

Christmas Bird Count 2011 Summary

by Tom Thomas

December 26, 2011 was the official count day. There were 100 participants, and on a day that started with an overcast sky, you could see that the sun was trying hard to break through, which it eventually did.

Temperatures ranged from +1°C to +6°C, with a mean temperature of +3°C. There was a stiff breeze blowing from the north, and streams and large bodies of water were ice-free. Overall, it was great day to be out counting birds.

Many reports indicated that there were fewer birds counted in their area this year, and in many cases this was true, but others saw a definite increase.

This was the year where we broke the record for the number of species counted. The old record was 104, and on count day we saw 105 species plus one recognizable form. You could argue when you see the totals, that an “Oregon” Junco is just a Dark-eyed Junco, and it is no longer considered a separate species, but it is a count species according to the historical record, and so we would still have broken the old record by one.

The official count total will stand at **105**. The current ten year average for individual species number is **100**.

The total number of birds counted was **77,877**, slightly higher than the current ten year average for total number of birds counted which is **72,560**.

It was also a year where we recorded three new species never before seen on the Hamilton C.B.C. - Franklin’s Gull, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Second ever count records included Little Gull and Wilson’s Warbler.

We had record high counts for Common Loon, American Wigeon, Northern Shoveler, Canvasback, and Lesser Black-backed Gull, and equaled the records for Eastern Bluebird, and Fox Sparrow.

Count Week Birds were: Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Killdeer, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Long-eared Owl and Ring-necked Pheasant.

There were many low individual species counts, and you could reason that regarding ‘puddle ducks’ and Mute Swans, that the reality of winter had not yet set in, so these species could be scattered around our outlying areas. There was also a high number of unidentified ‘duck species’ recorded, so that may account for the low numbers of Greater Scaup counted on the day. The low numbers for American Kestrels, woodpeckers, nuthatches, and sparrows, show a common theme echoed on many other southern Ontario bird count reports in 2011.

2011 Participants:

Barrie Boatman, Laurel Boatman, Helen Booker, Mary Booker, Peter Booker, Mike Boyd, John Brett, Hazel Broker, Carl Brouwer, Fran Bullock, Wayne Bullock, Albert Butwick, Evelyn Butwick, Ron Campeau, Sue Carson, Heather Cashin, Jerry Chapple, Stephen Cheesman, Michael Clark, Mark Cranford, Tim Cranford, Bill Crins, Tom Crooks, Jenny Darling, Sandy Darling, Phil Davis, Ewout DeGelder, Jan DeGelder, Edward Dinniwell, Graham Dinniwell, Robert Dinniwell, Rob Dobos, Dave Don, Bryan Drown, Barney Dutka, Helene Dutka, Cheryl Edgecombe, Andrew Enter, Brian Enter, Kathy Evan, Lois Evans, Russ Evans, Joanne Fleet, Christian Friis, Chris Gardiner, Denys Gardiner, Helga Gerhardt, John Glovel, Fran Hicks, Eric Holden, Lukian Husak, Zakhar Husak, Kyna Intini, Beth Jefferson, Mark Jennings, Jean Johnson, Graham Jones, Manfred Kolster, Ursula Kolster, Bill Lamond, Deborah Lindeman, Joyce Litster, Robert Maciver, Bruce Mackenzie, Stu Mackenzie, Arlene McCaw, Jim McCaw, Sheldon McGregor, Spencer McGregor, Kevin McLaughlin, Frank Morley, George Naylor, John Olmsted, Dennis Price, Bill Read, David Restivo, Orv Reynolds, Alf Senior, Caleb Scholtens, Peter Scholtens, George Sims, Joan Sims, Bill Smith, Robert Stamp, Chris Street, Mike Street, Neil Taylor, George Thomas, Tom Thomas, Herman van Barneveld, Phillip Waggett, Rob Waldhuber, Joan Wallace, Katie West, Angie Williams, Ken Williams, Ross Wood, Alan Wormington, Blair Youmans, Susan Youmans.

Counters in the Field	91
Number of hours feeder watching:	46.5
Number of hours owling:	8.75
Number of hours walking:	168.3
Number of hours driving:	59.65
Distance driven owling (km):	36.0
Distance driven daytime (km):	816.4
Distance walked owling (km):	3.25
Distance walked daytime (km):	200.0

The individual species count is as follows:
(Current average refers to average count over the last ten years. Record high counts are shown in bold.)

Hamilton CBC Dec 2011	2011	Highest recorded count 1954-2010	10 Year Current Average
Common Loon	9	7	3
Horned Grebe	1	9	-
Pied-billed Grebe	1	7	2
Red-necked Grebe	1	16	5
Double-crested Cormorant	17	74	43
Great Blue Heron	8	32	8
Black-crowned Night-Heron	2	10	4
Canada Goose	4,876	10,415	7,839
Brant	1	2	-
Trumpeter Swan	191	193	130
Mute Swan	38	138	93
Tundra Swan	6	207	17
Gadwall	25	278	67
American Wigeon	10	6	1
American Black Duck	153	1,170	423
Mallard	2,239	11,198	5,361
"Mallard x American Black Duck " hybrid	4	48	16
Northern Shoveler	179	134	53
Green-winged Teal	23	112	29
Canvasback	1,073	393	277
Redhead	13	367	31
Ring-necked Duck	25	205	88
Greater Scaup	3,591	17,556	7,975
Lesser Scaup	300	4,679	1,196
Surf Scoter	137	224	109
White-winged Scoter	474	1,077	566
Black Scoter	2	30	7
Long-tailed Duck	21,954	24,304	11,228
Bufflehead	479	925	549
Common Goldeneye	1,630	10,456	2,711
Hooded Merganser	53	70	65
Common	178	9,000	1,244

Merganser			
Red-breasted Merganser	252	589	263
Ruddy Duck	630	882	581
"Duck" species	8,000	10,001	2,906
Bald Eagle	4	9	5
Northern Harrier	1	15	2
Sharp-shinned Hawk	10	21	15
Cooper's Hawk	15	23	16
Northern Goshawk	1	4	1
"Accipiter" species	2	9	3
Red-tailed Hawk	109	186	151
Rough-legged Hawk	1	106	3
American Kestrel	8	50	19
Merlin	3	3	2
Peregrine Falcon	4	6	4
Wild Turkey	16	66	32
American Coot	106	167	108
Franklin's Gull	1	-	-
Little Gull	1	-	-
Ring-billed Gull	2,120	3,467	1,812
Herring Gull	1,671	12,600	1,685
Thayer's Gull	1	2	-
Iceland Gull	3	51	8
Lesser Black-backed Gull	4	3	1
Glaucous Gull	7	70	13
Great Black-backed Gull	36	433	92
"Gull" species	8	213	34
Rock Pigeon	841	5,140	2,223
Mourning Dove	657	2,180	1,377
Eastern Screech Owl	11	32	19
Great Horned Owl	5	45	7
Belted Kingfisher	7	13	7
Red-bellied Woodpecker	61	82	40
Downy Woodpecker	184	323	239
Hairy Woodpecker	60	126	78
Northern Flicker	7	52	10
Pileated Woodpecker	3	14	8
Northern Shrike	4	21	4
Blue Jay	257	527	394
American Crow	734	7,000	1,819
Common Raven	2	3	1
Horned Lark	18	217	26
Black-capped	1,444	2,228	1,832

Chickadee			
Red-breasted Nuthatch	21	98	45
White-breasted Nuthatch	165	286	229
Brown Creeper	14	97	23
Carolina Wren	44	52	32
Winter Wren	7	38	16
Golden-crowned Kinglet	20	213	44
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	1	-	-
Eastern Bluebird	52	52	26
Hermit Thrush	1	11	4
American Robin	806	1,587	659
Northern Mockingbird	26	44	26
European Starling	16,338	73,000	15,246
American Pipit	1	1	-
Cedar Waxwing	576	1,136	479
Yellow-rumped Warbler	5	8	2
Wilson's Warbler	1	1	-
American Tree Sparrow	258	2,640	695
Field Sparrow	2	53	1
Fox Sparrow	2	2	1
Song Sparrow	22	290	37
Swamp Sparrow	2	73	6
White-throated Sparrow	66	213	102
White-crowned Sparrow	1	52	14
Dark-eyed Junco	915	1,954	1,355
"Oregon" Junco	1	4	-
Snow Bunting	2	1,150	129
Northern Cardinal	429	672	597
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1	-	-
Red-winged Blackbird	1	68	5
Rusty Blackbird	13	22	1
Purple Finch	41	84	8
House Finch	530	1,669	542
Common Redpoll	2	890	48
Pine Siskin	14	800	44
American Goldfinch	832	1,358	893
House Sparrow	1,663	3,500	2,396
Individuals in year	77,877		