

Seven Mountains Audubon 2011 Lewisburg Christmas Bird Count

The best of days, the worst of days. At our evening gathering that follows the Christmas bird count, some folks declare a dearth of birds (“where have they gone?”), while other parties arrive with enviable reports (often the Joe Southerton party). Such is the random nature of winter birds. At the end of the day, though, our 72-species total was average for us, and given our geographic position in central Pennsylvania, this was another fine result.

Not often do we add a new species to the Lewisburg count circle with its sixty-plus year history, but the **Double-crested Cormorant** found by Steve Anderson on the river was a first. This was probably overdue, since large numbers of this species linger at the Fabridam to our south.

We had unusually high counts of Wood Duck, **Hooded Merganser**, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, **Common Raven**, and Carolina Wren. Bold-faced birds represent an all-time high for the Lewisburg Christmas Bird Count. The raven count of 20 easily exceeded the prior record of 9 recorded just last year.

We had very low numbers of Great Horned Owl, Black-capped Chickadee, American Tree Sparrow, and House Sparrow. Can you believe that the Schweinsberg party recorded (cross my heart and hope to die) **zero** House Sparrows?

Inevitably, each year we miss species, and this year that includes Rough-legged Hawk (9), Merlin (7), Fish Crow (5), Red-breasted Nuthatch (10), Field Sparrow (10), and Brown-headed Cowbird (6). The numbers in parentheses are the number of times that species was recorded on the previous ten counts. Darn! Since 15 of our 72 species were reported by only one of the field parties, it is easy to see how uncommon birds can escape detection.

We had 43 wonderful participants, all folks who share an appreciation for wildlife and this annual tradition. They included: Warren Abrahamson, Roger Allison, Owen Anderson, Steve Anderson, George Boone, Paul Dennehy, Roy Fontaine, Warren Frantz, Kerry Givens, Geoff Goodenow, Bob Gutheinz, Robert Hazard, David Hafer, Galen & Bonnie Ingram, Kay Cramer, Jill Largent, Matt Levanowitz, Bill Malone, Alice Marquart, Jen Mattive, Jack McCann, Wayne McDiffett, Larry McGraw, Debby & Paul Meade, Mike Molesevich, Dianne Muchant, Laurel Mutti, Dick Nickelsen, Kaustubh Patwardhan, Judy Peeler, Robert Reyda, Allen & Joanne Schweinsberg, Carl Shaffer, Richard Shaffer, Wesley Sigl, Joe Southerton, Logan Stenger, Stephanie Thomas, Don Ulrich, Tom Yannaccone. Please come back next year!

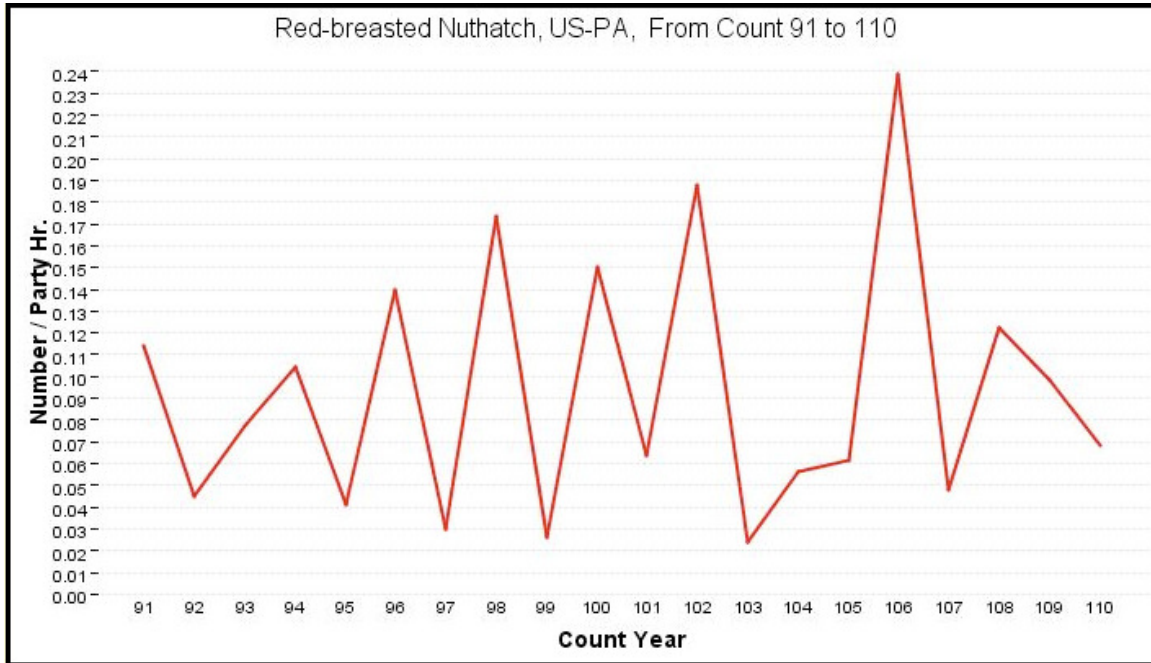
Here is the list.

Canada Goose	619
Tundra Swan	4
Wood Duck	13
American Black Duck	10
Mallard	535
Northern Pintail	1
Ring-necked Duck	3
Bufflehead	6
Hooded Merganser	18
Common Merganser	59
Ring-necked Pheasant	10
Ruffed Grouse	3
Wild Turkey	40
Pied-billed Grebe	1
Double-crested Cormorant	1
Great Blue Heron	20
Black Vulture	12
Bald Eagle	5
Northern Harrier	7
Sharp-shinned Hawk	6
Cooper's Hawk	5
Red-shouldered Hawk	2
Red-tailed Hawk	80
American Kestrel	57
American Coot	1
Killdeer	5
Wilson's Snipe	7
Ring-billed Gull	200
Herring Gull	3
Rock Pigeon	785
Mourning Dove	267
Barn Owl	3
Screech Owl	6
Great Horned Owl	2
Barred Owl	1
Belted Kingfisher	18

Red-bellied Woodpecker	51
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	5
Downy Woodpecker	106
Hairy Woodpecker	16
Northern Flicker	16
Pileated Woodpecker	13
Blue Jay	117
American Crow	919
Common Raven	20
Horned Lark	17
Black-capped Chickadee	108
Tufted Titmouse	135
White-breasted Nuthatch	71
Brown Creeper	13
Carolina Wren	60
Winter Wren	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	19
Eastern Bluebird	141
Hermit Thrush	1
American Robin	5
Northern Mockingbird	36
European Starling	5622
Cedar Waxwing	32
American Tree Sparrow	21
Song Sparrow	48
Swamp Sparrow	1
White-throated Sparrow	256
White-crowned Sparrow	14
Dark-eyed Junco	495
Northern Cardinal	144
Red-winged Blackbird	cw
Common Grackle	12
Purple Finch	2
House Finch	182
Pine Siskin	1
American Goldfinch	129
House Sparrow	357

Note: the Red-winged Blackbirds were detected during “count week” by Debby Meade, but nobody saw any on our count day.

That we missed Red-breasted Nuthatch this year is not especially surprising. This is a periodic species that is quite scarce at times, usually in alternate years. Here is a graph giving the relative abundance of this species on Pennsylvania Christmas Counts for the past 20 years.



Was our low Great-horned Owl total (2) due to diminished effort or just bad luck? The 20-year history of Pennsylvania counts indicates a possible recent decline.

Great Horned Owl, US-PA, From Count 92 to 110

