

2018 Maryland Fall Count

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The annual Maryland Fall Count is held on the third weekend in September with the choice of Saturday or Sunday at the discretion of the county and/or compiler. In 2018, data from 12 of Maryland's 23 counties were compiled. Six counties counted on 15 September, six on 16 September (Table 1). Receiving results from twelve counties is average participation for Fall Count. For several counties this seasonal count has been a long-held tradition, with this year being the 28th count for Allegany, 25th for Howard, and 23rd for Dorchester.

Table 1: 2018 Maryland Fall Count: participating counties, county codes, survey dates, and compilers.

County	Code	Survey Date	Compiler
Allegany	AL	16 September 2018	Chuck Hager
Washington	WA	15 September 2018	Doris Berger
Carroll	CA	15 September 2018	Don Jewell
Howard	HO	15 September 2018	Mike McClure, Chuck Stirrat
Prince George's	PG	16 September 2018	Dave Mozurkewich
Calvert	CT	16 September 2018	Sue Hamilton, Sherman Suter
Kent	KE	16 September 2018	Walter Ellison
Caroline	CN	15 September 2018	Debby Bennett
Talbot	TA	16 September 2018	Dave Palmer
Dorchester	DO	15 September 2018	Harry Armistead
Somerset	SO	16 September 2018	Paul Bystrak
Wicomico	WI	15 September 2018	Paul Bystrak

David Mozurkewich, Prince George's compiler provided the following description to put the count weekend weather in context: "A week before the count, the long-range weather forecast had a major hurricane heading up the Bay with predictions approaching 10 inches [25.4 cm] of rain for the extended weekend. Every subsequent forecast had the storm making landfall a little earlier and a little further south until it hit the coast of southern North Carolina on Thursday [13 September 2018]. Hurricane Florence stalled then headed inland and was in SW Virginia the day of the count. The storm pushed some interesting

birds into the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay but unfortunately, it was too far away to push them into our area. Fortunately, the storm was far enough away to avoid any storm damage to our area. The days before the count were dreary with unfavorable winds and little migration.”

The weather varied over the extent of the state and from Saturday to Sunday, but the difference was not dramatic. Temperatures were in the high 60s °F [~ 20 °C] in the mornings, rising to highs in the mid 80s °F [~ 29 °C] by mid-afternoon both days. The winds observed on the Eastern Shore were higher with most experiencing steady winds over 10 mph (16 kmph) from the ENE both Saturday and Sunday. Winds in the western counties were generally less than 5 mph (8 kmph). Cloud coverage was quite consistent across the state with significant cloud coverage early followed by partial clearing as the day proceeded. There were no reports of significant precipitation either day, with the only reported precipitation being drizzle at dawn on Sunday in Allegany and Prince George’s and a brief scattered shower in mid-morning in Howard on Saturday. Shorebird habitat was limited as tides were described as very high and ponds and reservoirs were full, with no muddy edges due to the significant rainfall preceding the count.

A total of 192 field observers in 137 parties turned up 198 species and 64,382 individual birds. They spent a total of 428.0 hours and covered 320.9 miles (516.4 km) on foot and spent 38.0 hours stationary. Birders spent 197.4 hours and 2158.4 miles (3473.6 km) birding by car. Participants in six counties reported spending 14.0 hours traveling 73.1 miles (117.6 km) while owling. Feeder watchers spent 28.3 hours (Table 2). A group of nine young birders counted in Dorchester County, marking at least seven years in a row a Youth MOS group has participated.

There were two write-in species reported. A late Orchard Oriole was found in Carroll and a Ring-necked Duck that had been present all summer in Talbot was probably an injured bird.

Other species with only a single individual found statewide included Gadwall (Prince George’s), Black Scoter (Talbot), Clapper Rail (Dorchester), Upland Sandpiper (Dorchester), Baird’s Sandpiper (Caroline), Buff-breasted Sandpiper (Caroline), Wilson’s Phalarope (Dorchester), Lesser Black-backed Gull (Talbot), Least Tern (Caroline), Black Tern (Kent), Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (Talbot), Cliff Swallow (Dorchester), Gray-cheeked Thrush (Howard), Hermit Thrush (Allegany), Grasshopper Sparrow (Prince George’s), Lincoln’s Sparrow (Howard), and Yellow-throated Warbler (Carroll) (Table 3). The Upland Sandpiper, Least Tern, and Cliff Swallow were the first occurrences in the past 6 years.

Table 2. 2018 Maryland Fall Count: summary.

	AL	WA	CA	HO	PG	CT	KE	CN	TA	DO	SO	WI	Total
Total Species	108	65	105	118	112	87	87	109	103	141	49	46	198
Total Birds	4056	1496	5085	10,315	10,779	2784	1947	5631	5233	16,107	449	500	64,382
Start Time	0720		0628	0545	0530	0620	0630	0430	0600	0520	1400	0645	0430
Stop Time	1830		2000	2000	2230	1820	2000	2030	2000	1815	1900	1915	2230
Parties	11	5	11	44	16	11	2	11	11	8	2	5	137
Individual People	12	7	20	51	20	14	4	16	22	18	2	6	192
Hours Driving	19.0	16.5	25.0	31.0	23.3	4.1	6.0	33.0	12.0	23.0	4.0	0.5	197.4
Miles Driving	209.0	154.0	268.9	316.2	195.5	27.8	28.0	393.0	90.0	456.0	10.0	10.0	2158.4
Hours Walking	30.4	2.5	47.7	152.7	57.5	25.6	8.5	30.3	30.0	36.0	2.0	4.8	428.0
Miles Walking	30.2	3.0	43.5	118.3	44.7	23.4	4.7	13.5	5.5	26.0	3.0	5.1	320.9
Stationary Hours	6.0	3.0	0.3	10.6	1.0	4.3						12.8	38.0
Feeder Hours	2.0	1.0	6.5	6.0	3.0			6.5				3.3	28.3
Owling Hours			0.5	0.5	1.0			2.5	3.5	6.0			14.0
Owling Miles			0.3	0.3	5.0			20.0	10.5	37.0			73.1

The following highlights were noted by compilers and the author. A flight of Common Nighthawks appeared over Carroll (35) and Howard County (27) with the total of 63 birds statewide being over three times higher than the count in any of the previous five counts. The 27 Common Terns seen flying down the Potomac River in Prince George’s was a good sighting for the county and similar flocks were reported from Montgomery County the day before and the day after the count. Osprey were reported in 10 counties and the total of 171 was significantly higher than the prior high of 93 seen each of the previous two years, with more lingering than usual as observed by one compiler. Twenty Merlins were a new high with an astounding 14 of those being in Dorchester. The six Olive-sided Flycatchers exceeded the total of 3 birds cumulative seen in the last five counts. The Tree Swallow count of 4692 was also a new high count. The Bobolink total of 1728, mostly found across Dorchester County, was more than twice the prior high during the previous five counts.

Compilers made note of several interesting sightings missed on the count but reported during the days around the count. Three Mississippi Kites were observed in Caroline County on 10 September. On 13 September, a Eurasian Collared-Dove was found in Dorchester but despite searching, it was not found

on count day. On the day following the Dorchester count, a Buff-breasted, a Baird's, and 2 Stilt Sandpipers were found at a location not visited during the count.

There were 39 species that were observed in only one county. Twelve of these were observed in Dorchester County, with the rest being 6 in Caroline and Talbot, 4 in Howard and Prince George's, 3 in Allegany and Carroll, and 1 in Kent. Fifteen species were reported in all 12 counties which is lower than normal largely due to some counties having very limited coverage.

Thank you to all participants and especially the compilers. I urge more participants to enjoy the experience and join in one of the 2019 counts that will be held on 21 or 22 September. I hope additional counties will have volunteers who choose to organize a count in the future and reverse the trend of decreasing interest and participation in organized seasonal counts.

Table 3. 2018 Maryland Fall Count: observed species.

Species	AL	WA	CA	HO	PG	CT	KE	CN	TA	DO	SO	WI	Total
Canada Goose	395	10	731	1526	580	108	105	124	104	527	59	98	4367
Mute Swan					10								10
Wood Duck	9	7	10	40	51	5	11	18	8	82		1	242
Blue-winged Teal										4			4
Northern Shoveler					1				5	25			31
Gadwall					1								1
Mallard	12	4	81	162	196	27	9	43	132	80			746
American Black Duck					8	1	5		2	13			29
Northern Pintail									2				2
Green-winged Teal					1				4	13			18
Ring-necked Duck									1				1
Black Scoter									1				1
Ruddy Duck			1							6			7
Northern Bobwhite								5		8			13
Wild Turkey	13	22	3	2	32		3	35	10	14		4	138
Pied-billed Grebe					1			1					2
Rock Pigeon	97	89	130	144	132	4	7	101	17	25		19	765
Mourning Dove	59	109	163	506	599	66	31	257	200	168	1	20	2179
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	2		8	4	7	6		1	1	3			32
Black-billed Cuckoo				1						1			2
Yellow-billed or Black-billed Cuckoo							1						1
Common Nighthawk			35	27					1				63
Chimney Swift	636	18	66	236	197	4	5	145	68	28			1403
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	61	12	18	34	25	17	7	24	17	37		3	255
Clapper Rail										1			1
Virginia Rail					1				1	6	1		9
Sora					7								7

Species	AL	WA	CA	HO	PG	CT	KE	CN	TA	DO	SO	WI	Total
Black-bellied Plover										4			4
Semipalmated Plover								2		14			16
Killdeer	13			57	40			66		23			199
Upland Sandpiper										1			1
Ruddy Turnstone										2			2
Dunlin										15			15
Baird's Sandpiper								1					1
Least Sandpiper	10							5		62			77
White-rumped Sandpiper	9									5			14
Buff-breasted Sandpiper								1					1
Pectoral Sandpiper								5		6			11
Semipalmated Sandpiper	12							7		140	20		179
unidentified peep										15			15
Short-billed Dowitcher										2			2
American Woodcock								2					2
Wilson's Snipe								7					7
Spotted Sandpiper	2			4				6	1	7	1		21
Solitary Sandpiper	5			1	1				1	1			9
Lesser Yellowlegs										50			50
Greater Yellowlegs				4						22	26		52
unidentified yellowlegs										1			1
unidentified shorebird										2			2
Wilson's Phalarope										1			1
Bonaparte's Gull								2					2
Laughing Gull					947	214	66	34	246	2245	36	47	3835
Ring-billed Gull					29	47	64	240	43	33	48		504
Herring Gull					9	169	7	3	106	373	2	5	674
Lesser Black-backed Gull									1				1
Great Black-backed Gull						311			12	104			427
unidentified gull					10	1		70					81
Least Tern								1					1
Caspian Tern					6	2	47		11	20			86
Black Tern								1					1
Common Tern					27		7	2		11			47
Forster's Tern					21	58	212	14	86	309	4		704
Common or Forster's Tern					4								4
Royal Tern							8	21		42	107	1	179
Double-crested Cormorant	1			12	59	43	90	29	779	368	18	27	1426
Brown Pelican										104			104
Great Blue Heron	4	2	22	36	16	11	21	21	15	61	4	8	221
Great Egret			5	6	17	1	1	1	18	124	29		202
Snowy Egret							4	1	39	76	24		144
unidentified egret							20						20
Little Blue Heron									2				2
Tricolored Heron									1	2	1		4
Cattle Egret									27	16			43
Green Heron	9	1	4	28	11		6	7	7	8			81
Black-crowned Night-Heron								1		2			3
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron				1		1							2

Species	AL	WA	CA	HO	PG	CT	KE	CN	TA	DO	SO	WI	Total
Glossy Ibis								2		4	3		9
Black Vulture	21	13	72	173	97	21	21	98	26	42		1	585
Turkey Vulture	150	60	157	261	95	65	138	262	101	258	8	10	1565
unidentified vulture										40			40
Osprey		1	1	14	15	27	11	16	32	52	2		171
Northern Harrier		2	1	2				1		6	4		16
Sharp-shinned Hawk	5	1	3	3	2				4	1			19
Cooper's Hawk	4		4	5	4			3	2	8			30
unidentified <i>Accipiter</i>				2									2
Bald Eagle	5	4	6	19	21	25	37	22	38	84	5	2	268
Red-shouldered Hawk	5	5	9	71	14	2	3	8		7			124
Broad-winged Hawk	608	1	3	13			1			1			627
Red-tailed Hawk	10	4	27	18	8	1	4	10	7	4		1	94
Eastern Screech-Owl	7		2	1		2	3	8	10	10			43
Great Horned Owl				3	2			5	6	3		1	20
Barred Owl			3	9	3		2	6	1			1	25
Belted Kingfisher	3	3	8	23	7	6	3	8	5	4	2	2	74
Red-headed Woodpecker	1	1	6	11	2	4				14			39
Red-bellied Woodpecker	38	24	79	178	65	32	29	31	14	11	1	4	506
Downy Woodpecker	21	6	43	107	47	25	20	21	16	28	3	6	343
Hairy Woodpecker	7	1	9	22	10	7	6	4	1	6	1		74
Northern Flicker	53	13	31	48	25	7	2	5	4	7	2	1	198
Pileated Woodpecker	12	8	16	44	12	6	6	15	10	7		3	139
American Kestrel	3	6	5	9	25	1	9	9	12	23		2	104
Merlin				2				1	1	14	1	1	20
Peregrine Falcon				1						2			3
Great Crested Flycatcher	2	1	6	7	4			3	3	4	1		31
Eastern Kingbird			1	9	1	9		2		2	1		25
Olive-sided Flycatcher	2			3	1								6
Eastern Wood-Pee wee	34	3	66	92	26	27	18	18	11	19			314
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher									1				1
Acadian Flycatcher	1		5	6	11	17	2			1			43
Willow Flycatcher	2												2
Traill's Flycatcher				1			1		1				3
Least Flycatcher	1			1						2			4
unidentified <i>Empidonax</i>	1	1	6	7	6	1				2			24
Eastern Phoebe	49	6	25	26	12	9	2	8		4			141
White-eyed Vireo	2		15	24	14	10	2	6	1	17	1	3	95
Yellow-throated Vireo	3	2	2	5	2	1	1		1				17
Blue-headed Vireo	2		1	2									5
Warbling Vireo			2										2
Red-eyed Vireo	33	8	35	96	52	35	39	9	6	10			323
Blue Jay	112	83	214	512	171	75	36	60	80	81		14	1438
American Crow	77	54	121	303	104	48	12	181	153	148	4	12	1217
Fish Crow			28	259	45	45	3	7	32	5	119	2	545
unidentified crow				193	32	9			32	46		3	315
Common Raven	28	2	1	7	3								41
Horned Lark			1	32				28	2	5			68
Purple Martin									12	18			30

Species	AL	WA	CA	HO	PG	CT	KE	CN	TA	DO	SO	WI	Total
Tree Swallow			1		2	14	1149	596	2930				4692
Bank Swallow								1	2	2			5
Cliff Swallow										1			1
Barn Swallow			2			2	1	7	19	157	1		189
unidentified swallow										40			40
Carolina Chickadee		11	57	114	61	59	22	64	54	80	16	21	559
Black-capped Chickadee	40												40
Tufted Titmouse	57	4	38	109	59	57	21	55	36	38		11	485
Red-breasted Nuthatch	12		10	7	4		7	2	18	2			62
White-breasted Nuthatch	40	9	41	106	35	25	13	11	15	1		2	298
Brown-headed Nuthatch						10				12	46	8	76
House Wren	9		8	17	3	1	7	3	2	7	5	1	63
Winter Wren	2			1									3
Marsh Wren											4		4
Carolina Wren	59	33	108	354	158	84	69	60	64	84	7	28	1108
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	3	11	5	16	11	4	5	3	16	32	1		107
Ruby-crowned Kinglet			3	1									4
Eastern Bluebird	40	64	98	150	68	36	12	103	61	62	2	1	697
Veery			3	4	1	5	2			4			19
Gray-cheeked Thrush				1									1
Swainson's Thrush	2		14	9						1	1		27
Hermit Thrush	1												1
Wood Thrush	4		43	14	7	7	3	1		2			81
American Robin	29	15	100	204	99	15	1	119	30	29		8	649
Gray Catbird	52	7	244	313	83	23	20	6	17	12		8	785
Brown Thrasher	6	1	15	19	6	6	11	6	12	3			85
Northern Mockingbird	11	5	48	81	38	16	24	45	23	40	1		332
European Starling	198	406	794	1557	2370	59	263	966	702	1912	54		9281
Cedar Waxwing	123	101	114	65	48			8		11	8		478
House Sparrow	79	20	62	308	92	46	3	124	13	59			806
House Finch	25	9	50	103	40	21		44	16	3		17	328
Purple Finch	3	1											4
American Goldfinch	100	34	123	286	72	117	8	101	66	44		11	962
Eastern Towhee	14		31	39	8	2	5	4		1			104
Chipping Sparrow	135	37	97	122	448	49	25	114	66	63	2	1	1159
Field Sparrow	13	8	2	4	4			5				1	37
Savannah Sparrow	1	2	1	20		3				2			29
Grasshopper Sparrow					1								1
Seaside Sparrow										8	2		10
Song Sparrow	18	8	41	42	8	3		1	1				122
Lincoln's Sparrow				1									1
White-throated Sparrow		1	1										2
unidentified sparrow				2		4		2					8
Yellow-breasted Chat				2									2
Bobolink	1			32	108			76	8	1497		6	1728
Eastern Meadowlark								5		1			6
Orchard Oriole			1										1
Baltimore Oriole				7									7
unidentified oriole					2					1			3

Species	AL	WA	CA	HO	PG	CT	KE	CN	TA	DO	SO	WI	Total
Red-winged Blackbird			111	37	1097		6	48	186	680	5	40	2210
Brown-headed Cowbird		40	2	65	1011	9		59	410	207			1803
Common Grackle	10		8	3	548	305		6	10	1241			2131
Boat-tailed Grackle										2	2		4
unidentified blackbird								100					100
Ovenbird	3		5	18	1	1	1	1		1			31
Worm-eating Warbler	3	1		2						1			7
Northern Waterthrush			1			3		2					6
Blue-winged Warbler	1			3	1								5
Black-&-white Warbler	2	1	13	44	23	14	18	13	10	15			153
Tennessee Warbler	7			2	1	1							11
Nashville Warbler	3			1									4
Mourning Warbler	1				2								3
Kentucky Warbler	1			1									2
Common Yellowthroat	21		35	119	20	40	17	6	7	26		2	293
Hooded Warbler	8				2	3							13
American Redstart	21	1	20	51	27	23	27	29	22	16			237
Cape May Warbler	11							1		4			16
Northern Parula	4		6	8	13	8	13	3	8	3			66
Magnolia Warbler	18		9	16	4	4	8		3				62
Bay-breasted Warbler	1						1						2
Blackburnian Warbler	10			3	2			1	1				17
Yellow Warbler	1		1							2			4
Chestnut-sided Warbler	17		4	19	3	1	1	2		1			48
Blackpoll Warbler	13				1		1		1				16
Black-throated Blue Warbler	11		5	12	2	2	2	3		1			38
Palm Warbler	4		2	1				1					8
Pine Warbler	7	6	2	2	8	8	1	6	33	62	3	2	140
Yellow-rumped Warbler	1		4					2					7
Yellow-throated Warbler			1										1
Prairie Warbler	3			4			1			3			11
Black-throated Green Warbler	26	1	4	7	2	1							41
Canada Warbler	2		1	6									9
Wilson's Warbler			1	1									2
unidentified warbler	3	2		46				1		1			53
Summer Tanager					1	4				11		2	18
Scarlet Tanager	20		7	12	9	3	3	1		2			57
Northern Cardinal	82	42	145	441	157	106	136	63	68	85	13	32	1370
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	7		6	9	6								28
Blue Grosbeak			2	8	12	9	4	35	13	58	3	3	147
Indigo Bunting	6		12	24	5	7	4		2	15		4	79
Total Birds													64,382