

## Christmas Bird Count 2005

The Woodstock Bird Count was held on Saturday December 17<sup>th</sup> this year. There was more snow than typical and standing water was all frozen (also atypical), but there was a good berry crop. That meant that we had next to no waterfowl, but there were some great birds, mostly associated with the abundant grapes and other berries. All of the southern Ontario bird counts experienced higher than usual numbers of birds that are associated with berries and grass seeds (sparrows and Hermit Thrush for example). To see online summaries of all the Christmas Bird Counts, go to <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/>.

The Woodstock count total for species was down somewhat from our average of 60 (56), but was still respectable because of the numerous rare birds that were found. Below are the highlights and lowlights of the count:

### **Rare Birds**

Cackling Goose CW (2<sup>nd</sup> time on count)

Bald Eagle 1 (2<sup>nd</sup> time on count)

Red-shouldered Hawk CW (4<sup>th</sup> time on count)

Merlin 1 (4<sup>th</sup> time on count)

Marsh Wren 1 (new bird for count and first December record for Oxford County)

Hermit Thrush 2 (new high count, 4<sup>th</sup> time on count)

Northern Mockingbird 1 (3<sup>rd</sup> time on count)

Fox Sparrow 2 (2<sup>nd</sup> time on count, ties high count)

White-crowned Sparrow CW (5<sup>th</sup> time on count)

Rusty Blackbird 1 (2<sup>nd</sup> time on count)

### **High Counts**

Wild Turkey 36 (second highest count, average 14 but trending up every year)

Red-bellied Woodpecker 10 (new high count, average 4 but trending up every year)

Northern Flicker 6 (second highest ever)

Horned Lark 339 (new high count, average 101)

Blue Jay 355 (new high count, average 220)

Winter Wren 3 (ties high count)

Field Sparrow 3 (new high count)

White-throated Sparrow 28 (new high count, average 6)

Snow Bunting 1,753 (2<sup>nd</sup> highest count, average 802 but extremely variable from year to year)

American Goldfinch 542 (new high count, average 269)

### **Low Counts**

American Black Duck 9 (low, average is 248)

Ring-billed Gull CW (first time missed on count day since 1988, average is 1,008 but they vary tremendously depending on how much open water is available)

American Herring Gull 24 (low, average is 122)

American Kestrel 1 (new low, average is 13 – low numbers on all southern Ontario counts this year)

Ruffed Grouse 0 (first time missed since 1986, average is 4 but they have been trending down every year)

Swamp Sparrow 2 (low count, average is 10)

**General Interest**

American Crow 15,279 (lowish compared to recent years)

Pine Siskin 3 (only northern finch on count)

**Summary statistics:** 31,150 individual birds of 56 species plus 5 count week species. 18 observers in field., 18 at feeders. Weather was good. Temperature steady at -5 degrees, light snow in morning, partly sunny in afternoon, wind SW at 20-30kph.