

## THE CAPE MAY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 1903-1979

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The first Cape May Christmas Bird Count was made by William L. Bailey on December 27, 1903. This was the National Audubon Society's fourth annual Christmas Bird census. Mr. Bailey recorded 37 species, for a total of 2,061 individuals or birds seen.

No further Cape May counts were recorded until December 26, 1920, when three birders reported 38 species, 554 individuals. Again a year passed before the census became a yearly routine. On December 4, 1922, Julian K. Potter single-handedly conducted the census, recording 43 species, 345 individuals. In 1923 Potter enlisted the aid of several helpers, and on December 23rd they recorded 48 species, 1,480 individuals. On December 28, 1924, Potter and party totalled 54 species and 1,886 individuals. In 1925 Potter was sick, and the census takers failed to turn the report in to the National Audubon Society; thus we have no record for that year even though a count was taken.

These beginning years of the Christmas Bird Count were all conducted at Cape May Point, New Jersey. The early counters travelled on foot, some with only 3 or 4 power binoculars, while others might not have had any. In 1929 and 1930 two census counts were conducted in southern Cape May County, one in Stone Harbor, and one at Cape May Point.

In 1944 a map was made and divided into areas within which the participants had to restrict themselves. This more sophisticated and organized method set the pattern for future counts. The count now includes a circle 15 miles in diameter with Rio Grande as the center. The circle includes Avalon, all the Wildwoods, Cape May, North Cape May, and areas along the bay-shore, north to Reed's Beach. This 15 mile diameter is divided into 11 smaller areas. Each area has its own group of observers who must remain in their assigned count area. Following this introduction is the list of past recorded Christmas Bird Counts for Cape May including the number of species recorded each year. We have 231 recorded species in the history of the count. Included in this accounting is the year in which each species was first recorded. The following is a total of species seen on each Cape May Christmas Bird Count since 1903: (Until 1929 the count was centered at Cape May Point. In 1929 and 1930 an additional count was conducted in Stone Harbor—See\*)

YEAR	NO. OF SPECIES	YEAR	NO. OF SPECIES	YEAR	NO. OF SPECIES	YEAR	NO. OF SPECIES	YEAR	NO. OF SPECIES
1903	37	1932	94	1944	102	1956	130	1968	131
1920	38	1933	96	1945	107	1957	136	1969	153
1922	43	1934	93	1946	117	1958	128	1970	149
1923	48	1935	111	1947	112	1959	153	1971	145
1924	54	1936	104	1948	117	1960	134	1972	137
1926	55	1937	102	1949	121	1961	133	1973	130
1927	71	1938	102	1950	117	1962	118	1974	146
1928	81	1939	108	1951	123	1963	132	1975	149
1929	47	1940	109	1952	128	1964	114	1976	141
1929	74*	1941	115	1953	141	1965	127	1977	121
1930	36	1942	85	1954	151	1966	143	1978	144
1930	79*	1943	100	1955	144	1967	145	1979	155
1931	88								

The following is a list of the year in which each species was first recorded on the Cape May Christmas Bird Count:

SPECIES	YEAR	SPECIES	YEAR
Common Loon	1920	Goshawk	1926
Red-throated Loon	1920	Sharp-shinned Hawk	1903
Red-necked Grebe	1923	Cooper's Hawk	1926
Eared Grebe	1968	Red-tailed Hawk	1903
Horned Grebe	1920	Red-shouldered Hawk	1922
Pied-billed Grebe	1922	Broad-winged Hawk	1959
Gannet	1923	Rough-legged Hawk	1935
Great Cormorant	1936	Golden Eagle	1936
Double-crested Cormorant	1932	Bald Eagle	1903
Great Blue Heron	1920	Marsh Hawk	1903
Great Egret	1944	Osprey	1944
Snowy Egret	1950	Peregrine Falcon	1932
Cattle Egret	1959	Merlin	1931
Louisiana Heron	1953	American Kestrel	1920
Little Blue Heron	1941	Ruffed Grouse	1940
Green Heron	1956	Common Bobwhite	1923
Black-crowned Night Heron	1930	Ring-necked Pheasant	1930
Yellow-crowned Night Heron	1964	King Rail	1954
American Bittern	1926	Clapper Rail	1937
Glossy Ibis	1971	Virginia Rail	1932
Mute Swan	1972	Black Rail	1971
Whistling Swan	1952	Sora Rail	1933
Canada Goose	1926	Common Gallinule	1954
Snow Goose	1931	Coot	1927
Brant	1928	American Oystercatcher	1973
Mallard	1924	Piping Plover	1941
Black Duck	1926	Semipalmated Plover	1935
Gadwall	1952	Killdeer	1903
Pintail	1920	Black-bellied Plover	1927
Green-winged Teal	1928	Ruddy Turnstone	1936
Blue-winged Teal	1939	American Woodcock	1928
Shoveller	1938	European Woodcock	1955
European Wigeon	1956	Common Snipe	1927
American Wigeon	1938	Whimbrel	1949
Wood Duck	1938	Spotted Sandpiper	1953
Redhead	1945	Willet	1953
Ring-necked Duck	1946	Greater Yellowlegs	1931
Canvasback	1924	Lesser Yellowlegs	1935
Greater Scaup	1903	Red Knot	1935
Lesser Scaup	1929	Purple Sandpiper	1924
American Goldeneye	1923	White-rumped Sandpiper	1959
Barrow's Goldeneye	1934	Least Sandpiper	1933
Bufflehead	1922	Dunlin	1928
Oldsquaw	1922	Long-billed Dowitcher	1954
Harlequin Duck	1954	Short-billed Dowitcher	1952
Common Eider	1941	Semipalmated Sandpiper	1933
King Eider	1936	Western Sandpiper	1932
White-winged Scoter	1920	Sanderling	1924
Surf Scoter	1922	Parasitic Jaeger	1934
Black Scoter	1920	Glaucous Gull	1951
Ruddy Duck	1933	Iceland Gull	1959
Hooded Merganser	1934	Great Black-backed Gull	1903
Common Merganser	1920	Herring Gull	1903
Red-breasted Merganser	1922	Ring-billed Gull	1903
Turkey Vulture	1903	Black-headed Gull	1955
Black Vulture	1939	Laughing Gull	1931

SPECIES	YEAR	SPECIES	YEAR
Bonaparte's Gull	1920	Bluebird	1903
Little Gull	1963	Golden-crowned Kinglet	1920
Kittiwake	1929	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1927
Black Tern	1969	Water Pipit	1922
Forster's Tern	1933	Cedar Waxwing	1924
Common Tern	1959	Northern Shrike	1926
Caspian Tern	1946	Loggerhead Shrike	1929
Black Skimmer	1944	Starling	1920
Thick-billed Murre	1938	Red-winged Blackbird	1903
Thin-billed Murre	1967	Northern Oriole	1954
Razorbill	1940	Rusty Blackbird	1927
Dovekie	1932	Brewer's Blackbird	1959
Black Guillemot	1933	Common Grackle	1924
Atlantic Puffin	1932	Boat-tailed Grackle	1958
Rock Dove	1920	Cowbird	1926
Mourning Dove	1922	Western Tanager	1979
Monk Parakeet	1971	Cardinal	1903
Barn Owl	1930	Black-headed Grosbeak	1960
Screech Owl	1935	Dickcissel	1946
Great-horned Owl	1932	Evening Grosbeak	1933
Snowy Owl	1937	Purple Finch	1903
Barred Owl	1924	House Finch	1966
Long-eared Owl	1930	Common Redpoll	1928
Short-eared Owl	1920	Pine Siskin	1922
Saw-whet Owl	1948	American Goldfinch	1903
Chimney Swift	1928	Red Crossbill	1963
Belted Kingfisher	1920	White-winged Crossbill	1954
Common Flicker	1903	Rufous-sided Towhee	1903
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1943	Savannah Sparrow	1920
Red-headed Woodpecker	1922	Henslow's Sparrow	1932
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1930	Sharp-tailed Sparrow	1920
Hairy Woodpecker	1903	Seaside Sparrow	1927
Downy Woodpecker	1903	Vesper Sparrow	1923
Western Kingbird	1956	Dark-eyed Junco	1903
Phoebe	1927	Tree Sparrow	1903
Horned Lark	1903	Chipping Sparrow	1922
Tree Swallow	1926	Field Sparrow	1903
Barn Swallow	1955	Lark Sparrow	1969
Blue Jay	1903	White-crowned Sparrow	1955
Common Crow	1903	White-throated Sparrow	1903
Fish Crow	1923	Fox Sparrow	1903
Black-capped Chickadee	1928	Swamp Sparrow	1923
Carolina Chickadee	1903	Song Sparrow	1903
Tufted Titmouse	1920	Lapland Longspur	1932
White-breasted Nuthatch	1903	Snow Bunting	1927
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1924	Orange-crowned Warbler	1952
Brown Creeper	1927	Yellow-rumped Warbler	1903
House Wren	1937	Pine Warbler	1954
Winter Wren	1929	Yellow Palm Warbler	1920
Carolina Wren	1903	Tennessee Warbler	1969
Marsh Wren	1920	Nashville Warbler	1969
Sedge Wren	1923	Prairie Warbler	1967
Mockingbird	1903	Ovenbird	1948
Gray Catbird	1926	Common Yellow-throat	1931
Brown Thrasher	1903	Yellow-beasted Chat	1954
Robin	1903	House Sparrow	1924
Wood Thrush	1933	Bobolink	1978
Hermit Thrush	1903	Eastern Meadowlark	1903

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