

24<sup>th</sup> Annual  
 PHILADELPHIA MID-WINTER BIRD CENSUS  
 January 9, 2010

Snow Goose	1	Northern Flicker	36
Canada Goose	4723	Pileated Woodpecker	7
Mute Swan	8	Eastern Phoebe	2
Gadwall	29	Blue Jay	163
American Black Duck	112	American Crow	107
Mallard	691	Fish Crow	28
Northern Shoveler	176	<b>Northern Rough-winged Swallow</b>	<b>62</b>
Northern Pintail	1	<b>Barn Swallow</b>	<b>1</b>
Green-winged Teal	1	Carolina Chickadee	482
Ring-necked Duck	13	Tufted Titmouse	269
Greater Scaup	2	White-breasted Nuthatch	121
Lesser Scaup	11	Brown Creeper	16
Scaup sp.	17	Carolina Wren	151
Bufflehead	52	Winter Wren	9
Common Goldeneye	5	Wren sp.	1
Hooded Merganser	20	Golden-crowned Kinglet	16
Common Merganser	153	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	7
<b>Red-breasted Merganser</b>	<b>1</b>	Eastern Bluebird	8
Ruddy Duck	262	Hermit Thrush	3
Wild Turkey	4	American Robin	1509
Pied-billed Grebe	2	Gray Catbird	5
Double-crested Cormorant	<b>122</b>	Northern Mockingbird	87
Great Cormorant	32	Brown Thrasher	1
Great Blue Heron	12	European Starling	3126
Black Vulture	4	Cedar Waxwing	24
Turkey Vulture	17	Palm Warbler (Subsp? 1, West. 2)	3
Bald Eagle	2	Eastern Towhee	8
Northern Harrier	1	American Tree Sparrow	<b>6</b>
Sharp-shinned Hawk	12	Chipping Sparrow	2
Cooper's Hawk	9	Field Sparrow	30
Northern Goshawk	1	Savannah Sparrow	1
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	Fox Sparrow	13
Red-tailed Hawk	76	Song Sparrow	463
American Kestrel	4	Swamp Sparrow	<b>8</b>
Peregrine Falcon	2	White-throated Sparrow	1645
American Coot	29	Dark-eyed Junco	626
Wilson's Snipe	2	Northern Cardinal	434
Ring-billed Gull	4848	<b>Dickcissel</b>	<b>1</b>
Herring Gull	277	Red-winged Blackbird	257
Lesser Black-backed Gull	1	Rusty Blackbird	6
Great Black-backed Gull	196	Blackbird sp.	30
Rock Pigeon	<b>753</b>	Brown-headed Cowbird	1
Mourning Dove	478	Purple Finch	2
Eastern Screech-Owl	45	House Finch	236
Great Horned Owl	5	American Goldfinch	114
Belted Kingfisher	4	House Sparrow	987
Red-bellied Woodpecker	110		
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	<b>26</b>		
Downy Woodpecker	172	<b>Total Species</b>	<b>93</b>
Hairy Woodpecker	31	<b>Total Individuals</b>	<b>24,670</b>

**OBSERVERS****AREAS COVERED**

Matt Sharp	Benjamin Rush State Park and vicinity
Frank Windfelder	Delaware River (Poquessing Creek to Rhawn St.), Pennypack Creek (Wooden Bridge Run, 3300 block of Solly Ave.), Northeast Water Pollution Control Plant and vicinity
Butch Lishman, Vince DeAntonias, Nick Zahn	Pleasant Hill Park
Peter Kurtz	Pennypack Creek (Verree Rd. to Pine Rd.)
Brian Schultz	Pennypack Creek (Bustleton Ave. to Upper Rhawn St. Bridge)
Roland Williams	Pennypack Creek (Upper Rhawn St. Bridge to Frankford Ave.)
Paul Driver	Northeast Water Pollution Control Plant and vicinity, Northeast Philadelphia Airport, Southampton Rd. west of Roosevelt Blvd.
Cindy Ahern, Eric Ahern	Northeast Philadelphia (various locations including Island Green Country Club, Burholme Park, Friends Hospital and Tacony Creek)
Richard Horwitz, Judy Stepanaskie	Delaware River (Philadelphia Naval Business Center to Frankford Creek), Northeast Water Pollution Control Plant, F. D. Roosevelt Park
David Wiedner	South Philadelphia (various locations along the Delaware River – Penn’s Landing to Snyder Ave. and adjoining neighborhood parks, gardens etc.)
Maria Walker	Yard count – 200 block of Morris St. in South Philadelphia
Chris Walters, Art McMorris, Edwin Shafer	Fort Mifflin, Army Corps of Engineers compound and vicinity, Penrose Ave. west of Schuylkill River, Southwest Water Pollution Control Plant and vicinity
Doris McGovern, Kerry Birnbaum, Martin Dellwo, Alice Severeid	John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge, Eastwick
Brian Byrnes	John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge
Denis Brennan, Gregg Gorton	Bartram’s Garden, Woodland Cemetery, Cobbs Creek (Morris Park, Whitby Ave., 63 <sup>rd</sup> and Race Sts. to Callowhill St.)
Erica Brendel, John Goschke	West Park (various locations including Philadelphia Zoo, Centennial Lake and Schuylkill River)
Winston and Wendy Moody	East Falls and lower Germantown (various locations including Queen Ln. Reservoir and the Schuylkill River at the Falls Bridge), Wissahickon Creek (in vicinity of Timber Ln.)
Michael Darcy	Roxborough (Schuylkill River and various adjacent locations in Manayunk)
Ken Januski, Jerene Schroeder	Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education, Manayunk Ave.
Steve Dupont	Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education
Chuck Hetzel, Leigh Ashbrook	Roxborough (Spring Ln. area)
Cliff and Nancy Hence	Cresheim Creek (Stenton Ave. to the Wissahickon Creek)
Al and Nancy Bilheimer	Wissahickon Creek (east bank - Springfield Ave. to Chestnut Hill Ave. and adjacent portions of Chestnut Hill)

**OBSERVERS (concluded)****AREAS COVERED (concluded)**

Celeste Hardester

Wissahickon Creek (west bank - Walnut Ln. to Henry Ave.)

David Belford, Jeff Belford,  
Alan Belford, Kendra Ormerod

Wissahickon Creek (west bank - Bell's Mill Rd. to Cathedral Rd.)

Andrew Albright

Wissahickon Creek (east bank - Northwestern Ave. to Thomas Mill Rd.)

Edie Parnum, Michael Rosengarten,  
Joe Hudson

Wissahickon Creek (west bank - Bell's Mill Rd. to Northwestern Ave.)

Jim Best, Val Best, Rich Conroy,  
Andy Fayer, Bob GutowskiMorris Arboretum, Wissahickon Creek (west bank from Roxborough Ave.  
to Forbidden Dr. between Walnut Ln. and Henry Ave.)

William Reaume

Awbury Arboretum

Keith Russell, Jeanne Schock,  
Shawn ToweyWissahickon Creek (various locations along east and west banks)  
East Park (various locations including the East Park Reservoir and  
Schuylkill River)

Catherine Brownholtz

Yard Count – 5300 block of Belfield Ave. in Germantown

**CONDITIONS**

Temperature: low 21°F at 8:03 am, high 30°F at 3:59 pm.

Sky: Mostly sunny throughout the day.

Precipitation: None during the day.

Ground: Covered with 1" of snow that had fallen the previous day.

Water: Most still waters 90-100% frozen. All rivers and streams open.

Wind: Light and variable with 15-25 mph gusts throughout the day.

**2010 CENSUS SUMMARY**

The 24<sup>th</sup> annual Philadelphia Mid-Winter Bird Census was held on Saturday January 9, 2010. This year 58 participants (29 field parties and 2 yard observers) counted 93 species and 24,670 individuals. The long-term (24-year) averages are 92 species and 26,651 individuals.

As is often the case, this year's results were partially affected by the weather. A record-breaking 22-inch snowfall on December 19 was followed by 3 weeks of mainly sub-freezing temperatures. As a result most lakes and ponds were frozen on the day of the census (a situation encountered on about 40% of previous censuses) causing some waterbirds to be low in number and others to be missed. But this winter's early cold snap had produced heavy snow, high winds or both on most of the dates on which Christmas Bird Counts in the Philadelphia region were held this winter - significantly reducing their species totals. Fortunately, even though this year's Mid-Winter Census species total was reduced by the freeze, weather conditions on the day of the census were not as difficult as they had been during the CBC period (December 19 – January 3). In contrast, weather conditions on census day were generally pleasant with abundant sunshine, no sustained strong winds, and only an inch of snow on the ground.

This year's results were highlighted by the observation of new 2 species that had not been recorded on the census before. The first of these was a Barn Swallow that was observed by Frank Windfelder at the Northeast Water Pollution Control (WPC) Plant. This bird was foraging with the flock of Rough-winged Swallows that have now been wintering at the plant for 6 consecutive years. The Barn Swallow had first been observed at the plant in early December (Barn Swallows have only been recorded in Pennsylvania during December on a few occasions) but the census record appears to be the first January record of the species for the state. Photos of the bird taken by Tom Johnson on December 29<sup>th</sup> can be found online at <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/bonxie88/4229206373/>>.

The other new species was a Dickcissel that was found at Pleasant Hill Park along the northern Delaware River by Butch Lishman and also observed by Vince DeAntonias and Nick Zahn. The bird, a possible immature male that was associating with House Sparrows, was later photographed. Photos taken by Bert Filemyr can be found online at <[http://www.thefilemyrs.com/Birding/BirdPhotographs/2010Pictures/01\\_11\\_10/01\\_11\\_10.htm](http://www.thefilemyrs.com/Birding/BirdPhotographs/2010Pictures/01_11_10/01_11_10.htm)>, while photos taken by Bill Keim can be found online at <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/forktail/>>. These 2 species raised the census' cumulative (1987-2010) species total to 149.

In addition to the above, there were 21 additional species that were only reported by a single party this year. These included Northern Pintail, Greater Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, Bald Eagle, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Peregrine Falcon, Fish Crow (Windfelder); Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, American Coot, American Tree Sparrow - all found at F. D. Roosevelt Park (Horwitz, Stepanaskie); Brown Thrasher, Savannah Sparrow (Sharp); Palm Warbler, Purple Finch (Driver); Snow Goose, Wilson's Snipe (Brendel, Goschke); Northern Goshawk (Best, Best, Conroy, Fayer, Gutowski); Brown-headed Cowbird (Januski, Schroeder), Northern Harrier (Walters, McMorris, Shafer) and Red-shouldered Hawk (McGovern, Birnbaum, Dellwo, Severeid). Most of the species in the above list are recorded on an annual or nearly annual basis, but some are not. Those that are not include Red-breasted Merganser (found this year on the Delaware at Glen Foerd; 4<sup>th</sup> record and first since 2004), Northern Goshawk (found at Morris Arboretum; 9<sup>th</sup> record and the first since 2004); Wilson's Snipe (found along a stream feeding Centennial Lake in West Park; 8<sup>th</sup> record, last recorded in 2009), Brown Thrasher (found at Benjamin Rush State Park; 7<sup>th</sup> record and the first since 2004), and Palm Warbler (found at the Northeast WPC Plant; 10<sup>th</sup> record, last recorded in 2009).

Other good finds this year included 4 Wild Turkeys at the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge (McGovern et al.; Byrnes), single Eastern Phoebe at the Northeast WPC Plant (Windfelder; Driver) and the Southwest WPC Plant (Walters, McMorris, Shafer), and individual Chipping Sparrows at the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education (Januski, Schroeder) and Woodland Cemetery in Center City (Gorton, Brennan).

In contrast to the last year when record high numbers were recorded for 11 species, this year record highs (listed here along with the previous high number) were only recorded for 2 species; Double-crested Cormorant (122 in 2010, 100 in 2009) and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (26 in 2010, 21 in 1996). Record lows however (only listed here for species that are often recorded in much larger numbers) were recorded for Northern Pintail (1), Green-winged Teal (1), Rock Pigeon (753), American Tree Sparrow (6), Savannah Sparrow (1), Swamp Sparrow (8) and Brown-headed Cowbird (1). And as usual, some expected species (usually recorded annually or semi-annually) were missed. This year's misses included American Wigeon (8<sup>th</sup> time missed), Canvasback (1<sup>st</sup> time missed), Redhead (14<sup>th</sup> time missed), Merlin (3<sup>rd</sup> miss since 1998 but rare before 1998), Killdeer (2<sup>nd</sup> time missed), Yellow-rumped Warbler (4<sup>th</sup> time missed), White-crowned Sparrow (5<sup>th</sup> time missed) and Common Grackle (3<sup>rd</sup> time missed). All of the duck species listed above had been present in late December and were clearly driven away or made scarce by the freeze.

I thought it would be interesting to once again list those species that were reported by the largest number of parties. The top 3 species from this year's list were also among the top 4 in 2009 and 2008. This year's list includes Downy Woodpecker, Northern Cardinal - 27 parties, Carolina Chickadee - 26, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow - 25, American Robin, Carolina Wren, Mourning Dove, Tufted Titmouse, House Sparrow - 24, Blue Jay, White-breasted Nuthatch - 23, Northern Mockingbird, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Red-tailed Hawk - 22, American Goldfinch, Dark-eyed Junco, European Starling - 21, American Crow - 20, Canada Goose - 19, Rock Pigeon - 18, Ring-billed Gull - 17, Mallard - 16, House Finch - 15, Hairy Woodpecker - 14, Northern Flicker - 13. While some species may appear on the above list in a different place than one might have expected, the list clearly shows us which bird species overall are the most widespread and easily found in Philadelphia during the winter.

Finally, over the last decade some of the census' long-term participants have unfortunately passed away including Bob Billings, David Cutler, Ed Fingerhood, Ken Gordon, Jim Lyman, Chris McCabe, John Miller, Bob Sehl, and Sandra Sherman. Among these names were some of the most highly respected and well-known birders in the Philadelphia region. I was deeply honored to have their participation on the census - and in the case of Dave, Ed, John, and Sandy, from its inception. The many years of contributions they made to the census and to the regional birding scene were invaluable, and they will be sorely missed.

Thanks again to everyone who participated in this year's census for another great effort. I hope you will be able to join us again next year on January 8, 2011 when census will mark its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

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