

57th Kingston Christmas Bird Count

The Kingston, NS Christmas Bird Count was held on December 23, 2024. The weather was partly sunny with mild NW winds and around -8 C most of the day. Snow on the 21st required changing the date on short notice to the 23rd. Congratulations to everyone who took part, setting new records for species on both count day and count week.

Thanks again this year to both Sheila Hulford (who continues to organize and collect results from feeder operators) and Lyall Bouchard (who once again organized our field parties). Great work again this year! Especially given the last-minute date changes. Several longtime field participants were unavailable this year, including leaders for Zones 4 and 6. Lyall juggled observers, putting Pat Kelly in Zone 6 and Larry Neily and Joe Johnson in Zone 4, while he assigned new-to-the-count, out-of-town birders Logan Lalonde to Zone 2 and Jake Walker to Zone 1. Zone 7 was covered, in part, by birders from adjacent zones 3 and 8. All told, he fielded 16 birders in 12 parties. Sheila was able to organize 52 feeder watchers at 38 feeders, collect the results and get them to me in a timely fashion. Thanks to Lyall and Sheila, my job as compiler is much easier. Altogether, 68 people participated on Count Day, one in a dual role, field and feeders.

We continue to use the Audubon and eBird method for reporting distance. The National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count Compiler's Manual, found at the following web address: (<https://nationalaudubon.app.box.com/s/h5h73acc0ix86vap55hf8miici88bniw>) says "If a route is an out-and-back trail or roadway, only the one-way distance is taken, but the entire time spent should be reported." That is definitive and should end any resistance to change. It is also the methodology used by eBird, which is, unfortunately, not followed by all eBirders either.

There is a continuing effort to encourage field parties to use eBird Trip Reports or checklists. We had 6 plus zones do it this year, while 4 parties still used paper reports. Below is a list of the Trip Reports and checklists and links to them, if anyone wishes to look at them. We have a few bugs to iron out, like the conflict between individual and group numbers, but it looks like we are going to continue using this tool. A temporary online compiling tool to allow participants to follow the totals as they are submitted was developed by Lyall Bouchard in Google Docs and used again this year. You may access this file at: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1rtyl98sA8tViNKg5tfEjrCZtYJXzbJzuMHgzjxcQlg4/edit?usp=sharing_eip&ts=676ad844.

Field Party Reports

Zone 1	Bouchard - https://ebird.org/tripreport/308370 Walker - https://ebird.org/tripreport/309524
Zone 2	Lalonde - https://ebird.org/checklist/S206353986 https://ebird.org/checklist/S206353452 https://ebird.org/checklist/S206353581 https://ebird.org/checklist/S206354389
Zone 3	Robar-DeCoste - paper form
Zone 4	Neily - https://ebird.org/tripreport/183999
Zone 5	Colville - https://ebird.org/tripreport/308676?view=checklists
Zone 6	Kelly - https://ebird.org/checklist/S206468715 Kelly - paper form Bouchard - https://ebird.org/checklist/S206344624
Zone 7	Robar-DeCoste - paper form Hulford - paper form
Zone 8	Hulford - paper form
Zone 9	Bates - https://ebird.org/tripreport/308641?view=checklists
Zone 10	Foote - https://ebird.org/tripreport/311448



A new Count Day species for the Kingston CBC.

One of 5 Eastern Bluebirds at Middleton, in Zone 4. Photo taken by Larry Neily.

We had 79 species on count day, almost 17 species above the latest ten-year average and 7 species higher than our previous best. With 1 additional Count Week species the Total Species was 80, nearly 12 above the 10-year average and 2 above the previous best. The total number of individuals was 10719, only slightly below the 10-year average, but more than 3,400 above last year's meager total. Most abundant species were European Starling (3091), Dark-eyed Junco (1020), Canada Goose (864), Blue Jay (808), Mourning Dove (728), Black-capped Chickadee (700), American Goldfinch (516) and American Crow (479). Of the 39 species seen on 90% or more of the last 10 counts, all were seen except for Green-winged Teal. Among the less common species missed, Northern Goshawk and Common Redpoll were the only ones that we have had 50% or more of the time in the past decade. Only one species was seen in the Count Week but not on Count Day: an American Pipit which was the first ever on the count.



An American Pipit found on open farmland around Clairmont Road and Brooklyn Street NE of Kingston. Photos by Andrew Bates taken Dec. 26, 2024.

We had one new Count Day species (Eastern Bluebird), while we lost one due to Common Redpoll & Hoary Redpoll now being classified as a single species called Redpoll, leaving our cumulative Count Day total at 132. There was 1 new Count Week species, the American Pipit found by Andrew Bates on the open farmland around Clairmont Road and Middle Road NE of Kingston in Zone 6. Because our new count day species was previously on the Count Week only list, and the Redpolls having been lumped; our cumulative total including Count Week species is now 140. We had our 2nd Eastern Phoebe (a fairly hardy flycatcher being seen more often in recent winters, seen again at the Middleton sewage lagoons); our 2nd Hermit Thrush (seen by the Giffen's in their Kingston backyard); our 3rd year with Northern Pintail

(Middleton sewage lagoons); our 3rd year with Black Guillemot (two at Margaretsville and four at Kirk Brook near Morden); our 3rd record of Common Murre (a single at Margaretsville); our 3rd year with Cooper's Hawk (there were actually 3 of this resident species that's getting more common in our area); and two species recorded for the 4th time (Ruby-crowned Kinglet & Swamp Sparrow}. There were new record highs for 6 species: Black Guillemot (6, previously one); Cooper's Hawk (3, was 1); Blue Jay (808, was 756); Dark-eyed Junco (1020, was 935); Song Sparrow (59, was 48); and Northern Cardinal (103, was 78). And seven species were tied for existing highs: Bufflehead, Cooper's Hawk, Northern Harrier, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Eastern Phoebe, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Hermit Thrush. Another high count, though not a record, was from White-breasted Nuthatch (105). Low counts were recorded for American Black Duck (14) and Red-breasted Nuthatch (24).

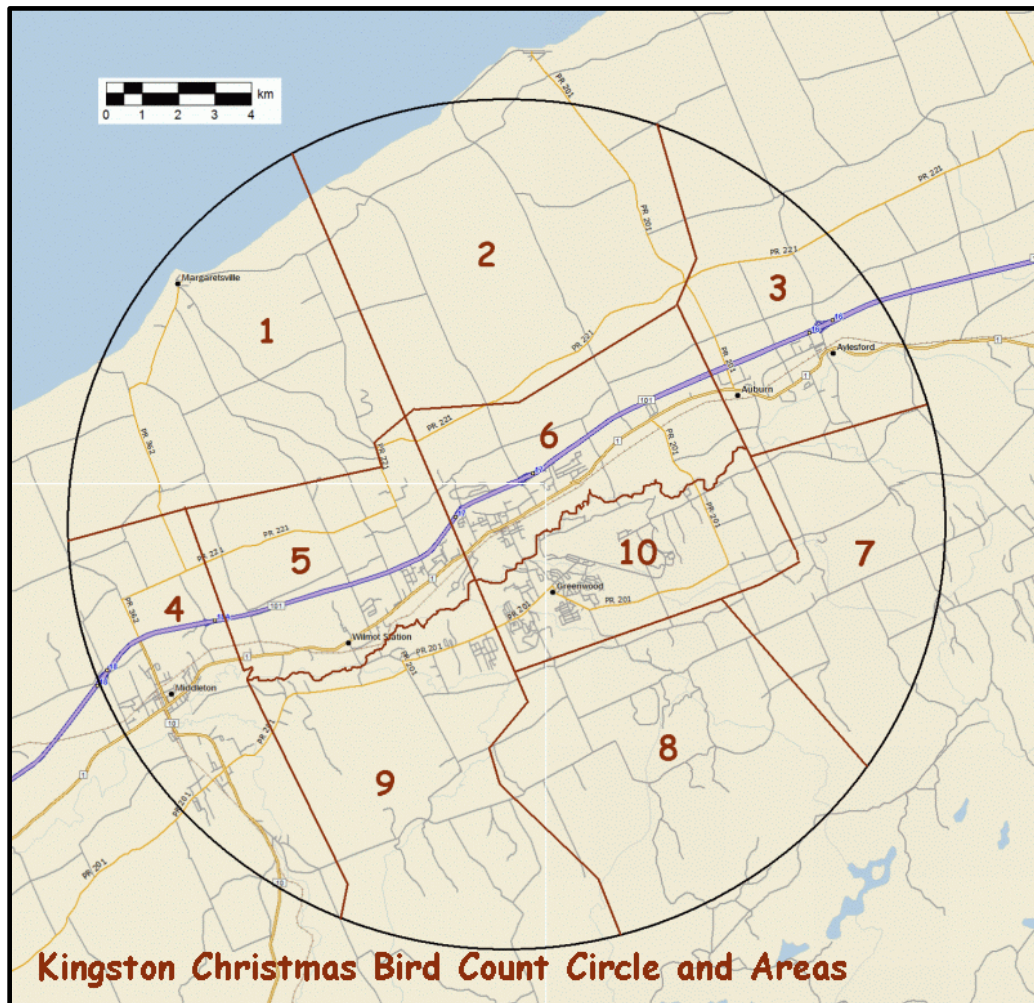
Some uncommon species found were Northern Pintail, Black Guillemot, Common Murre, Cooper's Hawk, Eastern Phoebe, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush and Swamp Sparrow. Anyone who enjoys data tables can get their fill at [Kingston CBC Results 1968 to 2024](#). There you will find the field/feeder/total compilation table from December's count, and you can also find a complete table of the count's results from its inception in 1968 to the present.

A total of 10,719 individuals of 79 species were seen on count day. Canada Goose 864, Mallard 546, American Black Duck 14 (low), Northern Pintail 1 (3rd record), Common Eider 11, Harlequin Duck 1, Surf Scoter 1, White-winged Scoter 3, Black Scoter 1, Long-tailed Duck 4, Bufflehead 3 (tied high count), Hooded Merganser 2, Common Merganser 3, Red-breasted Merganser 7, duck sp. 80, Ruffed Grouse 5, Ring-necked Pheasant 15, Rock Pigeon 395, Mourning Dove 728, Black Guillemot 6 (new high count, 3rd record), Razorbill 5, Common Murre 1 (3rd record), Black-legged Kittiwake 3, Ring-billed Gull 1, American Herring Gull 80, Great Black-backed Gull 3, Horned Grebe 1, Red-necked Grebe 2, Red-throated Loon 4, Common Loon 8, Sharp-shinned Hawk 5, Cooper's Hawk 3 (new high, 3rd record), Northern Harrier 2 (tied high), Bald Eagle 20, Red-tailed Hawk 29, Rough-legged Hawk 1, accipiter sp. 1, Barred Owl 3, Red-bellied Woodpecker 3 (tied high), Downy Woodpecker 79, Hairy Woodpecker 69, Pileated Woodpecker 3, Northern Flicker 2, woodpecker sp. 5, Merlin 1, Eastern Phoebe 1 (tied high, 2nd record), Blue Jay 808 (new high), American Crow 479, Common Raven 131, Black-capped Chickadee 700, Horned Lark 13, Ruby-crowned Kinglet 1 (tied high, 4th record), Golden-crowned Kinglet 44, White-breasted Nuthatch 105 (high), Red-breasted Nuthatch 24 (low), Brown Creeper 12, European Starling 3,091, Eastern Bluebird 5 (new count day species), Hermit Thrush 1 (tied high, 2nd record), American Robin 1, Cedar Waxwing 1, House Sparrow 74, American Pipit CW (new to count), Evening Grosbeak 35, Pine Grosbeak 7, Purple Finch 10, White-winged Crossbill 1, Pine Siskin 2, American Goldfinch 516, Snow Bunting 350, Chipping Sparrow 11, American Tree Sparrow 7, Dark-eyed Junco 1020 (new high), White-throated Sparrow 45, Savannah Sparrow 1, Song Sparrow 59 (new high), Swamp Sparrow 1 (4th record), sparrow sp. 2, Baltimore Oriole 1, Red-winged Blackbird 20, Brown-headed Cowbird 9, Common Grackle 3, Pine Warbler 1, Northern Cardinal 103 (new high).

Field Party Participants: Andrew Bates, Andrew Baumier, Lyall Bouchard, Annette Colville, David Colville, Kim Foote, Sarah Foote, Sheila Hulford, Joseph Johnson, Patrick Kelly, Logan Lalonde, Ken MacIntosh, Larry Neily (compiler), Twila Robar-DeCoste, Alex Sanford and Jake Walker.

Feeder Watchers: John Antoniuk, Leona Baker, Ron Baker, Sharon Baker, Brenda Berube, Phill Berube, Karen Campbell, Robert Campbell, Tony Chaulk, Cathy Crook, John DeCoste, Gordon Derry, Linda Derry, Paul Despres, Valerie Despres, Sherry-Anne Deveau, Claire Diggins, David Diggins, Harold Elliott, Anita Frittenburg, Barbara Giffin, Patrick Giffin, Richard Giles, Shirley Giles, Doris Glavine, Leo Glavine, Carol Gregory, Len Gregory, Janet Hatt, Arlene Healy, Donna Hill, Marilyn Hudgins, Sheila Hulford, Sibella Hulford, Ted Kajdas, Russell Keddy, Amy Klein, Cathou Larocque, Andrea Leeson, Patty MacDonald, John MacEachern, Darrell Messom, Allen Morris, Vivian Morris, Noreen Reagh, Wendy Rodda, Howard Selig, Judy Uhlman, Mac Uhlman, Margaret Waldner, Mel Waldner, Margaret Weeks and Ann Young.

Larry Neily, Compiler, Lawrencetown, NS February 2025



Approximate location of Kingston CBC Zones – Note: The circle is centred about 300 m too far south.