



The Redstart

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THE 1945 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

by
Maurice Brooks

The Redstart presents in this issue the results of Christmas bird counts made throughout the tri-state area, with two extra-territorial counts, one to the north at Cleveland, Ohio, and one to the south, in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, which are interesting for comparison. The editor expresses his appreciation to Merit B. Skaggs for the Cleveland report, and to Arthur Stupka for the Great Smokies count.

The tri-state area is represented by counts from Steubenville, Ohio, and Wheeling and Morgantown, West Virginia, in the north, to Charleston, Huntington, and Bluefield in the south. We still lack counts from western Pennsylvania, and it is to be hoped that an increased force of observers will make possible some reports from the southwestern corner of this state in 1946. The interesting Raccoon Hollow region is fairly close to our Wheeling group, and the Morgantown observers may be able to conduct counts in Fayette or Green counties.

Perhaps the only general impression that one may get from the ten counts included is that winter birds are unusually scarce. Winter came early to this territory, with a very cold and stormy December. Coupled with this is the most disastrous failure of wild fruits and nuts which I have ever seen. One of the Morgantown observers spent two hours in woodland which is usually quite "birdy", and saw in that time exactly two crows. Nearly every list is below normal in numbers of species and individuals, although this is not so noticeable in the Huntington district.

Robins are notably scarce, as are bluebirds - this almost certainly being due to short food supplies, particularly wild grapes. Cedar waxwings are very scarce, and golden-crowned kinglets are generally far below their usual numbers. The only wandering finch reported from West Virginia is the siskin from Charleston, although it may be noted that Cleveland reports evening grosbeaks (See Bill Lunk's note in this issue), and Stupka finds

fair numbers of red crossbills in the Smokies, an observation that may have some bearing on the reported disappearance of these birds from the West Virginia mountains (See the Nov-Dec Redstart).

Such counts as these emphasize the fact that West Virginia represents in this region the most northern normal winter range for quite a number of species. Observers in southern West Virginia regularly have winter observations of white-throated, white-crowned, field, and swamp sparrows, ruby-crowned kinglets, and other species which are seldom noted in the northern part of the state. Towhees, flickers, yellow-bellied sapsuckers, Bewick's wrens, and others are of regular occurrence in the southern part of the state; they are irregular or entirely absent to the north. Thus there is a steady, and rather rapid, increase in the number of species and individuals to be expected as one travels the relatively short distance from Morgantown to Charleston, or from Wheeling to Huntington.

No way yet devised gives a better picture of our winter bird life than does the Christmas count. It is to be hoped that we may have more of them as time goes on.

--West Virginia University
Morgantown, W. Va.

CLEVELAND, OHIO CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Cleveland, Ohio (Gordon Park eastward to mouth of Chagrin river along the Lake Erie shore; inland to Shaker Lakes, Gates Mills, North Chagrin reservation and Willoughby; lake shore 15%, beech-maple climax forest 20%, open fields 35%, town suburbs 15%, thickets 10%, swamps 5%).--Dec. 29; 8 a.m. to dusk. Foggy in spots until 10 a.m. then clear with intermittent sunshine; SW wind in late afternoon only; temp. 32° to 42°; snow 8 to 10 in. deep in woods but less in open places; Lake Erie open but ponds and rivers mostly frozen. Twenty-three observers in 8 parties. Total hours, 54 (34 on foot, 20 in cars); total miles, 295 (44 on foot, 251 by car).

Great blue heron, 2; mallard, 56; black duck, 23; pintail, 1; lesser scaup, 15; golden-eye, 32; bufflehead, 2; white-winged scoter, 1; ruddy duck, 1; American merganser, 40; red-breasted merganser, 3; sharp-shinned hawk, 1; Cooper hawk, 6; red-tailed hawk, 1; red-shouldered hawk, 3; marsh hawk, 1; sparrow hawk, 3; ruffed grouse, 2; bob-white, 14; (one covey); pheasant, 15; herring gull, 131; ring-billed gull, 228; Bonaparte gull, 3; rock dove, 182; barred owl, 1; flicker, 2; pileated woodpecker, 9; red-bellied woodpecker, 4; hairy woodpecker, 11; downy woodpecker, 36; blue jay, 110; crow, 12; black-capped chickadee, 131; tufted titmouse, 47; white-breasted nuthatch, 51; red-breasted nuthatch, 22; robin, 1; golden-crowned kinglet, 4; starling, 813; English sparrow, 206; cardinal, 80; evening grosbeak, 2; goldfinch, 19; towhee, 3; slate-colored junco, 53; tree sparrow, 67; song sparrow, 8; snow bunting, 1. Total, 48 species; 2459 individuals. (Seen in area, Dec. 28; canvasback, 1; great black-backed gull, 3; Dec. 30: Carolina wren, 1; great horned owl, 2; mourning dove, 2.)

Observers were: Leta Adams, Jerry Brody, Vera Carrothers, Edith Dobbins, Rob't Foley, Earl Godfrey, R. W. Hill, Dick and Isabelle Klein, Nadine Literaty, Margaret Pernor, Marian Schutler, F. N. Shankland, C. M. Shipman, Brian and Margaret Sherwin, Marion Skaggs, Ted Stevens, Kurt Student, Clark Tefft, Harold

Wallin, A. B. Williams, M. B. Skaggs, (guests and members, The Kirtland Bird Club).

M. B. Skaggs
2066 Alton Road
Cleveland, Ohio

JEFFERSON COUNTY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Steubenville, Ohio, Union Cemetery gate through cemetery and area south of Sunset Blvd. to near Lover's Land, to north side of Sunset Blvd. and Will's Creek area to highway near Ohio river, up Paddy Mud road to golf course across golf course, over Brady Avenue to starting place, deciduous woods 48%, bushy meadows and pastures 13%, hemlock grove 5%, creek bottom land 14%, bushy woods or under bush 12%, urban 8%. Dec. 30th, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Cloudy forenoon, rainy afternoon, temp. 40°F. wind south 1 m.p.h. shifting to west 7 to 10 m.p.h. Seven observers, two parties part time, total hours 11, total miles 21.

Ruffed grouse, 3; cooper's hawk, 1; belted kingfisher, 1; downy woodpecker, 12; red bellied woodpecker, 1; prairie horned lark, 5; crow, 2; starling, 74; goldfinch, 5; tree sparrow, 23; junco, 11; song sparrow, 15; cardinal, 37; Carolina wren, 1; white breasted nuthatch, 5; tufted titmouse, 17; Carolina chickadee, 34; English sparrow, 51; Total 18 species, 298 individuals. (Seen in area during count week, sparrow hawk, 1; screech owl, 2.).

Members taking part: Albert Tenney, Lois Tenney, James Bates, Don Rarey, Earl Farmer, Richard Banks and Clinton Banks (Members of the Forest Audubon Club).

--Clinton Banks
Steubenville, Ohio

OHIO COUNTY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

December 30, 1945, Oglebay Park and Woodsdale Area. Time in the field, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Temperature 9:00 a.m. 40° F. - winds from southwest. Territory covered - 7 miles on foot and one mile by auto; party hours in field 24.5, party miles on foot 49.

Kingfisher, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 5; Horned lark, 3; crow, 111; chickadee, 17; tufted titmouse, 5; white-breasted nuthatch, 2; brown creeper, 1; Carolina wren, 3; starling, 12; English sparrow, 27, Cardinal, 13; Goldfinch, 1; Junco, 19; tree sparrow, 15; song sparrow, 2. 17 species, 238 individuals.

December 30, 1945, Big Wheeling Creek area. Time in field, 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Temperature at 3:30 p.m. 47° F. Continuous light rain throughout the afternoon. Traveled 3 miles on foot and 4 miles by auto. Party hours in field, 21; party miles on foot, 18.

Belted kingfisher, 1; *red-bellied woodpecker, 1; downy, 5; chickadee, 21; tufted titmouse 3; Carolina wren, 2; bluebird, 2; starling, 35; English sparrow, 41; cardinal, 20; junco, 24; song sparrow, 4. 12 species, 159 individuals.

* This bird was not observed by the group but was observed a short time before by Mr. & Mrs. R. C. McElwee at their feeding station.

Observers were: Clyde Upton, Carolyn Conrad, Nick Flower, Bob Bonenberger, Byrne Waterman, Molly Breiding, George Breiding and Jean Bierer.

Footnote: Hermit thrush (observed on three occasions, probably 7 individuals).
Ruffed grouse, 2; red-eyed towhee, 2.

The above species were observed by George Breiding and Don Keyser in the Fulton Heights Area between December 21-December 27, 1945.

--George H. Breiding
Columbus, Ohio

MORGANTOWN CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Morgantown, W. Va. (center of town to points up to about 8 miles west and north-west; Falling Run and other suburban areas, University farms and Municipal Airport, vicinity of Cheat Lake, Cooper's Rocks State Forest; deciduous woods 30%, brush wasteland 30%, open farmland 20%, town suburbs 18%, hemlock woods 2%). - Dec. 26; 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Cloudy, with freezing rain, sleet, and snow flurries at times; wind NW, 10-25 m.p.h.; temp. 36°- 26° F.; snow on ground at higher elevations only, more general toward evening; all still water frozen. Seven observers in 5 parties. Total hours, 24 (22 on foot, 2 by car); total miles 64 (24 on foot, 40 by car).

Sparrow hawk, 2; bob-white, 12; ring-necked pheasant, 1; mourning dove, 5; screech owl, 1; flicker, 1; red-bellied woodpecker, 2; hairy woodpecker, 1; downy woodpecker, 15; prairie horned lark, 13; blue jay, 8; crow, 43; chickadee, 36; tufted titmouse, 51; white-breasted nuthatch, 5; winter wren, 3; Carolina wren, 10; mockingbird, 2; hermit thrush, 1; bluebird, 6; migrant shrike, 1; starling, 63; myrtle warbler, 3; English sparrow, 113; cardinal, 83; goldfinch, 5; slate-colored junco, 90; tree sparrow, 34; fox sparrow, 2; song sparrow, 25; Total, 30 species; 637 individuals.

Observers were: M. G. Brooks, I. B. Boggs, H. M. Bowers, D. W. Parsons, C. K. Peck, Richard Wiles, W. A. Lunk.

--W. A. Lunk

MT. LOOKOUT, W. VA. CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Mt. Lookout (Nicholas Co.), W. Va. (same area as in 1941 and later counts; deciduous and hemlock woodland 74%, pine grove, 1%, farmland 25%) - Dec. 26. Cloudy; temp. 32° to 30°; wind NW, 7-38 m.p.h.; much snow in woods. Two observers, separate in a.m., together in p.m. Total hours, 14 (on foot); total miles, 17 (on foot).

Ruffed grouse, 8; mourning dove, 3; red-bellied woodpecker, 1; hairy woodpecker, 5; downy woodpecker, 8; blue jay, 13; crow, 6; chickadee, 10; tufted titmouse, 16; white-breasted nuthatch, 3; winter wren, 3; Carolina wren, 1; robin, 35; hermit thrush, 2; starling, 2; English sparrow, 27; cardinal, 47; goldfinch, 3; junco, 143; tree sparrow, 5; white-throated sparrow, 4; song sparrow, 8. Total, 22 species; 353 individuals. (Dec. 23; horned lark, 5; field sparrow, 1; Dec. 24: pileated woodpecker, 1.)

--W. C. Legg
Alton McClung
Mt. Lookout, W. Va.

ANSTED, W. VA. CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Ansted (Fayette Co.), W. Va. (edge of town down Mill Creek to the New River Canyon at Hawks Nest R. R. Station, along the river and adjacent woods; Hawks Nest State Park and adjacent woods; creek and river 50%, deciduous woodland 20%, pine woodland 30%.) - Dec. 28; 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Overcast, with heavy fog until noon; no wind; temp. 40° to 36° F.; ground bare; water mostly open. Two observers together. Total hours, 7 on foot; total miles, 10 on foot.

American merganser, 8; bob-white, 5; yellow-bellied sapsucker, 1; hairy woodpecker, 1; downy woodpecker, 4; blue jay, 12; crow, 2; chickadee, 34; tufted titmouse, 22; white-breasted nuthatch, 4; red-breasted nuthatch, 15; brown creeper, 3; winter wren, 4; Carolina wren, 10; hermit thrush, 1; golden-crowned kinglet, 28; cedar waxwing, 2; starling, 7; myrtle warbler, 3; English sparrow, 30; cardinal, 18; goldfinch, 10; towhee, 3; junco, 8; field sparrow, 6; white-crowned sparrow, 1 (seen by both observers); white-throated sparrow, 10; song sparrow, 15. Total, 28 species; 267 individuals.

--W. C. Legg
Alton McClung
Mt. Lookout, W. Va.

CHARLESTON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Charleston, West Virginia (bordering McCorkle Avenue, Kanawha City Land Co., Porter's Hollow, Davis Creek from mouth to State Route 13, thence bordering State Route 13 to Kanawha River, Crescent Road; open farmland and grassland 30 percent, deciduous woodland 60 percent, pine woodland 8 percent, wooded swamp 2 percent). December 29; 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.; overcast with heavy fog at start, clear in afternoon; temp. 32° to 53° F; wind calm to W. 8 m.p.h.; ground bare water soaked, water semi-open. Nine observers in seven parties. Total hours 23 on foot, one by car; total miles, 22 on foot, 20 by car.

Mallard, 1; scaup duck, 7; Cooper's hawk, 1; red-shouldered hawk, 1; sparrow hawk, 4; mourning dove, 12; barred owl, 1; red-bellied woodpecker, 1; yellow-bellied sapsucker, 1; hairy woodpecker, 3; downy woodpecker, 24; blue jay, 8; crow, 2; Carolina chickadee, 135; tufted titmouse, 72; white-breasted nuthatch, 22; brown creeper, 3; Carolina wren, 36; robin, 1; hermit thrush 4; bluebird, 8;

golden-crowned kinglet, 7; starling, 185; English sparrow, 234; cardinal, 57; pine siskin, 1; goldfinch, 46; towhee, 17; slate-colored junco, 150; tree sparrow, 4; field sparrow, 12; white-throated sparrow, 7; song sparrow, 78. Total, 33 species; 1,144 individuals.

Observers were: Mrs. J. W. Handlan, Mrs. Robert D. Ketchum, Dr. Robert D. Ketchum, Miss Sarah Barber, Miss Lucy Barber, Miss Sybil Ball, Miss Eleanor Simms, W. R. DeGarmo, Wayne Bailey.

HUNTINGTON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Huntington, W. Va. December 23, 1945. Same area as 1940 and subsequent counts; open fields 50%, roadsides and deciduous woodland 50%, Temp. 18°-28°F.; Wind W. 15-25 m.p.h.; 4" crusted snow; sky slightly overcast. Twenty-two observers in six groups. Total hours 22; 23 mi. on foot; 15 mi. in automobile.

Canvas-back, 30; sparrow hawk, 2; bob-white, 15; herring gull, 2; hairy woodpecker, 10; downy woodpecker, 40; blue jay, 37; crow, 238; Carolina chickadee, 152; tufted titmouse, 140; white-breasted nuthatch, 12; brown creeper, 2; winter wren, 7; Carolina wren, 25; mockingbird, 9; robin, 9; hermit thrush, 1; bluebird, 22; golden-crowned kinglet, 3; ruby-crowned kinglet, 3; starling, 55; myrtle warbler, 22; English sparrow, 181; meadowlark, 15; cardinal, 88; goldfinch, 4; towhee, 54; junco, 161; tree sparrow, 4; fox sparrow, 1; white throated sparrow, 6; song sparrow, 74. Total species, 34; approximately 1,427 individuals.

Observers were: Miss Rachael Wilson, Mrs. C. S. Wagers, Mrs. H. A. Resener, Miss Lois Raine, Mr. Burton Raine, Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Hale, Mrs. C. W. Kerr, Mrs. Roy Wells, Mrs. Iva Nowlan, Miss Nell Rose Hale, Miss Virginia Cavendish, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Odell, Mrs. Amos Culp, Mr. and Mrs. W. L. Garges, Miss Grady Risen, Mrs. H. E. Shultz, Mrs. I. J. Kail, Miss Clara Schlegel, Ralph M. Edeburn

--Ralph M. Edeburn
Marshall College
Huntington, W. Va.

BLUEFIELD CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

For the first time a Christmas bird census was made in Bluefield, W. Va. in 1945. It was made on Dec. 27 by Mrs. C. L. Seyler and Mrs. W. W. Dickinson of the Bluefield Garden Club. Mileage covered was twenty-five miles in a round trip; twenty-four miles in a car, one on foot around one side of Falls Mills Lake. The greatest number of birds was found at the lake. The census was started within the city limits and continued seven miles to the lake and on out a country road for five miles. Part of the birds counted were on a hill in town, but they made a comparatively poor showing as there were 50 English sparrows against 16 counted and 10 cardinals against two. There were numerous juncos which also did not show up well. There was one foot of old snow. The temperature was 30° which rose when the sun came out. Hours worked, 10-2.

Any extension of range would have added to the numbers of birds but not many to the species. The white-breasted nuthatch was the only permanent resident not sighted; the white-crowned sparrow is worthy of note. Golden-crowned kinglets were here until December 12 and are probably still here. Two redwings were seen on December 26.

Species and numbers listed: downy woodpecker, 3; blue jay, 2; crow, 4; chickadee, 9; tufted titmouse, 4; winter wren, 2; Carolina wren, 1; mockingbird, 2; bluebird, 6; English sparrow, 40; cardinal, 19; goldfinch, 4; junco, 4; tree sparrow, 2; field sparrow, 1; white-crowned sparrow, 1; swamp sparrow, 1; song sparrow, 16. Total 19 species; 209 individuals.

--Mrs. C. L. Seyler
Mrs. W. W. Dickinson

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK, TENN. CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tenn. (same area as in past 8 years; circle of $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles radius centering on Bull Head of Mt. LeConte, including a section of the Tennessee-North Carolina divide from Indian Gap to Mt. Kephart; towns of Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge; spruce-fir forest 30%, deciduous forest 15%, orchard 15%, open farmland and field borders 20%, abandoned fields 5%, stream courses 5%, towns and suburbs 10%). - Dec. 30; 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Overcast and becoming threatening in a.m., light rain developing in early p.m. and continuing into the night; temp. 38 degrees to 50 degrees F.; wind mostly light and variable; ground bare up to altitude of approximately 3500 feet, snow-covered at higher elevations with snow blanket measuring 13 in. at 5000 feet. Altitude range 1200 to 6100 feet. Twenty-seven observers in seven parties. Total party hours, 39; total miles, 130 (85 by car, 45 on foot).

Black duck, 4; turkey vulture, 30; black vulture, 5; Cooper's hawk, 1; red-tailed hawk, 1; duck hawk, 1; sparrow hawk, 3; ruffed grouse, 6; bob-white, 12 (covey); wild turkey, 2; killdeer, 10; Wilson's snipe, 1; mourning dove, 110; kingfisher, 1; flicker, 5; pileated woodpecker, 5; hairy woodpecker, 6; downy woodpecker, 10; phoebe, 2; horned lark, 16; blue jay, 11; crow, 150 (est.); chickadee (both black-capped and Carolina observed), 98; tufted titmouse, 22; white-breasted nuthatch, 3; red-breasted nuthatch, 13; brown creeper, 9; winter wren, 9; Carolina wren, 8; mockingbird, 6; brown thrasher, 2; robin, 97; hermit thrush, 19; bluebird, 25; golden-crowned kinglet, 45; ruby-crowned kinglet, 8; cedar waxwing, 1; starling, 33; myrtle warbler, 3; English sparrow, 72; meadow-lark, 22; red-wing, 6; cowbird, 60; cardinal, 49; purple finch, 25; goldfinch, 54; red crossbill, 9; towhee, 14; vesper sparrow, 1; junco (both slate-colored and Carolina observed), 170; field sparrow, 81; white-throated sparrow, 53; swamp sparrow, 1; song sparrow, 32. Total, 56 species and sub-species; approximately 1442 individuals. (Seen in area Dec. 27: great blue heron, 1; Dec. 29: fox sparrow, 1. Tracks of raven were observed in snow on day count was made and one or two birds were seen on several days during the month.)

Observers were: Fred W. Behrend, Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Broome, Warren Burgus, Mary Ruth Chiles, Brockway Crouch, Thomas W. Finucane, Robert Garber, Ralph Garrett, Harry Henry, Dr. Lee Roy Herndon, Elizabeth Johnson, William M. Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Leonhard, Henri Levy, Charlton Mabry, James R. Mattocks,

Mr. and Mrs. Franklin Odell, Jr., Winifred Odell, A. F. Pearson, Herbert Pomerance, Arthur Stupka, Roy A. Wedekind, Dr. Dorothy E. Williams, William Yambert (members and guests, Tennessee Ornithological Society and National Park Service).

EVENING GROSBEAKS AT FAIRMONT, WEST VIRGINIA

To the growing number of recorded occurrence of the Evening Grosbeak, Hesperiphona vespertina, in West Virginia is added another, in Fairmont; where a flock of something over a dozen individuals was seen on November 15, 1945. (A male and a female were collected, of which a record will be published elsewhere.)

The writer's home is located in the outskirts of town, in the Bell Run section, where there is considerable scattered woods as well as a variety of shade trees. The flock of grosbeaks was first seen about fifty yards to the rear of, and above, the house, feeding in a small box elder tree at the edge of a patch of woods. These eight or ten birds, upon which it must be confessed no detailed observations were made due to eagerness to obtain and to retrieve a specimen, flew towards town. However, a few minutes later, several of the birds, seemingly a different group, were seen scattered along the edge of the woods at the same approximate spot. They were moving about actively in the low branches, but were not seen to feed upon anything but the box of elder seeds. Quite tame, and not greatly disturbed even by the shots, the birds afforded some splendid views. Two fine males and four females or young were still feeding in a group when I left, altogether handsome and satisfying birds in any plumage.

Apparently the species has a variety of notes. The flock in question was relatively quiet. A sharp chip was heard, neither loud nor particularly distinctive to my ear; and also, what first attracted my attention, a peculiar, soft, little rolling note with an upward inflection, which was run into a sort of chippering as the birds took flight.

--William A. Lunk
Bell Run Road
Fairmont, W. Va.