

## RESULTS OF THE 1978 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

### IN EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

by Robert H. Stymeist, Brookline

A total of 172 species were recorded on 18 counts held during December 16-January 1 inclusive in eastern Massachusetts. This was augmented by three additional races: Blue Goose, Ipswich Sparrow, and Oregon Junco. A Harris' Sparrow at Westport, Massachusetts, brings the total to 176 species with additional races. Highlights include Sooty Shearwater, Whistling Swan, Blue-winged Teal, Red-shouldered Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Sora Rail, Long-billed Dowitcher, a jaeger (species), a skua (species), Lesser Black-backed Gull, Common Murre, Common Puffin, Western Kingbird, Bohemian Waxwing, Solitary Vireo, and Harris' Sparrow.

For those unfamiliar with Christmas Bird Counts, they are a census of wintering bird species taken within a defined area--a circle 15 miles in diameter. This was the 79th annual run. In 1977-78, a total of 609 species, plus 23 infraspecific forms were accepted; this represents 120,912,723 individual birds!

The following tables represent the results of 18 eastern Massachusetts counts. They have not been edited for questionable species, of which there are some; we will leave that up to the National Audubon Society's editor.

Trends of wintering bird populations can be determined by the yearly CBC data. This year the absence of Blue Jays was most apparent. At Concord, normally the location of the nation's high concentration of Blue Jays, reported a mere 281 as compared with 1874 the year before. Other normally common species such as Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Tree Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco and White-throated Sparrow were also way down. On the other side of the coin, Northern Shrikes totaled 43 this year, and other increases were noted with raptor species. There was no winter finch invasion compared with 1977, though all were reported.

The complete results of the 1978-79 Christmas Bird Counts can be obtained for \$4.50 from the National Audubon Society, 950 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10022.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Athol</u>	<u>Buz. Bay</u>	<u>C. Ann</u>	<u>C. Cod</u>	<u>Concord</u>	<u>G. Bos.</u>	<u>M. V.</u>
Common Loon	1	42	39	30		3	67
Red-throated Loon			2	11		1	1
Red-necked Grebe		6	1	2			1
Horned Grebe	5	583	21	8		6	22
Pied-billed Grebe		33		33	1	1	6
SOOTY SHEARWATER				1			
Gannet			39	8000			1
Great Cormorant		157	231	365		123	27
Double-crested Cormorant		1		6			
Great Blue Heron		34	6	38		4	21
Green Heron							
Black-crowned Night Heron		8		4			2
American Bittern		1		2			
Mute Swan		40	2				118
WHISTLING SWAN							
Canada Goose		1022	511	803	985	117	620
Brant		47		1517		2	
Snow Goose							
"Blue Goose"							
Mallard	6	308	473	353	594	1779	185
Black Duck	42	1092	2939	3214	173	2004	460
Gadwall		3	13			2	13
Pintail		2	2	3		1	
Green-winged Teal				7	3	1	4
Blue-winged Teal							1
American Wigeon		94		8		53	29
Northern Shoveler			1				
Wood Duck		2				3	3
Redhead		30		8			1
Ring-necked Duck		88		82	2	1	
Canvasback		194		31		6	59
Greater Scaup		5584		10		4696	1
Lesser Scaup		574		18		35	
Common Goldeneye	2	1839	503	397	1	649	405
Barrow's Goldeneye		1	1			1	
Bufflehead		2490	313	1335		482	295
Oldsquaw		998	24	105		7	19
Harlequin Duck				11			
Common Eider		1312	864	6242		5029	4439
King Eider				1		1	
White-winged Scoter		682	245	180		67	1918
Surf Scoter		309	2	27			2
Black Scoter		127	63	360			170
Ruddy Duck		1		37			
Hooded Merganser	5	229	2	9	4	30	11
Common Merganser	19	67		58		26	102
Red-breasted Merganser	6	1774	312	274		623	1831
Goshawk				1	2		
Sharp-shinned Hawk		5	2	12	2	1	
Cooper's Hawk					3		1
Red-tailed Hawk	4	2	5	9	38	30	24
RED-SHOULDERED HAWK							
Rough-legged Hawk					3	3	3
Bald Eagle	2			1			

Sp.	Marsh.	Millis	Nant.	N. B.	Newbpt.	Plym.	Quin.	Taun.	Tuck.	Wilm.	Worc.
CL	9		355	5	27	31	2		14		2
R-tL	4		375		2	4			4		
R-nG	6		94		1	10			5		
HG	6		101	20	36	13	55		4		7
P-bG		2	34	1		14		1	1		1
SS											
G			83		2	1					
GC	5		55	32	5	22	350	1	11		
D-cC			1	1	1						
GBH	20	1	55	6	2	4	5				
GH									1		1
B-cNH			10				5		12		
AB											
MS			81	49	2	45			17		
WS					1						
CG	907	378	817	1483	1925	378	85	124	70	2	388
B	2405		31	4	160	315	1182		44		
SG					4						
"BG"			3								
M	133	627	283	180	64	518	447	138		220	450
BD	1822	230	510	315	3495	1522	1558	260	101	25	106
G		4	16		19	13	4				
P			3		43	7	2		2		
G-wT			82	5		2	3				1
B-wT							1				
AW			272	4	5	20	23		48		
NS			1	1	1						2
WD		1	3				2				1
R			29	2					90		
R-nD		2	40			23	2				
C			240		1	1	8	408	12		
GS	21		1924	1820	8	8	1792	3			
LS			452	15			1				
CG	211		3117	295	729	219	320	76	330	6	15
BG	1		4		3		1	1			
B	176	1	1067	439	508	222	1394	12	50		
O	39		24267	30	46	25	9		3215		
HD			1								
CE	9027		18585		15	5867	3432		4678		
KE			1				1				
W-wS	352		1547	224	32	146	258		126		
SS			147	21		16			2		
BS	81		85	7		6	1		127		
RD		1	4								
HM		1	3	6		16	13	87			1
CM	12	20	8	2	46	264	21	15	10	7	39
R-bM	205		2711	80	91	729	1381		330		
G		1			1						2
S-sH	2	4	9		3	4					3
CH											
R-tH	6	20	31	6	19	11	11	9	2	8	16
R-sH		1									
R-lH	4	1	13		3	3	1	2	2		
BE			2								

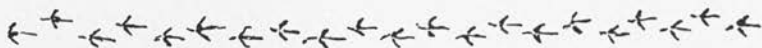
Species	Athol	Buz. Bay	C. Ann	C. Cod	Concord	G. Bos.	M. V.
Marsh Hawk		3		23		1	13
PEREGRINE FALCON				1			
Merlin		1		4		1	
American Kestrel		10	10	26	13	18	11
Ruffed Grouse	2	5	1		29		
Bobwhite		158		29			20
Ring-necked Pheasant	3	5	15		104	128	11
Virginia Rail		1		5	2		
SORA					1		
Common Gallinule							1
American Coot		22	4	74		35	18
Killdeer		1					3
Black-bellied Plover				47		4	4
Ruddy Turnstone			3				
American Woodcock				1			1
Common Snipe		10	3	6		2	3
Greater Yellowlegs		1		1			
Lesser Yellowlegs							
Purple Sandpiper			170			1	4
Dunlin			50	2215		197	5
LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER							
Sanderling		42		750		100	45
Red Phalarope							
JAEGER, sp.						1	
SKUA, sp.				1			
Glaucous Gull							
Iceland Gull			10	1	1	3	
Great Black-backed Gull		263	11840	6073	86	914	140
LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL							
Herring Gull	29	3307	20546	15430	670	10001	1630
Ring-billed Gull	2	311	105	591	12	1112	30
Black-headed Gull		1		1		3	
Laughing Gull				2			1
Bonaparte's Gull		440	656	101		36	151
Little Gull							
Black-legged Kittiwake			3	9000			
Razorbill				6			
COMMON MURRE							
Black Guillemot		1	3				
COMMON PUFFIN				2			
Rock Dove	207	460	223	50	1129	3415	53
Mourning Dove	88	478	235	206	929	153	93
Barn Owl							3
Screech Owl		3	1		24	11	6
Great Horned Owl		1		1	7	3	
Snowy Owl							
Barred Owl	1						
Long-eared Owl						1	
Short-eared Owl					1	3	5
Saw-whet Owl							
Belted Kingfisher	1	36	8	23	3	6	9
Common Flicker		35	3	45	3	7	25
Pileated Woodpecker	2				3		
Red-headed Woodpecker					2		

<u>Sp.</u>	<u>Marsh.</u>	<u>Millis</u>	<u>Nant.</u>	<u>N. B.</u>	<u>Newbpt.</u>	<u>Plym.</u>	<u>Quin.</u>	<u>Taun.</u>	<u>Tuok.</u>	<u>Wilm.</u>	<u>Worc.</u>
MH			40	3	1	2			9		
PF					1						
M			3			1					
AK	15	17	16	16	15	14	13	21	1	5	7
RG	1	11		1	9	29	6	5		1	9
B		23	16	4		28	2	53			
R-nP	1	17	63	8	15	1	7	2		13	17
VR	3		7			3					
S											
CG			1								
AC			88	28		62	12	32			
K	1		1	1	1	5		2			
B-bP	9		15			1					
RT			1				11				
AW						1					
CS	2		3		14	4	1	12	1	4	
GY							1				
LY				2							
PS			60			1					
D	237		40	49	16	84	144				
L-bD					2						
S	25		479	4		85	21		1		
RP			6								
J, sp.											
S, sp.											
GG					2						
IG			30		3		1				
GB-bG	335	153	1884	71	415	640	920	81	232	89	18
LB-bG			2								
HG	8355	2139	8770	2078	6265	7364	16296	1682	488	4513	1184
R-bG	27	6	25	182	67	434	779	5	8	5	17
B-hG			2				2				
LG											
BG			1406	231	169	54	192		1620		
LG					3						
B-LK	1		451				30		9		
R			12								
CM			1								
BG			4		2						
CP											
RD	334	468	114	496	435	222	411	218		1069	441
MD	115	135	339	492	231	221	71	407		691	331
BO			1								
SO	2	6			24	5	2	1			1
GHO	1	3			4	3	4	2		1	1
SO					8						
BO					1			1			
L-eO			1					2			
S-eO	4		5				2		6		
S-wO		1	1								
BK	5	4	4	5	1	7	6	1			5
CF	18	1	88	9	3	8	3	4	16	12	1
PW		2									
R-hW											

<u>Species</u>	<u>Athol</u>	<u>Buz. Bay</u>	<u>C. Ann</u>	<u>C. Cod</u>	<u>Concord</u>	<u>G. Bos.</u>	<u>M. V.</u>
Hairy Woodpecker	19	3	2	3	100	9	5
Downy Woodpecker	31	48	29	19	260	88	17
WESTERN KINGBIRD		1					
Horned Lark		54	56	83	28	15	25
Blue Jay	236	254	76	109	281	284	117
Common Crow	27	446	539	312	1357	1017	196
Fish Crow					2		
Black-capped Chickadee	484	806	269	509	2070	549	174
Tufted Titmouse	33	104	52	11	378	119	1
White-breasted Nuthatch	40	32	35	18	288	74	27
Red-breasted Nuthatch	22	6	1	1	8	3	2
Brown Creeper	3	6	3	4	13	13	8
Winter Wren		1		1		1	1
Carolina Wren		12		1			7
Long-billed Marsh Wren				4			
Mockingbird	3	129	40	72	171	76	20
Gray Catbird		8		2			1
Brown Thrasher							
American Robin	1	230	9	438	18	115	36
Hermit Thrush		8		1			
Eastern Bluebird				10			
Golden-crowned Kinglet	4	43		12	8	2	2
RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET		1	1				
BOHEMIAN WAXWING					2		
Cedar Waxwing		14		56	175	35	
Northern Shrike	2	2	2	2	10	5	2
Starling	687	22251	2099	1047	6787	103000	2006
SOLITARY VIREO		1					
Orange-crowned Warbler		2					
Yellow-rumped Warbler		551	39	397		2	162
Pine Warbler		1		1			
Palm Warbler		8		7			
Common Yellowthroat		1		1	1		
Yellow-breasted Chat		3		2			
House Sparrow	267	811	417	307	1535	749	78
Eastern Meadowlark		3		21		1	3
Red-winged Blackbird		2			3	14	
Northern Oriole		2	2	3		1	
Rusty Blackbird					9		
Common Grackle		4	2	1	11	9	1
Brown-headed Cowbird	3	17			3	28	
Cardinal	22	224	39	121	193	105	42
Evening Grosbeak	828	100	79	113	600	165	55
Purple Finch	12	13	5		85	3	2
House Finch	12	561	142	221	33	228	46
Pine Grosbeak	17			30			
Common Redpoll						8	
Pine Siskin			18	25		110	2
American Goldfinch	92	116	84	169	766	152	40
Red Crossbill						3	
White-winged Crossbill							1
Rufous-sided Towhee		16	6	3		2	5
Savannah Sparrow		5	2	13		6	
"Ipswich Sparrow"						1	

<u>Sp.</u>	<u>Marsh.</u>	<u>Millis</u>	<u>Nant.</u>	<u>N. B.</u>	<u>Newbpt.</u>	<u>Plym.</u>	<u>Quin.</u>	<u>Taun.</u>	<u>Tuck.</u>	<u>Wilm.</u>	<u>Worc.</u>
HW	4	19	2	7	23		2	12		96	10
DW	19	56	5	10	47	21	35	52	1	193	33
WK											
HL	21		55	71	62	10	27	2			7
BJ	43	96	76	82	242	249	44	108	12	682	94
CC	33	1011	418	158	427	187	206	411	20	438	236
FC		52									
B-cC	226	715	230	153	473	682	241	433	28	1245	474
TT	33	128		54	39	39	66	165		490	46
W-bN	9	66	2	23	63	24	26	61		207	52
R-bN	2	2	35		3	14	2	3	1	17	8
BC	1	10		2	21		2	2		10	3
WW		1			1	3	1				
CW				8				1			
L-bMW			5		2						
M	48	46	22	18	36	33	43	32	1	55	21
GC		1	6			1				3	
BT						2	1		1		
AR	7	2	306	44	57	80	6	26	2	3	1
HT	1		2			1	3				
EB											
G-cK	1	8	36	6	6	59		6			4
R-cK						5	1	1			
EW											
CW		48	32	37	53	95	4	48			12
NS	3	2			5	4	1		1	2	
S	1198	2595	9996	3885	6674	649	110000	8800	26	1930	8902
SV											
O-cW											
Y-rW	37		2983	72	21	481	26	81	72		
PW											
PW	1		60		1	1					
CY	1		2		1				1		
Y-bC			1								
HS	581	375	228	621	348	111	238	365		1359	292
EM	36		18	6	2			47	24		
R-wB			41	5	2			3		8	
NO											
RB	1										
CG		7	1		3			1		127	
B-hC		5	1	30			27	1		26	
C	32	53	38	55	18	41	29	66		141	18
EG	24	215	97	19	245	241	2	557	2	191	306
PF		22		29	8	5	8	41		74	2
HF	8	21	69	87	5	78	90	38		45	54
PG		1		1					1		
CR										1	
PS		8						12		65	
AG	245	217	68	67	162	156	43	438	1	697	54
RC							12				
W-wC											
R-sT	1		6	7		3	1	2			
SS	5		20		1	4	1	14	12		
"IS"			3			3					

<u>Species</u>	<u>Athol</u>	<u>Buz. Bay</u>	<u>C. Ann</u>	<u>C. Cod</u>	<u>Concord</u>	<u>G. Bos.</u>	<u>M. V.</u>
Sharp-tailed Sparrow				2			
Dark-eyed Junco	49	148	45	17	374	232	31
"Oregon Junco"							
Tree Sparrow	49	44	78	11	608	121	14
Chipping Sparrow		13					
Field Sparrow	1	70		32	16	10	2
White-crowned Sparrow		1			1	1	
White-throated Sparrow	5	275	25	121	66	67	32
Fox Sparrow		2		1		2	
Swamp Sparrow		28		17	17	3	2
Song Sparrow	1	346	21	143	127	105	46
Lapland Longspur			3	250		38	
Snow Bunting		13	44	281		4	27
Total # of species	46	113	79	119	67	101+1	96



#### Letter To The Editor

I was fascinated to read at least one observer's account of his time with the Salisbury Boreal Owl. Leif Robinson is probably correct in his belief that the amount of human interference the Boreal Owl experienced was not particularly detrimental to the bird and is quite likely not the reason for the owl's disappearance. What troubles me about Robinson's account of the "kitchy-kitchy-koo" episode is what it says about the attitude birders bring to their pursuit. One wonders if birds are playthings designed to amuse and satisfy bird-watchers? Or might birds be biological entities that we as bird-watchers can observe, study, admire and respect?

It is unfortunate that it was a member of the Massachusetts Audubon staff that touched the Boreal Owl. One would hope such staff members would be the model of good birding etiquette. But if an Audubon society staff-person can play with Boreal Owls, why isn't it fine for any birder to do whatever he or she wishes with any bird they chance upon? Clearly such a situation would present a very sad state of affairs. Obviously Massachusetts Audubon does not condone or support the interference of any part of a bird's natural history. All the research, sanctuaries and natural history education testify to that. But as birders let us take the time to re-examine our reasons for looking at birds. Observe them, scrutinize them carefully, delight in them, worship them. The reasons for being afield will be your own. But please, whatever your reasons, leave them alone. If nothing else, respect them.

Peter Vickery  
Lincoln, Maine

(All letters to the editor are subject to condensation.)



<u>Sp.</u>	<u>Marsh.</u>	<u>Millis</u>	<u>Nant.</u>	<u>N. B.</u>	<u>Newbpt.</u>	<u>Plym.</u>	<u>Quin.</u>	<u>Taun.</u>	<u>Tuck.</u>	<u>Wilm.</u>	<u>Worc.</u>
S-ts											
D-eJ	67	182	72	95	121	248	141	340		594	97
"OJ"			1								
TS	69	218	9	21	214	36	90	116	2	226	87
CS				2							
FS	12	2	1	26		18	1	23			
W-cS				12			1			3	
W-tS	39	16	131	54	23	73	30	39	3	55	12
FS		1		2			2	1		30	
SS	44	13	23		11	24	8	2	1	2	3
SS	50	39	183	8	46	75	58	19	36	31	12
LL					1						
SB	2	4	23		59	73		1	60	5	
Tot.	79	68	118+2	80	96	94+1	94	71	60	50	54

## "Birders"

The Outer Cape has long been famous for its impressive bird life. Both species diversity and bird populations are large and varied. From mid-July to November 1st the bird migration is spectacular! Henry David Thoreau, William Brewster, Arthur Cleveland Bent, Henry Beston, and Ludlow Griscom are among the great ornithologists and naturalists to study here.

The **Red River Motel** located on Route 28 in South Harwich on the Chatham Line has been purchased and is managed by a group of birdin' fools. We are close to the famed Monomoy Island Wilderness Area, Chatham - which is tremendous for fall land birds, Nauset Beach - shorebird Heaven and the surrounding waters of Cape Cod which abound with hard to get pelagic species. We also keep abreast of any rarities or unusual birds in the area and have an excellent local knowledge of what is going on.

Our room rates are competitive and for people staying with us there are some guided walks.

For further information stop by at the

**RED RIVER MOTEL**

Route 28

South Harwich, Mass. 02661

432-1474

