

Kingston, N. S. - Christmas Bird Count –2013

- Wayne Neily

Our 46th annual Xmas Bird Count (XBC) in 2013 was a good one in many ways but may have seemed like a letdown after last year's record one. We had a good number of observers, but no effort records, and so slightly less coverage than last year. The weather allowed us a day between storms, but the bay was rough, winter finches were almost absent, many small roads blocked by snow, and these factors and the slight coverage drop reduced the total number of species to a more average 58. Again, none of them were new to the cumulative list for our count, which remains at 120. See the items with asterisks below for new records. These are new highs for half-hardy species that are benefiting from the climate change (despite this winter's snow and cold) and adapting to the presence of feeders provided by humans. The near-doubling of the record for pheasants probably reflects not only last year's mild winter, but also a declining interest in hunting game birds. The rarest bird, a White-crowned Sparrow was at Frank Hawkins' Wilmot area feeders, where in 1981 they had our count's only Harris' Sparrow!

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: – 21 December 2013, 06:30-17:30, 20:30-21:00. Temperature 0° to 5° C. Wind NE, 0-5 km / h. Snow 20-40 cm deep. Still water partly frozen, moving water open. A.M. & p.m. Mainly overcast, foggy, light rain.

Observer effort: 117 observers, 23 in field in 10-11 parties (daytime), and 94 at 57 feeders. Time and distance: 287.0 hours at feeding stations, 2.5 hours and 7.0 km owling; total field party-hours 77.5 (day), and party-km 774.0 (day) (15.75 hr. and 18.0 km on foot, and 61.75 hr. And 756.0 km by car).

Birds observed: Canada Goose 87, American Black Duck 156, Mallard **406***, Common Eider 17, Surf Scoter 1, White-winged Scoter 5, Long-tailed Duck 3, Common Merganser 12, Red-breasted Merganser 11, Ring-necked Pheasant **119***, Ruffed Grouse 8, Common Loon 10, Horned Grebe 1, Bald Eagle **14*** (12a, 2i), Sharp-shinned Hawk 5, Red-tailed Hawk 28, Rough-legged Hawk 1, *Buteo* sp. 1, Herring Gull 67, Great Black-backed Gull 1, *Larus* sp. 2, Alcid (sp.) 1, Rock Pigeon 457, Mourning Dove **1251***, Downy Woodpecker **68** (H), Hairy Woodpecker **71** (H), Northern (Y-s) Flicker **7** (H), Pileated Woodpecker 9, Northern Shrike 1, Blue Jay **743***, American Crow 7085, Common Raven 286, Horned Lark 120, Black-capped Chickadee 1112, Red-breasted Nuthatch 39, White-breasted Nuthatch 66, Brown Creeper 4, Golden-crowned Kinglet 12, American Robin 99, European Starling 3825 (H), Cedar Waxwing 29, **Pine Warbler 1** (6rd record, AY), American Tree Sparrow 6, Chipping Sparrow 1, **Savannah Sparrow 1** (7th record, DPa), Song Sparrow **48***, White-throated Sparrow 33, **White-crowned Sparrow 1** (3rd record, MG, JR), Dark-eyed (S.-c.) Junco 464, Snow Bunting 104, Northern Cardinal **27***, Red-winged Blackbird 5, Common Grackle 1, Brown-headed Cowbird 139, Pine Grosbeak 7, Purple Finch 2, Pine Siskin 2, American Goldfinch **1437***, Evening Grosbeak 112, House Sparrow 124.

Total species 58, total individuals 18755.

Observed during **count week** but not on count day: **Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier**, Barred Owl.

H = high count; * = record high total for the 46 years of this count; L = low count.

Observers (field): Brian & Mary Barkman, David Colville, Keegan Colville, Claire Diggins, Dan Diggins, Michael Gemmell, Barbara & Patrick Giffin, **Shirley Harris, Sheila L. Hulford**, Brian Jones, Kevin Kornelsen, Lyndon Kornelsen, Kristin McCurdy, Jonathan Muers, Larry Neily, **Wayne Neily (compiler – 562 Messenger Rd., Tremont, R. R. # 6, Kingston, N. S. B0P 1R0 Neilyvornis@hotmail.com)**, Daniel Penner, Twila Robar-DeCoste, Jason Rogers, Roger Short, Richard Stern;

(feeder stations): Spike & Carole Allen, John & Sandy Antoniuk, Ron & Sharon Baker, Al & Gloria Blizzard, Bob & Karen Campbell, Kathy Chapman, Tony Chaulk, David & Heide Cogswell, John Collins, Cathy Crook, Kenneth Crowell, Tom & Elizabeth Cushing, Ella & Howard Dalton, Valerie & Paul Despres, Bea Deveau, David Diggins, Harold & Donna Elliott, Shirley Fahie, Bobby Featherstone, Joan Featherstone, Lloyd & Mary-Lou Graham, Mark Hamilton, Lilli Hand, Donna & Ron Hill, Patricia House, Marilyn Hudgins, Sibella Hulford, Kelly & Sharon Hutton, Michael Inkpen, Ted Kajdas, Jack Keddy, Russell & Roseann Keddy, Don & Ruth Kelly, Cathou Larocque, Andrea Leeson, Dave & Tonya Ludlow, Velma MacDearmid, Judy & Malcolm MacKenzie,

Patricia MacMillan, Myrna Maye, Jason McInnis, Colleen & Jason McKinnon, Ethel McLane, Greg Miller, Sandy Morrison, Jacquie Muers, Darlene Palmer, John & Susan Paull, Gerry & Lillian Pellerin, Noreen Reagh, Ike & Janet Reid, Mable Robar, Wendy Rodda, Ron Rogerson, Kay & Shirley Sanford, Howard Selig, Helen Sharp, Ralph & Marylyn Swinamer, Charles & Doris Tye, Judy & Malcolm Uhlman, Chris Waldner, Jake Waldner, Margaret Waldner, Margot & Mel Walker, Mary Lou Ward, Audrey Wellwood, Robert Wolfe, Ann Young. [Feeder Observer Co-ordinators 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 to field observers and others on request.

Prepared 24 January 2014

Last revised 12 February 2014