



While a common occurrence on Christmas Bird Counts in some southern areas, this Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*) provided a first count record on the St. Albert, Alberta, CBC. Photo/Terry Thormin

Present in the Broken Bow Reservoir, Oklahoma, circle for some time prior to the Christmas Bird Count period, this Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*) was the first ever on a CBC in the state, and only the second state record. Photo/Berlin Heck



Found on the Grand Junction, Colorado, CBC, this Sedge Wren (*Cistothorus platensis*) was some distance from its normal wintering range along the Gulf Coast. Photo/Christopher L. Wood



One of several southwestern species of birds with an interesting range extension nearly into the Great Plains, this Canyon Towhee (*Pipilo fuscus*) was an excellent find at Cimmaron National Grasslands, Kansas. Photo/Christopher L. Wood



We asked and you delivered! Thanks to all of you who submitted photos from the 105th Christmas Bird Count. We are pleased to present here a sample of your photos, showcasing some of the rarities that turned up during this past season's count. Please send us your photos of birds and people on the Christmas Bird Counts in coming seasons as well.

Fightings

A notorious "skulker" and thus seldom appreciated for its subtle beauty, this Le Conte's Sparrow (*Ammodramus leconteii*) was an excellent find on the Tucson Valley, Arizona, Christmas Bird Count. Photo/David J. Stejskal



Both out of season and out of range, this Worm-eating Warbler (*Helmitheros vermivorum*) provided an excellent record on the Santa Barbara, California, CBC. Photo/Jim Greaves and Lark Chadwick

Right: Though a species that generally vacates the North American continent by the CBC season, this Franklin's Gull (*Larus pipixcan*) on the Truckee Meadows, Nevada, count provided photographic documentation showing that some birds of this species do, indeed, linger northward into at least mid-December. Photo/Greg T. Scyphers



Far Right: Generally known as a pelagic species, sighted on boat trips or near huge coastal breeding colonies, this Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*) provided excitement on the inland Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, Indiana, CBC. Photo/Jeff McCoy

From the 105th Christmas Bird Count



Providing a first state record for Wisconsin, this Hooded Oriole (*Icterus cucullatus*) was attending a feeder in the LaCrosse circle both before and after the CBC, but unfortunately was not seen on count day! Photo/Tim Collins



This Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*) was an extremely unusual record so far to the north on the Brooklyn, Long Island, New York, CBC. This species normally winters in Central and Northern South America, with only scattered winter records in the southern states. Photo/Steve Nanz



Among the vanguard of what was to become an epic flight in some regions, this Great Gray Owl (*Strix nebulosa*) on the Grand Forks-East Grand Forks, North Dakota-Minnesota, count provided the first CBC record in North Dakota, and the first record for the state in nearly 40 years. Photo/Dave Lambeth



A great bird on a stellar CBC, this Magnolia Warbler (*Dendroica magnolia*) was photographed to provide impeccable documentation of this out-of-season rarity on the Matagorda County-Mad Island Marsh, Texas, count. Photo/Chris Merkord

continued from page 7

numbers and diversity across much of the rest of the interior of the continent, and northward both along the Atlantic Coast to New England and the Pacific Coast to Alaska! Ruffed and Spruce grouse (as well as ptarmigan) are famous for their fluctuation in populations; Spruce Grouse seems to be at an ebb across the board, while Ruffed Grouse is beginning an upswing in the Atlantic Provinces; perhaps this groundswell will be seen in future seasons across the CBC region.

The combination of the Christmas Bird Count database and the CBC web site provide a great, quick tool for checking out range-shifting species. A host of birds formerly of the southern United States has been expanding northward for some decades now. Northern Mockingbird, Northern Cardinal, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, and Red-bellied Woodpecker have all claimed significant new northern wintering grounds in the East, and White-winged Dove, Inca Dove, and Great-tailed Grackle have spread northward through the West. American Robins seem to be wintering in large numbers farther north across North America in recent years. Species' range maps, some features with animated maps, and the "Historical Results" tool all await perusal on the CBC web site. What is causing the northward shift of these species? Global climate change and large scale habitat alterations may well be in the mix, and the increase of bird feeding stations seems likely to be another factor in the survival of "half hardy" species farther north in winter. While the CBC database cannot address the causes of these range shifts over time, it can now quickly document what is happening with these species on a continental or regional basis.

A long lifetime—both that of the database itself and often of the people involved in the count—increases the value of the Christmas Bird Count. As has been mentioned in several summaries in the past few years, many of the current crop of "old guard" compilers and participants are retiring or dying. A new generation of Christmas Bird Count

constituents is learning from our mentors, and will be guiding the count for the seasons to come. As of this season, my own experience as Director and Editor of the Christmas Bird Count has now apparently exceeded that of one of my mentors—Allan Cruickshank. To my knowledge, Allan held the reins for 17 years, until now longer than anyone else during the count's run since Frank Chapman, and was in charge during the CBC's initial major expansion. During his tenure, the number of counts increased from roughly 400 to more than 800; look where we are today!

The continuation of the CBC tradition is key to its success, as each season we take to the field to inventory our familiar haunts, not knowing what surprise they may hold. The 105th CBC rewarded me with a particularly wonderful experience.

During a late morning break in coastal Rhode Island on one of my traditional counts, a flock of chickadees began to make a major fuss, soon joined by titmice, nuthatches, cardinals, kinglets, robins, and, yes, even a Red-bellied Woodpecker, all duly tallied. The focus of their attention was a small juniper tree. A quick check revealed the piercing stare of a Northern Saw-whet Owl at eye level. At long last I had seen the species that had evaded me on CBCs for years. It was eerie how similar the bird's gaze was to that of our cat, one of two littermates we had gotten during my first year with Audubon in 1987 and who had died the week before. Her brother (they were both indoor cats, by the way) followed her down the trail a few weeks later. I'm sure I'll find his gaze in another bird this coming CBC season. I'll certainly be out there looking.



It was long felt that, aside from southern Florida, Broad-winged Hawks (*Buteo platypterus*) would never be found on Christmas Bird Counts. This adult Broad-wing, photographed in Manhattan's Central Park on the Lower Hudson, New Jersey, CBC, disproves that conventional wisdom. Photo © Deborah Allen

What keeps observers on their toes with any out-of-range *Selasphorus* hummingbird is the fact that every once in a while what is believed to be a Rufous is really an Allen's Hummingbird (*Selasphorus sasin*). Often the only way to verify the identification to species is to capture the bird and measure its tail feathers. This Allen's was photographed in the Cape May, New Jersey, circle. Photo/Doyle Dowdell



Hummingbirds That Hung Around



It was thought for many years that hummingbirds vacated most of the North American continent by the early winter. While hummingbirds of a variety of species can be found on Christmas Bird Counts along the Pacific and Gulf coasts and in the desert Southwest, only recently have we realized that they survive—often at feeders—into the CBC season in more northern areas as well. Here is a sampling of this past season's late-lingering nectivorous jewels.



Observers on most CBCs in northern areas would consider themselves extremely lucky to have even one lingering hummingbird on their count; amazingly there were three hummingbirds of two different species present on the Newport-Westport, Rhode Island-Massachusetts, count this season. Two Rufous Hummingbirds (*Selasphorus rufus*) were at feeders in one yard (an immature male [top] and a female [above]), and even more shockingly, a female Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*) was present in another. Photos/Geoff Dennis



The 105th Christmas Bird Count Alphabetical Index to Regional Summaries

The regional summaries in the pages that follow are presented in geographical order. This alphabetical index will assist you in finding the summary for a particular region.

Species appearing in boldface in the regional summaries are deemed "unusual" by the regional editors, unless otherwise noted.

All maps in the regional summaries were created by Caroline Jackson.

A key to the editorial codes used in the summaries can be found on page 107.

For full names of count circles, please see the listing beginning on page 108.

Calling All Counters!



We're always looking for images to use in *American Birds*, such as photographs of birds seen during the Christmas Bird Count or participants in the field. If you would like your pictures considered for publication, please remember to send them to your count compiler or regional editor, asking them to forward the images to us. Include your name and contact information. Thank you.

CANADA

Alberta	48
British Columbia	51
Manitoba	48
New Brunswick	43
Newfoundland and Labrador	43
Northwest Territories	48
Nova Scotia	43
Nunavut	48
Ontario	46
Prince Edward Island	43
Quebec	44
Saint-Pierre et Miquelon	43
Saskatchewan	48
Yukon Territory	51

CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA

Brazil	104
Chile	104
Colombia	104
Costa Rica	104
Ecuador	104
Panama	104
Peru	104
Trinidad	104

MEXICO/BELIZE

Belize	103
Mexico	103

PACIFIC ISLANDS

Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands	101
Guam	101

WEST INDIES/BERMUDA

Bahamas	105
Bermuda	105
Dominican Republic	105
Puerto Rico	105
Virgin Islands	105

UNITED STATES

Alabama	74
Alaska	53
Arizona	95
Arkansas	84
California	98
Colorado	93
Connecticut	54
Delaware	62
Florida	68
Georgia	67
Hawaii	101
Idaho	91
Illinois	80
Indiana	77
Iowa	83
Kansas	86
Kentucky	71
Louisiana	85
Maine	54
Maryland	62
Massachusetts	54
Michigan	76
Minnesota	82
Mississippi	74
Missouri	84
Montana	90
Nebraska	86
Nevada	95
New Hampshire	54
New Jersey	60
New Mexico	94
New York	58
North Carolina	65
North Dakota	86
Ohio	71
Oklahoma	86
Oregon	96
Pennsylvania	60
Rhode Island	54
South Carolina	66
South Dakota	86
Tennessee	73
Texas	88
Utah	92
Vermont	54
Virginia	64
Washington	96
Washington, DC	64
West Virginia	71
Wisconsin	79
Wyoming	92



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