

Kingston, N. S. - Christmas Bird Count –2012

- Wayne Neily

Our 45th annual Xmas Bird Count (XBC) in 2012 was a record one in many ways and a highlight of the year for me. We had a record high number of observers (total and field), a record number of feeding stations observed, and so definitely our best coverage of the circle in the history of the count. The total number of species was also a record (72), surpassing the seemingly impossible 21-year old total of 68 set in 1991 despite the fact that none of them were new to the cumulative list for our count. See the items with asterisks below for more records. We cannot expect to do this well every year – weather as well as effort is always a factor – but as the 2013 season approaches, let's take inspiration from it, and ensure that we get the best coverage that we can.

Kingston, N. S., 44°59'N, 64°57'W (all points within a 24-km diameter, centre intersection of Bridge and Main Streets in Kingston, as described in 1969, to include Margaretsville, Dempsey Corners, Aylesford, Nicholsville, South Tremont, Nictaux Falls, and Middleton).

Conditions: – 22 December 2012, 06:45-17:30, 20:30-21:00, 22:00-22:30. Temperature +4 to 9° C. Wind E, 0-15 km / h. Snow 0-10 cm deep. Still water mostly open, moving water open. A.M overcast to partly cloudy; p.m., mostly cloudy.

Observer effort: 123* observers, 27* in field in 11 parties (daytime), and 96 at 65* feeders. Time and distance: 313.75 hours at feeding stations, 1.0 hour and 36.0* km owling; total field party-hours 87.0* (day), and party-km 924.5* (day) (19.0 hr. and 30.0 km on foot, and 68.0 hr.* and 894.5 km by car).

Birds observed: Canada Goose 69, American Black Duck 58, Mallard 123, Common Eider 26, Surf Scoter 19, White-winged Scoter 8, Long-tailed Duck 6, Red-breasted Merganser 13, Ring-necked Pheasant 19, Ruffed Grouse 8, Red-throated Loon 3, Common Loon 9, Horned Grebe 3, Red-necked Grebe **11***, **Northern Gannet 9*** (2nd record, RBS & RLB), **Turkey Vulture 1** (3rd record, CD & BJ), Bald Eagle 9a, 2i, **Northern Harrier 1** (6th record, DC *et al.*), Sharp-shinned Hawk 3, Northern Goshawk 1, Red-tailed Hawk 26, Purple Sandpiper 3 (L), Herring Gull 248, Great Black-backed Gull 10, **Black-legged Kittiwake 1** (6th record, RSt), **Thick-billed Murre 1** (2nd record, RSt), **Razorbill 5** (7th record, RSt), Alcids (sp.) 100+* (RSt), Rock Pigeon 351, Mourning Dove 632, Barred Owl 2, **Belted Kingfisher 3*** (5th record, 2 parties), **Red-bellied Woodpecker 1** (6th record, K&MB), Downy Woodpecker **70** (H), Hairy Woodpecker **73***, Northern (Y-s) Flicker 2, Pileated Woodpecker **15***, Northern Shrike 1, Canada (Grey) Jay 4, Blue Jay 516, American Crow **9126***, Common Raven **438***, Black-capped Chickadee **1203***, Boreal Chickadee 2, Red-breasted Nuthatch **91** (H), White-breasted Nuthatch **76***, Brown Creeper **14***, Golden-crowned Kinglet 22, American Robin 1 (L), **Northern Mockingbird 1** (5th record, TC), European Starling **3833***, Bohemian Waxwing 250, **Eastern Towhee 1** (3rd record, C&DT), American Tree Sparrow 8, Chipping Sparrow 8 (H), Song Sparrow 22, White-throated Sparrow 32, **White-crowned Sparrow 1** (2nd record, AO), Dark-eyed (S.-c.) Junco 539, sparrow (sp.) 12, Snow Bunting 200, Northern Cardinal **18***, Red-winged Blackbird 2, Common Grackle 43, Brown-headed Cowbird 112, Pine Grosbeak, 12, Purple Finch 9, Red Crossbill **31***, White-winged Crossbill 48, Common Redpoll 75, Pine Siskin 4, American Goldfinch 968, Evening Grosbeak 122, House Sparrow 90.

Total species 72*, total individuals **19887***.

Observed during **count week** but not on count day: Cedar Waxwing.

H = high count; * = record high total for the 45 years of this count; L = low count.

Observers (field): Brian & Mary Barkman, Ron Blackert, James Churchill, Lana Churchill, Ashley Colville, David Colville, Keegan Colville, John DeCoste, Claire Diggins, Michael Gemmell, Barbara & Patrick Giffin, **Sheila L. Hulford**, Brian Jones, Kevin Kornelsen, Lyndon Kornelsen, Viala Kornelsen, Frances Lourie, Kristin McCurdy, Gary Myers, Larry Neily, **Wayne Neily (compiler – 562 Messenger Rd., Tremont, R. R. # 6, Kingston, N. S. B0P 1R0 Neilyornis@hotmail.com)**, Daniel Penner, Twila Robar-DeCoste, Roger Short, Richard Stern;

(feeder stations): Spike & Carole Allen, Webster Andrews, John & Sandy Antoniuk, Karin & Manfred Baecker, Ron & Sharon Baker, Al & Gloria Blizzard, Bob & Karen Campbell, Kathy Chapman, Tony Chaulk, David & Heide Cogswell, John Collins, Cathy Crook, Kenneth Crowell, David & Edna Curry, Tom Cushing, Ella & Howard Dalton, Valerie Despres, Bea Deveau, David Diggins, Harold Elliott, Shirley Fahie, Bobby Featherstone, Joan Featherstone, Lloyd & Mary-Lou Graham, Cary Graves, **Carol & Leonard Gregory**, Mark

Hamilton, Lilli Hand, Arlene Healy, Doreen Healy, James Healy, Donna & Ron Hill, Patricia House, Sibella Hulford, Michael Inkpen, Ted Kajdas, Jack & Karen Keddy, Roseann & Russell Keddy, Don & Ruth Kelly, Cathou Larocque, Andrea & Garry Leeson, Judy MacKenzie, Pam MacLachlan, **Patricia MacMillan**, Myrna Maye, Jason McInnis, Ethel McLane, Weldon Morash, Sandy Morrison, Ruth Myers, Ann O'Donnell, Alton & Darlene Palmer, Daniel Patterson, Lillian Pellerin, Debbie Proctor-Scoville, Noreen Reagh, Ike Reid, Wendy Rodda, Ron Rogerson, Kay & Shirley Sanford, Tony Scoville, Howard Selig, Helen Sharp, Herb & Judy Snell, Trish Stoelting, Ralph Swinamer, Holly Theriault, Barb Thompson, Charles & Doris Tye, Judy & Malcolm Uhlman, Margaret Waldner, Margot Walker, Audrey Wellwood, Jane White, Robert Wolfe, Ann Young. [Feeder Observer Coordinators bold-faced].

Habitat analysis has not been requested by Audubon since the 1970s, but we have long wanted an updated one, and ours has been revised in 2012 by David Colville of the Applied Geomatics Research Group to: (Acadian) Forest 55%, arable land, shrubs and early regeneration areas, 27%, towns ('urban') and roads 10%, wetlands 4%, sand and gravel ('bare') 1%, salt water 2.5%, fresh water 0.5%. A more detailed version of this re-analysis, including map as done by David Colville and a comparison to the 1971 analysis, will be provided soon to field observers (and others on request).

Dedicated to two of our long-time field observers who passed away during 2012: **Bill Caudle**, a Nova Scotia Bird Society Past President who led the party covering our Middleton zone for many years, and **Ed Dodd**, who, with his wife Joyce, provided the coverage for our Millville zone through 2011.