

Thank you for helping with the 46th Rockwood Christmas Bird Count on December 21, 2019. The 82 species counted was right at the average for the past 46 years. Highlights of this year's count—species recorded on fewer than 10 past counts—include Yellow Warbler (the only previous record was in 1997), Horned Grebes (8 past counts), 2 Merlins (6 past counts), Turkey Vulture (4 past counts), 3 Pileated Woodpeckers (last year was the first), American Pipit (2 previous counts and 2 count week birds), Tree Swallows (4 previous counts) and Savannah Sparrow (8 past counts). There was also an Oregon type Dark-eyed Junco, which is somewhat unusual as the Slate-colored is the usual junco type present.

Unfortunately, some of the most interesting species were count week birds, being seen just before or after the actual count. The Purple Sandpiper—present the day after the count—was a new species that has not been on a past count or even a previous count week bird. Other interesting count week birds include Dunlin, Marsh Wren, Gray Catbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Northern Shrike and Wild Turkey.

Usual or interesting species seen on fewer than 15 previous counts include Killdeer (14 past counts) and Northern Mockingbird (11 past counts). A record number of Red-bellied Woodpeckers was counted and Redheads (2nd highest total), Belted Kingfishers (3rd highest total) and White-breasted Nuthatches (2nd highest total) were more numerous than usual. Not on a count since 2010, a Ring-necked Pheasant was a welcome addition. Outside of Detroit, pheasants are becoming increasingly hard to find.

A few species were less abundant than usual. Only 1 of the count areas had American Crow, giving it a record low count; and the 3 American Coot were extremely low, the lowest total since 1988. The number of American Tree Sparrows was a record low, although this was likely weather related; with the mild conditions and lack of snow, birds may have been more spread out and less likely to form conspicuous groups. The same probably applies to House Finch whose total was the lowest since 1984. A few species usually counted were missed including Sharp-shinned Hawk (38 past counts), Hermit Thrush (37 past counts), Red-breasted Nuthatch (39 past counts) and Snow Bunting (35 past counts). Winter finches were also absent, as were the non-resident owls. There were also no usual gulls this year.

Special thanks must go to Paul Cypher and Kevin Arnold for making the Lake Erie Metropark Marshlands Museum available for the tally and to Ava Landgraf who greatly helped with the area assignments and other logistical issues. The count was sponsored by the Detroit Audubon Society, which also provided the chili for lunch and the tally.

The 2020 count will be on **Saturday, December 26, 2020**. Please mark this date on your calendars and I sincerely hope this date will prove doable for everyone.

Tom Carpenter, compiler

Results of the 46th Rockwood Christmas bird count held 21 December 2019

Canada Goose 2879	Merlin 2	Marsh Wren cw
Mute Swan 482	American Coot 3 (low)	Golden-crowned Kinglet 25
Tundra Swan 605	Ring-necked Pheasant 1	Ruby-crowned Kinglet 1
swan species 25	Wild Turkey cw	Eastern Bluebird 60
Wood Duck 1	Killdeer 1	American Robin 37
Northern Gadwall 42	Dunlin cw	Gray Catbird cw
American Wigeon 3	Purple Sandpiper cw	Northern Mockingbird 1
American Black Duck 108	Bonaparte's Gull 27	European Starling 933
Mallard 3385	Ring-billed Gull 828	American Pipit 1
Northern Pintail 1	Herring Gull 476	Cedar Waxwing 19
Canvasback 4366	Mixed Herring/Ring-billed 515	Yellow-rumped Warbler 7
Redhead 3010	Great Black-backed Gull 13	Yellow Warbler 1
Ring-necked Duck 60	gull species 4	American Tree Sparrow 39* (82)
Greater Scaup 28	Rock Pigeon 213	Savannah Sparrow 1
Lesser Scaup 77	Mourning Dove 484	Swamp Sparrow 3
scaup species 80	Eastern Screech Owl 9	White-throated Sparrow 13
Long-tailed Duck 1	Great Horned Owl 3	Song Sparrow 34
Bufflehead 205	Belted Kingfisher 10	Dark-eyed Junco 212
Common Goldeneye 323	Red-bellied Woodpecker 69* (62)	Oregon Junco 1
Hooded Merganser 14	Downy Woodpecker 93	Northern Cardinal 140
Common Merganser 22	Hairy Woodpecker 16	Red-winged Blackbird 16
Red-breasted Merganser 14	Pileated Woodpecker 3* (1)	Eastern Meadowlark cw
Ruddy Duck 157	Northern Flicker 20	Brown-headed Cowbird 253
duck species 4	Northern Shrike cw	Common Grackle 17
Horned Grebe 2	American Crow 3* (5)	American Goldfinch 71
Great Blue Heron 25	Horned Lark 1	House Finch 43 (low)
Turkey Vulture 1	Tree Swallow 31	House Sparrow 481
Bald Eagle 26	Blue Jay 119	
Northern Harrier 7	Black-capped Chickadee 149	
Cooper's Hawk 7	Tufted Titmouse 42	
Red-shouldered Hawk 2	White-breasted Nuthatch 82	
Red-tailed Hawk 48	Brown Creeper 23	
American Rough-legged Hawk 1	Carolina Wren 20	
American Kestrel 11	Winter Wren 4	

Total species counted: 82

Total individuals counted: 21,695

bold type indicates an unusual or noteworthy species, or an unusually high number counted but not a record

asterisk designates a record high or low count for the species with the previous record in ()

cw = count week—species was seen in the count circle 3 days before or after the date of the count but was not seen during the day of the count

41 observers in 14 parties

351.25 party miles: 39.75 on foot and 311.5 by car

68.5 party hours: 30.75 on foot and 37.75 by car

8.75 hours owling and 30.25 miles