-up, we had “somewhat cooperative yet uncooperative weather keeping birds spread out”. The 2024 Count was much the same, cooperative in the fact that those heading out on routes had easy driving and walking, yet nice weather doesn't concentrate birds at feeders and kept waters on ponds and lakes wide open, again, not concentrating waterfowl and gulls ... especially along Lake Erie.

December had fairly mild to normal temperatures, and little to no snow. On Count Day, Saturday, December 28, it was downright spring-like. Temperatures started off the day in the upper 40's to low 50's, depending where the route was located, and the high made it into the low 60's. The day was mostly overcast, with the sun peeking out for very short periods but no precipitation was recorded and no snow accumulation anywhere. Most water; lakes, larger ponds, rivers and streams were unfrozen with some ice along the edges on smaller pond. 2024 was also not an irruptive year for finches.

The 2024 Count tallied **78 species on Count Day** with two species added during *Count Week (cw)*. Noteable species on Count Day were: **Wood Duck, Red-necked Grebe, Killdeer, Eastern Screech Owl,** and **Northern House Wren**. See the species list at the end of the narrative.

With Lake Erie being wide open, the diversity and number of waterbirds/waterfowl reported was low. It wasn't for the lack of trying, the birds just were not around. Canada Goose and Mallard were in good numbers, not only on Lake Erie, but throughout the Count Circle. One of the higher count of a species was Common Goldeneye. Other waterfowl numbers were low. Red-breasted Mergansers, which should be in the 10's of thousands, didn't even reach 1000 birds. Single birds were reported for Wood Duck, Redhead, Greater Scaup, and White-winged Scoter. Three species of Grebe; Pied-billed, Horned, and Red-necked were found which was nice. American Coot, Common Loon, and Double-crested Cormorants were also found. Gulls had low numbers and low diversity with no unusual or rare gulls located.

Wild Turkey are always roaming suburban neighborhoods somewhere in the Count Circle. Never say “always” since none were sighted on Count Day but were added for Count Week in 2024. Two Killdeer, in different areas, were a nice find. In the 2023 CBC write-up I noted, “Turkey Vultures are becoming winter birds here”. Well, 2024 proved me wrong. No Turkey Vultures for the 2024 count. Raptors and owls made a decent showing. Two Eastern Screech Owls in a neighborhood backyard, 2 Great Horned and 2 Barred Owls were reported. A good number of Bald Eagles, a couple of Sharp-shinned Hawks, several Cooper's Hawks, and a

good number of both Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks. Yes, it was a good day to be out hunting or riding the thermals. All three species of falcons; American Kestrel, Merlin, and Peregrine were found.

Neighborhood and backyard feeder birds were not bad. Woodpeckers; Red-headed, Red-bellied, Downy, Hairy and Flicker were in good numbers, although Pileated numbers were down a little. No one was able to pick up a sapsucker, darn. Lots of Blue Jays and a good number of American Crows were located. Horned Larks were sighted at Hopkins Airport fields ... Yippee! Black-capped Chickadees, Tufted Titmouse, Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches, and a good number of Brown Creeper. Many Carolina Wrens were on lists, as were a couple of Winter Wren and ... surprise ... a Northern House Wren! Not normal at this time of year. The 4 participants who viewed the bird had a discussion to rule out other wrens, or other "little brown jobs". A Rare Bird Report was submitted for this find.

Golden-crowned Kinglets appeared in good numbers, as did Eastern Bluebirds. It was a beautiful day for them. A single Hermit Thrush was a good find and American Robins were noted in good numbers. Northern Mockingbird seem a bit scarce with only 2 birds found. European Starlings and House Sparrows, too many. A nice addition that we don't always get were a small flock of Cedar Waxwings.

As noted earlier, it was not a winter finch year so no special winter finches were located, but a couple of Purple Finch, many House Finch and American Goldfinch were noted in yards and at feeders. Sparrow diversity was not great, with lower numbers of American Tree, Song, and Swamp Sparrows. White-throated Sparrow and Dark-eyed Juncos were more abundant this year. Blackbirds found for the Count were Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, and Brown-headed Cowbird. Lastly, Northern Cardinals were recorded in good numbers.

The most important part of the Christmas Bird Count are our participants, whether as part of a walking or driving route, or as a feeder watcher, your skills and effort are always appreciated ... thank you again. The 2024 Count had **116 participants** with a group, the Nature Club at the Renaissance Retirement Community, participating. An hour of nocturnal birding was done. Ten feederwatchers tallied 20.5 hours. The 21 parties (groups) that were out, some walking, some by car, and some both, accumulated 78.75 hours and 139.75 miles all together. I am humbled by the dedication of every participant. Thank you.

The list of species and number of each species is below. The list of participants follows the bird list. Species in **bold** are unusual species and those in *italics* are Count Week species (cw)

- |                          |                                      |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Canada Goose 1297     | 9. Surf Scoter 2                     |
| 2. Wood Duck 1           | <i>Long-tailed Duck (count week)</i> |
| 3. American Black Duck 2 | 10. Bufflehead 132                   |
| 4. Mallard 348           | 11. Common Goldeneye 1220            |
| 5. Redhead 1             | 12. Hooded Merganser 6               |
| 6. Greater Scaup 1       | 13. Common Merganser 2               |
| 7. Lesser Scaup 69       | 14. Red-breasted Merganser 480       |
| Greater/Lesser Scaup 2   | 15. Ruddy Duck 16                    |
| 8. White-winged Scoter 1 | <i>Wild Turkey (count week)</i>      |
|                          | 16. Pied-billed Grebe 3              |

- 17. Horned Grebe 21
- 18. Red-necked Grebe 1**
- 19. Rock Pigeon 164
- 20. Mourning Dove 182
- 21. American Coot 18
- 22. Killdeer 2**
- 23. Bonaparte's Gull 1
- 24. Ring-billed Gull 3822
- 25. American Herring Gull 95
- 26. Great Black-backed Gull 2
- 27. Common Loon 2
- 28. Double-crested Cormorant 21
- 29. Great Blue Heron 12
- 30. Sharp-shinned Hawk 2
- 31. Cooper's Hawk 8
- 32. Bald Eagle 14
- 33. Red-shouldered Hawk 14
- 34. Red-tailed Hawk 45
- 35. Eastern Screech Owl 2**
- 36. Great Horned Owl 2
- 37. Barred Owl 2
- 38. Belted Kingfisher 9
- 39. Red-headed Woodpecker 27
- 40. Red-bellied Woodpecker 136
- 41. Downy Woodpecker 142
- 42. Hairy Woodpecker 23
- 43. Pileated Woodpecker 7
- 44. Northern Flicker 20
- 45. American Kestrel 6
- 46. Merlin 2
- 47. Peregrine Falcon 4
- 48. Blue Jay 392
- 49. American Crow 70
- 50. Horned Lark 3
- 51. Black-capped Chickadee 222
- 52. Tufted Titmouse 110
- 53. Red-breasted Nuthatch 5
- 54. White-breasted Nuthatch 113
- 55. Brown Creeper 5
- 56. Carolina Wren 57
- 57. Winter Wren 2
- 58. Northern House Wren 1**
- 59. Golden-crowned Kinglet 8
- 60. Eastern Bluebird 25
- 61. Hermit Thrush 1
- 62. American Robin 467
- 63. Northern Mockingbird 2
- 64. European Starling 1155
- 65. Cedar Waxwing 5
- 66. House Sparrow 976
- 67. Purple Finch 2
- 68. House Finch 185
- 69. American Goldfinch 159
- 70. American Tree Sparrow 51
- 71. Dark-eyed Junco 423
- 72. White-throated Sparrow 92
- 73. Song Sparrow 31
- 74. Swamp Sparrow 2
- 75. Red-winged Blackbird 38
- 76. Brown-headed Cowbird 13
- 77. Common Grackle 2
- 78. Northern Cardinal 213

***Here are the participants from the 2024 Lakewood Circle Christmas Bird Count:***

Suzanne Aldrich, Judy Allen, Peg Anderson, Alison Ball, Ken and Lois Ballas, Buster Banish, Mary Bartos, Monika Bell, Diane Bjel, David Bowditch, Michelle Brosius, Lori Brumbaugh, Marti Burrows, Al Cadesky, Craig Caldwell, Alice Luddington-Cantor, Richard Cantor, Lee Cavano, Lenore Charnigo, Gay Christiansen-Dean, Tim Colborn, Dennis & Sharon Colburn, Sandy Cullers, Paula Deal, Jenny & Zak Dieringer, Jamie & Greg Emmert, Erin Enovitch, Victoria Feliciano, Maria & Rick Finchum, Katie Fleming, Ron Fleming, Jenni Foote-Harper, Sal Fragapane, Lou Gardella, Alisa & Becky Gerbec, Margaret Glenn, Dave Graskemper, Chuck Grossman, Sandra Hardy, Ann Heidenreich, Tom & Marie Herr, Jeff Herwick & Karen Sabo-Herwick, Linda Lee Horvath, Jeff Hoskin, Nancy Howell, Mary Lou Hura, Carolyn & Earl Jedlicka, Michele Kalapos, Rich & Karen Kassouf, Patty Kellner & Jim Heflich, Anna Kozlenko, Marian & Jeff Kraus, Elisabeth Kroepel, Joann Kubicki, Craig

Lanken, Fred Losi, Paula Lozano, Judy Malasky, Michelle Manzo, Dot Masterson, Jim McCarty, Jeff McManus, Liz McQuaid, Ben Meredyk, Jerry Miller, Carol Miske, Shaun Missig, Drina Nemes, Bill Ohlsen, Ciara & Rose Olive, Mike Pacek, Skylar, Tina & Jeremy Pasatta, Linda Paull, Myrna Pendery, Rayka Petkova, Chris Pierce, Al Rand, Mary Anne & Tom Romito, Jeremiah Roth, Melinda Seaver, Linda Sekura, Tom Sendry, Al Skierski, Judy Sklarek, Ryan Smylie, Kent Starrett, Sonya Steckler, Gary Stevens, Debra & Mark Sweeney, Laura & Jassen Tawil, Vicki Thomas-Ramirez, Russell Valentine, Bev Walborn, Matt Warchol, Nan Wilson, and Mark & Sherri Wincek.

**GOOD BIRDING IN 2025!**

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Howell, Christmas Bird Count Coordinator  
Lakewood Circle (OHLK)  
nancyhowell@wcaudubon.org  
January 15, 2025