

Christmas Bird Count spots 60 species here

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Halton/North Peel Naturalists Club

In contrast to the weather experienced for the 2013 Christmas Bird Count in the aftermath of the ice storm that year, the weather for the 24th annual Christmas Bird Count on December 27, 2014 was quite delightful.

Although there was a very brief light shower around noon, the lack of snow made for excellent survey conditions. The temperatures that got to approximately 10C in the afternoon were probably the second highest in the 24 years that the survey has been undertaken. The survey had a new high total of 33 participants.

The number of species reported was 60 plus one hybrid, which exceeds the previous high of 57 species seen in 2003. Despite the large increase in numbers of Canada Geese (over half of the total), the total number of birds was 8,413. The total of counted birds was lower than the long-term average by more

than 1,300. Six species (Ruffed Grouse, Snowy Owl, Golden-crowned Kinglet, American Robin, White-throated Sparrow, and Pine Siskin) made the final list but were not tallied on Count Day.

Eight species were present in new high numbers. These included Trumpeter Swan (2), Northern Shoveler (7), Bufflehead (2), Common Goldeneye (22), Cooper's Hawk (7), Eastern Screech Owl (6), Red-bellied Woodpecker (18), and Common Raven (4). Twenty-six species were present in numbers below average. The single Common Redpoll was the lowest count recorded to date when the species is actually present; however, this is a highly-eruptive species with numbers as high as 1,670 in 1997 and present only about every other year.

The unusually warm conditions and lack of snow in combination with extra observers likely affected the overall results. The lack of snow would cause fewer birds to require food from feeders though most feeders observed were

not filled. Despite the annual variability in numbers observed over the duration of the Halton Hills Count, we can conclude that numbers of Canada Geese, Common Raven and Red-bellied Woodpecker are increasing while the numbers of American Kestrel have declined.

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Results of the 2014 Christmas Bird Count at Halton Hills

Species	Total	Avg	Low	High	Species	Total	Avg	Low	High
Canada Goose	4281	1879	229	4577	Pileated Woodpecker	5	3.5	0	12
Cackling Goose	1				Northern Shrike	2	4.2	1	19
Mute Swan	3	5.7	1	15	Blue Jay	85	158.3	60	333
Trumpeter Swan	2	1.0	1	1	American Crow	379	344.7	55	692
Gadwall	1	1.0	1	1	Common Raven	4	1.7	0	3
American Black Duck	50	18.7	2	67	Black-capped Chickadee	339	683.1	244	1211
Mallard	488	558	135	1636	Red-breasted Nuthatch	6	9.2	1	22
Northern Shoveler	7				White-breasted Nuthatch	31	44.9	19	82
Bufflehead	2	1.0	1	1	Brown Creeper	4	3.2	1	8
Common Goldeneye	22	2.6	1	7	Winter Wren	1	0.7	0	1
Common Merganser	11	14.5	1	66	Golden-crowned Kinglet	CW	7.6	1	30
Ruffed Grouse	CW	4.2	0	8	American Robin	CW	30.8	1	206
Wild Turkey	15	21.9	0	55	Northern Mockingbird	2	1.9	0	5
Great Blue Heron	2	1.4	0	4	European Starling	503	2114	485	3490
Bald Eagle	2	1.3	0	3	Cedar Waxwing	83	73.4	7	240
Northern Harrier	1	3.5	0	11	American Tree Sparrow	131	299.7	95	837
Sharp-shinned Hawk	5	4.5	1	11	Song Sparrow	12	5.0	1	22
Cooper's Hawk	7	2.5	0	5	White-throated Sparrow	CW	2.6	1	10
Red-tailed Hawk	50	64.7	39	117	Slate-colored Junco	155	257.2	91	565
Rough-legged Hawk	3	7.5	1	45	Snow Bunting	35	267.5	1	1118
American Kestrel	2	10.4	0	16	Northern Cardinal	45	58.9	29	95
Ring-billed Gull	126	182.5	3	2010	Red-winged Blackbird	1	4.7	1	12
Herring Gull	22	42.2	1	222	Purple Finch	3	12.6	1	52
Rock Pigeon	518	617.2	210	1455	House Finch	73	235.1	23	456
Mourning Dove	241	708.8	191	1385	Common Redpoll	1	264.2	3	1670
Eastern Screech Owl	6	1.7	0	4	Pine Siskin	CW	13.3	1	50
Snowy Owl	CW	0.5	0	1	American Goldfinch	212	185.9	37	470
Belted Kingfisher	3	2.8	1	7	House Sparrow	347	668.7	196	1316
Red-bellied Woodpecker	18	1.9	0	6	Hybrid Mallard X Black	1			
Downy Woodpecker	44	52.1	21	91					
Hairy Woodpecker	19	16.6	2	32	Total Birds	8413	9760	3131	15507
Northern Flicker	1	1.1	0	2	No. Species	60	50	41	57

(CW = Count Week)

Results of the 2014 Christmas Bird Count in Halton Hills.

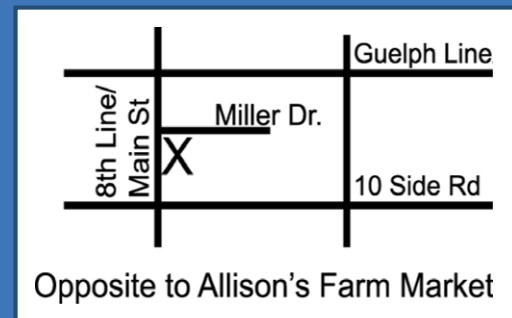
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