

# ROCKLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY

## 76<sup>th</sup> RAS and 123<sup>rd</sup> National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count Summary

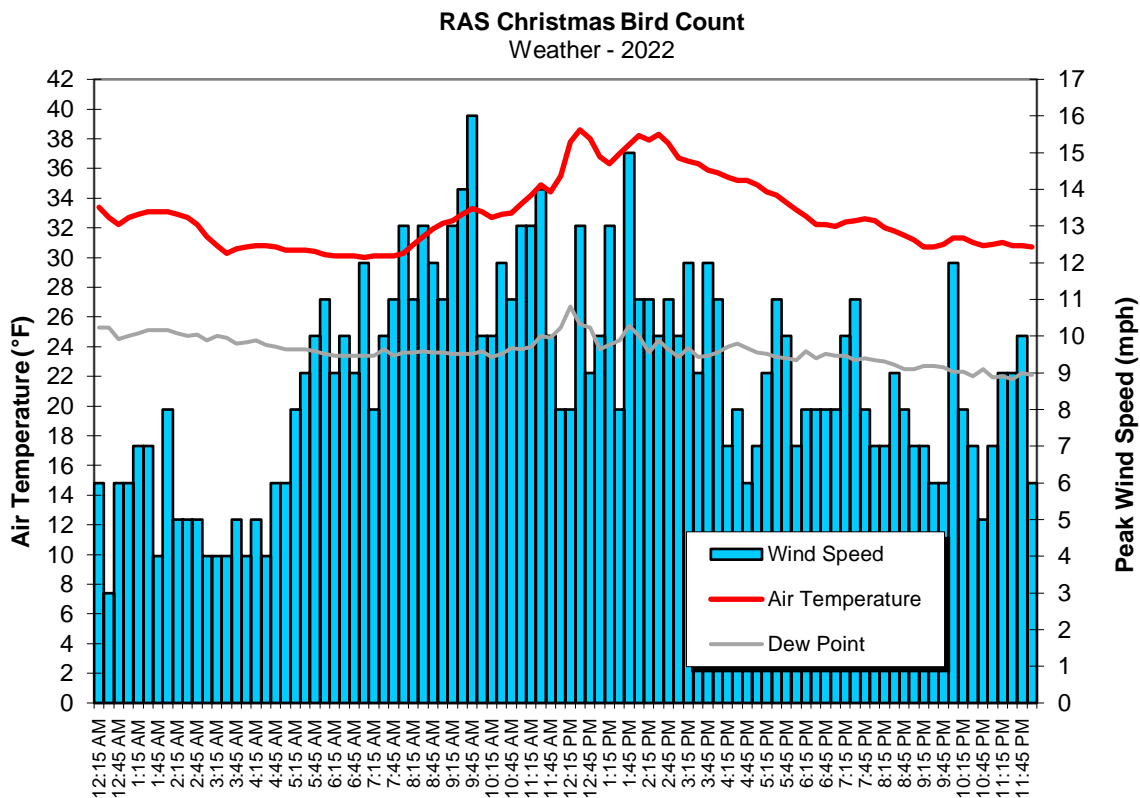
Date: 12/18/2022

Despite a third year of COVID-19 restrictions (albeit somewhat relaxed) our dedicated field and feeder counters came through with another successful effort! A tremendous **THANK YOU** to all participants!!

**Weather:** Weather conditions the week prior to the RAS 76<sup>th</sup> annual CBC were generally seasonable with average air temperatures ranging from 33 to 43°F and gusty WNW winds averaging 10-20 mph. During daylight birding hours on Count Day there were overcast skies during the morning giving way to mostly cloudy skies in the afternoon. Average daytime temperatures ranged from 30 to 39°F (**Figure 1**). Dew Point temperatures ranged from 23 to 27°F. Sustained winds ranged from 1 to 6 mph with gusts from 7 to 16 mph from the WNW throughout the day. With wind chill, daytime temperatures felt like 26 to 37°F.

Temperatures during nocturnal birding hours (from the earliest start time, 4:00 AM, to sunrise, 7:16 AM) ranged from 30 to 31°F with a dew point temperature of 24°F. Sustained winds during the period were 2-4 mph from the WSW. Wind gusts ranged from 4-12 mph from the WSW.

Prior to Count Week (Dec 15-21), air temperatures were relatively mild from December 1 through December 14 with the average daily high air temperature ranging from 33 to 56°F and the daily low air temperature ranging from 20 to 51°F. There were no snowfall events prior to or following Count Week. Most small ponds were partially frozen but larger waterbodies and flowing waters, including the Hudson River, were largely ice free.



**Figure 1.** Weather conditions for December 18, 2022 RAS CBC: Air temperature, dew point, and maximum wind gusts.

**Field Observers: 43** (+1 fledgling\*) field counters on Count Day. **\*Note:** Future official CBC counter, 6-year-old Phoebe Fuller, has now completed her sixth CBC! She is off to a great start!!

District	No.	Counters
01	5	(Team 1 & 3) Alan Wells (Compiler), Tom Cunningham, John Tyler (Team 2 & 3) Della Wells, Julia Warger
02	5	(Team 1) Simon Streatfeild, Gene Herskovics (Team 2) Elyse Fuller, Tom Fuller, (Phoebe Fuller*), Tom Glover
03	3	(Team 1) Frank Kemmer, Liz Cherry, Catherine Parker
04	4	(Team 1) Nancy Slowik, Karen Nickeson, Bonnie Koop (Team 2) Joanna Galdone
05	5	(Team 1) Zenon Bachir, Peter Johnson, Susan Frieman, Jean Arcieri (Team 2) Pat Murray
06	5	(Team 1) Stephanie Garber, Michael Garber, Suzanne Barclay, Walter Aurell, Veronika Krause
07	6	(Team 1) Carol Weiss, Nigel Bark, Linda Pistolesi, Ken McNichol, Bernie Doyle, Maude Lindsey
08	3	(Team 1) Jim Previdi, Ari Weiss, Stella Miller
09	6	(Team 1) Vince Plogar, Drew Ciganek, Tom Harten (Team 2) Tom Dow, Elda Dow, Chris Healy
10	1	(Team 1) Elijah Goodwin

**Districts:** 01 Haverstraw and Stony Point; 02 North Ramapo; 03 South Ramapo; 04 North and West Clarkstown; 05 Central Clarkstown; 06 South Clarkstown; 07 West Orangetown; 08 East Clarkstown; 09 East Orangetown; 10 Westchester.

**Feeder Counters** (7 Locations): Nancy Slowik, Stella Miller, Judy Cinquina, Donna Nye, Ari Weiss, Alan Spooner and Gene Brown.

**Coverage:** The seventeen (17) teams spent a total of 82.5 team hours covering 75 miles by foot during their daylight birding effort. These teams also spent an additional 23.5 team hours covering 263 miles by car during daylight hours. An additional 7.5 hours were spent on nighttime birding (owling). The number of count participants, 43, is above the 1977- 2021 median of 35.

**Results:** Rockland Audubon Society conducted its 76<sup>th</sup> annual Christmas Bird Count on Sunday, December 18, 2022. Forty-three (43) individuals (plus fledgling counter Phoebe Fuller) participated in the field count, tallying 19,062 birds of 87 different species. Seven feeder counters (at seven locations) added 255 birds of 19 species. Combining both field and feeder counts, 19,317 individuals representing 87 species were tallied. One additional species was added during Count Week bringing the total number of species detected to 88.

The single Count Week species was:

Common Name	Date Seen	District	Location	Observers
Scaup spp. (Lesser)	12/16	9	Piermont Pier	Ari Weiss

The number of species observed was relatively high by historic standards. The 87 count day species marks the 89<sup>th</sup> percentile of all RAS count years (1947-2021) and the 82<sup>nd</sup> percentile of all modern RAS circle boundary years (1978-2021). The number of individuals is about normal (57<sup>th</sup> percentile) for the entire 1947-2022 count period but exceptionally low (30<sup>th</sup> percentile) for the 1978-2022 period.

The ten most abundant species, in descending order, were: Canada Goose, European Starling, Common Merganser, Common Grackle, Dark-eyed Junco, Ring-billed Gull, House Sparrow, American Robin, Mallard, and Mourning Dove / White-throated Sparrow (tie). Together, they comprised 80% of the total individuals.

## New High Counts:

New high counts were established for:

**Bald Eagle** (98 v 78 in 2021) – continuing the increasing trend seen in recent years

**Cooper's Hawk** (12 vs 10 in 2019)

**Merlin** (3 v 2 during several years; first seen in 1992)

**Common Raven** (34 v 24 in 2021)

## New to the RAS CBC:

**Cackling Goose** – Until this year Cackling Goose has been unreported in the RAS CBC. This is largely a northern and western bird with only occasional strays showing up on the East Coast. Its close resemblance to the common Canada Goose makes it difficult to detect even when present. In fact, it was generally regarded as a subspecies of Canada Goose until 2004 when it was formally recognized as a distinct species. (Note: RAS would not have separated Cackling Goose from Canada Goose prior to 2004 even if the former had been found.) Since 2004 Cackling Goose has been detected in Rockland County only a very few times (only once prior to 2022?) and never on a Christmas Count. This year was quite different, there was a spate of sightings beginning in late November 2022: eBird records sightings from Hessian Lake (11/19-21); Rockland Lake (12/1, 12/17, 12/20, 12/22), Rockland Psychiatric Center (12/11, 12/18), Lake Tappan (12/16), and PIPC Parkway (12/17). During Count Week (12/17) Alan and Della Wells re-found and photographed (see **Photo 1**) a lingering individual originally found by Carol Weiss at Rockland Lake on 12/11). Carol Weiss, Linda Pistolesi, and Nigel Bark found another (previously reported) individual at the Rockland Psych Campus on Count Day (12/18) but were unable to obtain photographic documentation.

**Orange-crowned Warbler** – Alan Wells, Tom Cunningham, and John Tyler ran across the Rockland County rarity on Count Day at the Haverstraw County Landfill. This is a restricted area that we survey annually with permission from the Town Supervisor. The bird was seen flying into tangled brush about 20 ft in front of us. It was in plain view, at eye-level, for about a minute before flying further down the path where we lost sight of it. Tom Cunningham was able to obtain several photographs (see **Photo 2**). While rare in Rockland County (this appears to be only the 5<sup>th</sup> sighting in the County), Alan was familiar with the species from numerous sightings in California and other locations and was able to identify the bird immediately.

## Significant Misses

Missed birds are those birds “typically” seen but not found during the current year. A “MISS” is defined as any species not found on Count Day but (1) found in 50% or more of the RAS CBC counts since 1947 or (2) 50% or more of the RAS CBC counts in the previous 10 years.

**Ruffed Grouse** and **Ring-necked Pheasant** were again missed this year. Both have been seen in 40 previous counts. Ring-necked Pheasant has not been seen since 1995 and are now probably extirpated from the county. Any recent sightings are likely released or escaped farm-raised game birds. Ruffed Grouse has not been seen on the count since 2001.

**Wood Duck** – Seen in 38 (51%) previous counts since 1947 and seven (70%) out of the last 10 counts. It was seen in the 2020 count when three were found.

**Scaup spp.** – Seen in 53 (71%) previous counts since 1947 and six (60%) out of the last 10 counts. It was seen in the 2018 count when five were found. Ari Weiss found a single Lesser Scaup at Piermont Pier during Count Week.

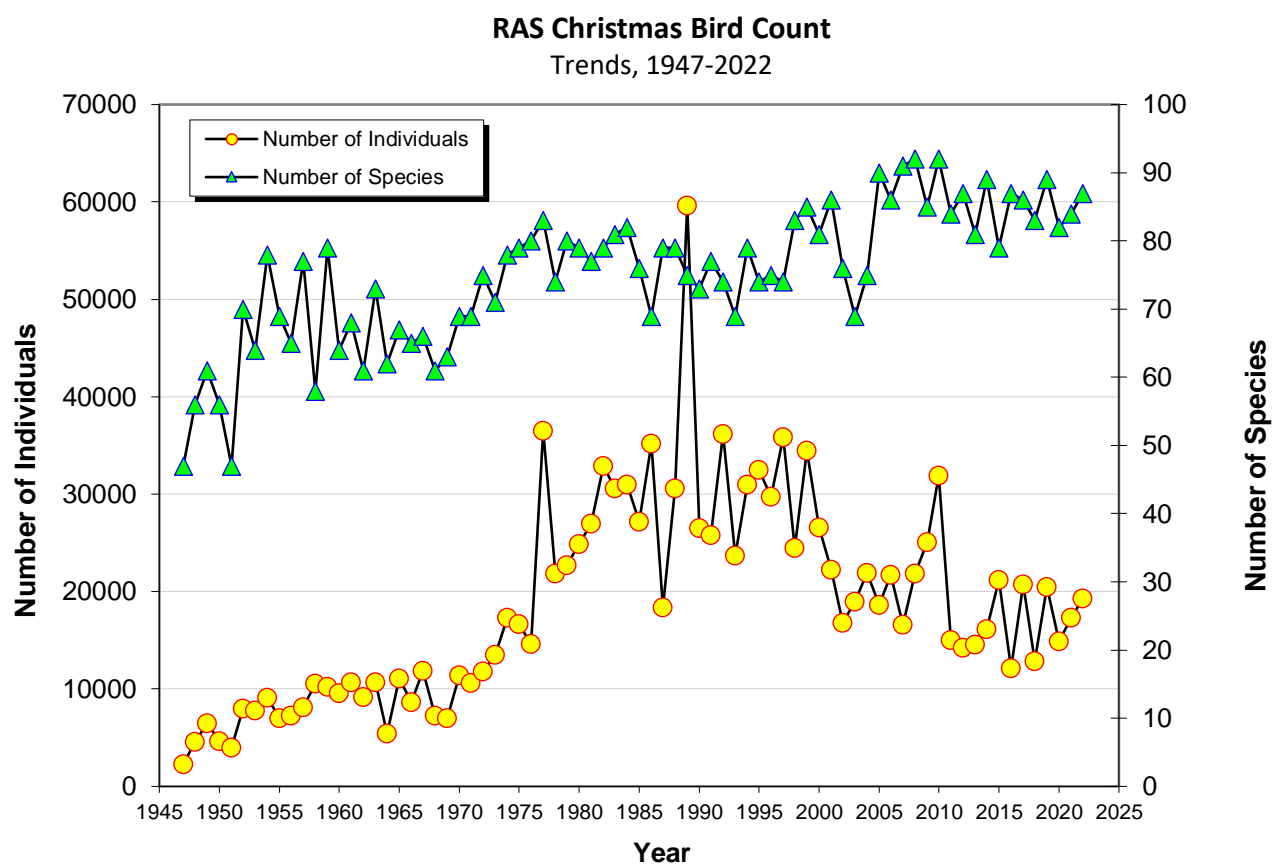
**Common Goldeneye** – Seen in 64 (85%) previous counts since 1947 and eight (80%) out of the last 10 counts. It was seen in the 2020 count when three were found and in 2021 when a single individual was found. This species was relatively common up until about 1996, thereafter the numbers began to decline.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** – Seen in 55 (73%) previous counts since 1947 but only four (40%) out of the last 10 counts. After several years of absence, a relatively large number of individuals (78) were seen in the in 2021, only to be followed by another year of complete absence.

**Field Sparrow** – Seen in 59 (79%) previous counts since 1947 and four (40%) out of the last 10 counts; last seen in 2020 when two were sighted.

**Savannah Sparrow** – Seen in 34 (45%) previous counts since 1947 and five (50%) out of the last 10 counts, last seen in 2019 when three were found.

**Brown-headed Cowbird** – Seen in 52 (69%) previous counts since 1947 and five (50%) out of the last 10 counts; the species was last seen in the 2019 RAS CBC when a single individual was found.



**Figure 2.** Number of species and individuals by year reported for Rockland Audubon CBC.



**Photo 1. Cackling Goose** is a Rockland County rarity found for the first time this year during a RAS Christmas Count. The above photo was taken on December 17, 2022 at Rockland Lake State Park by Alan Wells.



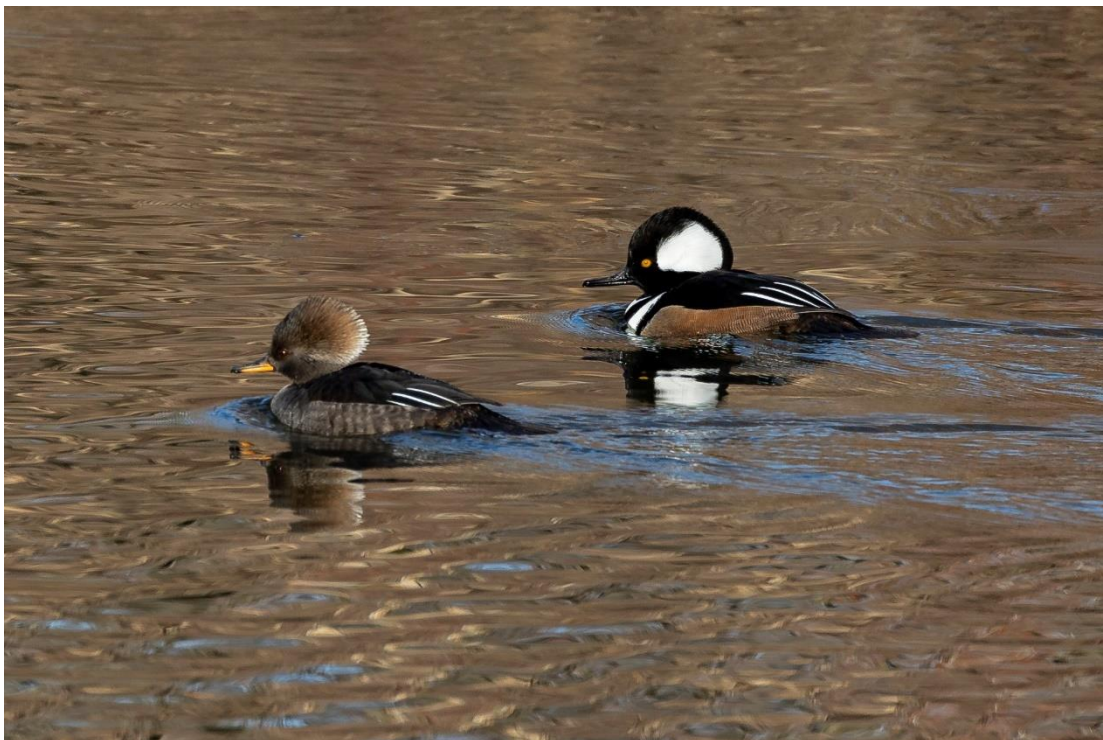


**Photo 2.** Another first for the RAS CBC was this **Orange-crowned Warbler** found at the Haverstraw County Landfill. The above bird was photographed by Tom Cunningham on December 18, 2022.



**Photo 3. Red-breasted Nuthatches** are always a pleasure to find! The Haverstraw Marina has been a rather reliable location for this species over the last several years and proved so again this year. Alan Wells returned to this location on January 14, 2023 to obtain this photograph of a foraging nuthatch.

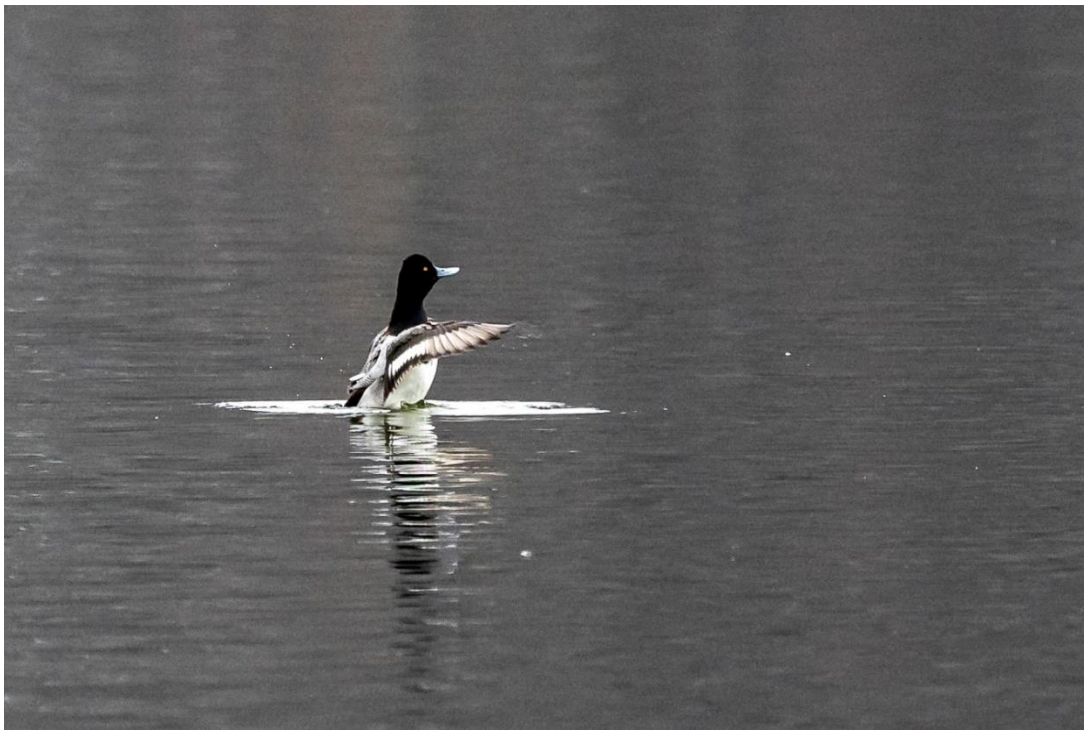




**Photo 4. Hooded Merganser** numbers made a strong showing again this year. Since the early 1980s this species has been increasing at an average rate of nearly 8% per year. This pair was photographed by Alan Wells at Haverstraw Bay County Park on December 12, 2022.



**Photo 5.** After the West Nile virus outbreak in 1999, **European Starling** numbers dropped precipitously. Thereafter, numbers have been increasing only slowly, at an average rate of less than 1% per year. This individual was photographed by Alan Wells at Rockland Lake State Park on 12/17/2022.



**Photo 6.** Scaup spp. are not uncommon during November through April at Rockland Lake and Piermont Pier. This year none were found on Count Day. Ari Weiss found one at Piermont Pier on December 16 and Alan Wells found this **Lesser Scaup** at Rockland Lake on January 11, 2023 (outside of Count Week).



**Photo 7.** The only three **Great Cormorant** found during the 2022 RAS CBC were found at the Haverstraw Marina (District #1). These two were photographed at Haverstraw Marina on January 14, 2023 by Alan Wells.



# ROCKLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT, 2022

Common Name	Total	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	Years Seen	Previous High Count	New High ?	Current Year Rank
	<b>19317</b>	<b>2771</b>	<b>1974</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>1776</b>	<b>4914</b>	<b>3832</b>	<b>1582</b>	<b>4245</b>	<b>548</b>				
	<b>87</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>40</b>				
Snow Goose	2									2		22	124		74
Canada Goose	4230	1145	259	8	3	371	165	1107	664	188	320	58	4892		1
<b>Cackling Goose</b>	1							1				0	0	<b>NEW</b>	82
Mute Swan	158	3	1		2	6		5	141			71	205		18
Gadwall	127		112					2	13			45	189		21
American Black Duck	45	10	7		2			3		18	5	75	493		38
Mallard	403	137	40	11		23	16	114	8	47	7	74	2782		9
Black Duck x Mallard Hybrid	1							1							82
Northern Shoveler	6								6			40	133		61
Green-winged Teal	4	4										21	81		67
Canvasback	30									30		69	4203		43
Ring-necked Duck	168	73	95									44	193		16
Scaup spp. (Lesser)	<b>CW</b>									<b>CW</b>					----
Bufflehead	70	1	12			12			39	6		64	138		31
Hooded Merganser	135	13	1		3	5	3	42	65	2	1	45	237		20
Common Merganser	2446				55	234	6	1897	253	1		74	5700		3
Ruddy Duck	65									65		68	761		33
Wild Turkey	5		2				3					28	86		64
Pied-billed Grebe	2	1							1			39	13		74
Double-crested Cormorant	7									6	1	39	112		57
Great Cormorant	3	3										26	8		70

# ROCKLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT, 2022

Common Name	Total	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	Years Seen	Previous High Count	New High ?	Current Year Rank
Great Blue Heron	48	4	2		1		1	25	7	7	1	50	53		37
Black Vulture	80	24	4	2		27	3	3	1	16		20	187		30
Turkey Vulture	124	9	12	8	4	68	5	2	2	13	1	35	186		24
Bald Eagle	98	11	1	1		1	9	65		9	1	44	78	YES	27
Northern Harrier	1									1		42	5		82
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2								1	1		49	11		74
Cooper's Hawk	12	1	2		2		1			5	1	40	10	YES	51
Red-shouldered Hawk	4				1						3	30	12		67
Red-tailed Hawk	61	7	5	6	2	3	4	8	5	15	6	69	81		36
American Kestrel	2							2				56	23		74
Merlin	3		1							2		14	2	YES	70
Peregrine Falcon	5		1					4				25	8		64
American Coot	40								40			68	304		39
Killdeer	3										3	37	10		70
Ring-billed Gull	520	83	7		40	165	12	164	22	26	1	73	8922		6
Herring Gull	31	8			1					15	7	75	5636		42
Great Black-backed Gull	13	8								4	1	75	458		49
Rock Pigeon	275	4	99		5	138		27		2		45	1027		13
Mourning Dove	339	88	50	16	13	19	3	30	15	94	11	74	750		10
Eastern Screech-Owl	9	1						3		2	3	59	22		54
Great Horned Owl	7	2						3	1	1		45	11		57
Barred Owl	2				1					1		25	4		74
Belted Kingfisher	20	4	4	2		1		4	1	2	2	72	20		47

# ROCKLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT, 2022

Common Name	Total	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	Years Seen	Previous High Count	New High ?	Current Year Rank
Red-bellied Woodpecker	94	6	13	14	10	12	7	4	12	11	5	51	124		28
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	7	3	1				1		1		1	42	14		57
Downy Woodpecker	85	11	18	3	3	6	2	7	8	25	2	75	187		29
Hairy Woodpecker	29	4	6	1		2		6	1	7	2	75	58		44
Northern Flicker	16	3	2	3		1		2	1	3	1	73	41		48
Pileated Woodpecker	10	4	3					1		2		65	15		53
Blue Jay	308	10	45	22	8	56	33	25	30	75	4	75	508		12
American Crow	182	34	50	2	17	42	9	15	3	6	4	75	38520		15
Fish Crow	23	3				8		3		3	6	47	86		46
Common Raven	34	5	3		7	2	1	6	3	6	1	24	24	YES	41
Black-capped Chickadee	137	22	13	21	10	6	14	5	20	17	9	75	579		19
Tufted Titmouse	126	11	31	18	10	5	14	7	9	15	6	75	292		22
Red-breasted Nuthatch	7	4			1		1			1		50	17		57
White-breasted Nuthatch	99	8	10	12	7	11	5	9	10	17	10	75	150		26
Brown Creeper	3		1						1	1		73	26		70
Carolina Wren	70	8	10	2	4	2	2	2	14	20	6	66	92		31
Winter Wren	12	2	6		1				3			70	12		51
Golden-crowned Kinglet	2									2		66	41		74
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	4	1						2		1		55	17		67
Eastern Bluebird	9	4	5									37	135		54
Hermit Thrush	2	1								1		50	14		74
American Robin	456	7	130	4	22	15	4	21	14	238	1	74	3702		8
Gray Catbird	1									1		62	11		82



## ROCKLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT, 2022

Common Name	Total	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	Years Seen	Previous High Count	New High ?	Current Year Rank
Northern Mockingbird	64	19	8	3	1	8	6	9	3	5	2	70	170		34
European Starling	3593	640	594	72	40	315	167	74	75	1595	21	75	13665		2
American Pipit	6									6		13	32		61
Cedar Waxwing	6								6			63	415		61
<b>Orange-crowned Warbler</b>	1	1										0	0	<b>NEW</b>	82
Eastern Towhee	1									1		52	23		82
American Tree Sparrow	28	7	8				6			7		75	762		45
Savannah Sparrow	2									2		34	50		74
Fox Sparrow	5									5		65	32		64
Song Sparrow	166	24	32	9		7	1	5	19	56	13	75	322		17
Swamp Sparrow	13		1	12								65	38		49
White-throated Sparrow	339	35	49		13	30	37	25	24	94	32	75	587		10
Dark-eyed Junco	736	88	115	82	29	80	34	100	3	191	14	75	1224		5
Northern Cardinal	125	20	22	6	16	5	9	5	6	22	14	75	339		23
Red-winged Blackbird	210	4	3	2						201		75	4230		14
Rusty Blackbird	9						9					28	121		54
Common Grackle	2012		1	78	1			1032		900		66	8817		4
Purple Finch	35				35							63	158		40
House Finch	111	9	25		20	1	2	6	10	38		60	333		25
American Goldfinch	63	1	17	2	8	4	7	3	6	11	4	75	486		35
House Sparrow	469	128	37	68		85	15	28	15	78	15	75	1293		7

**Districts:** 01 Haverstraw and Stony Point; 02 North Ramapo; 03 South Ramapo; 04 North and West Clarkstown; 05 Central Clarkstown; 06 South Clarkstown; 07 West Orangetown; 08 East Clarkstown; 09 East Orangetown; 10 Westchester