

Washtenaw
Audubon
Society

NEWSLETTER

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ANN ARBOR CHRISTMAS CENSUS

Most of this Newsletter will be devoted to the field trips taken at Christmas time in order to compile the annual Christmas census. In Ann Arbor, Miss Marie Donegan was a member of one of these groups and she sends us her impressions of the trip:

It was still dark when the alarm went off, but it was Bird Census day; so out fast, and into layers and layers of clothes, warm gloves and boots and off to meet the other bird watchers. The morning was cold, sunny with almost no wind. In the afternoon the sun had gone and the wind had arrived. The greatest number of species was found in the morning; so in the afternoon the hunt was on for the ones not seen in the morning. When we found one we were triumphant and hoped no other group would find it. The bird that eluded us all was the red-headed woodpecker, and hunt as we would he just couldn't be found.

For each one the highlight of the day was different. One of us remembers the swamp where one foot was on top of a root and the other under it and neither would move. For others the highlights were the unexpected blue herons, or the two pintails among the black ducks, or the hawks soaring in the wind. Then there were the ten bob-whites marching in single file across the road, a thrill for still another group, especially as these were the only ones seen. The living picture seen by some others was a pair of beautiful blue birds

together with a flock of myrtle warblers and two downy woodpeckers feeding on the poison ivy berries. Never to be forgotten was the experience of one group, when one of the party screeched like a screech owl and then unexpectedly out of a hole in a tree popped the head of a screech owl which screeched right back at him.

Now for the record, here is the official count for the Ann Arbor Christmas census, compiled Dec. 30, 1956.

Pied-billed Grebe	2
Great Blue Heron	2
Mallard	55
Black Duck	86
Am. Widgeon	1
Pintail	3
Greater Scaup	7
Am. Golden-eye	10
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1
Cooper's Hawk	2
Red-tailed Hawk	11
Red-shouldered Hawk	1
Sparrow Hawk	1
Bob-white	10
Ring-necked Pheasant	8
Am. Coot	1
Herring Gull	3
Ring-billed Gull	3
Mourning Dove	37
Screech Owl	3
Horned Owl	2
Belted Kingfisher	1
Flicker	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1
Hairy Woodpecker	13
Downy Woodpecker	27
Horned Lark	1
Blue Jay	16
Crow	3
Black-capped Chickadee	103
Tufted Titmouse	34

White-breasted Nuthatch	26
Red-breasted Nuthatch	4
Brown Creeper	3
Carolina Wren	1
Brown Thrasher	1
Robin	1
Eastern Bluebird	4
Golden-crowned Kinglet	12
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	5
Starling	23
Myrtle Warbler	7
House Sparrow	85
Cardinal	64
Purple Finch	2
Pine Siskin	3
Am. Goldfinch	23
Slate-colored Junco	51
Am. Tree Sparrow	268
Song Sparrow	12

Total species: 50
Total individuals: 2031

NORTHVILLE CENSUS

In the Northville area, Harold S. Hartley of the Audubon Society helped to compile the following list on December 29, 1956:

Canada Goose	250
Mallard	200
Black Duck	500
Am. Widgeon	3
Pintail	2
Am. Golden-eye	15
Red-tailed Hawk	1
Sparrow Hawk	1
Ruffed Grouse	1
Bob-white	10
Pheasant	7
Ring-billed Gull	1
Mourning Dove	5
Flicker	2
Hairy Woodpecker	7
Downy Woodpecker	6
Blue Jay	25
Crow	1
Black-capped Chickadee	20
Titmouse	13
White-breasted Nuthatch	8
Brown Creeper	2
Golden-crowned Kinglet	2
Cedar Waxwing	3
Northern Shrike	1
Starling	10
House Sparrow	57

(Northville continued)

Meadowlark	6
Cardinal	19
Purple Finch	10
Goldfinch	12
Junco	35
Tree Sparrow	43
Song Sparrow	3

Total species: 34
Total individuals: 1281

A MICHIGAN "FIRST"

Probably the most unusual and exciting discovery of all during the Christmas census trips throughout the state was the sighting and positive identification in Jackson County by the Audubon observers in that area of a Townsend's Solitaire

This was not only the first such record on a Christmas census in Michigan, but also the first record anywhere in Michigan for this western bird.

DETROIT AREA CENSUS

Through the courtesy of Messrs. Ralph O'Reilly and Bob Rogers of the Detroit Audubon Society, we are able to report on the Christmas census there.

Pied-billed Grebe	2
Great Blue Heron	1
Whistling Swan	6
Canada Goose	35
Mallard	330
Black Duck	241
Canvas-back	3
Scaup	19
Golden-eye	139
Buffle-head	1
Am. Merganser	25
Cooper's Hawk	2
Red-tailed Hawk	30
Red-shouldered Hawk	3
Rough-legged Hawk	2
Marsh Hawk	1
Sparrow Hawk	20
Unidentified Hawks	6
Bob-white	123

Pheasant	186
Coot	67
Herring Gull	8
Ring-billed Gull	64
Mourning Dove	81
Horned Owl	2
Belted Kingfisher	6
Flicker	12
Hairy Woodpecker	13
Downy Woodpecker	82
Horned Lark	6
Blue Jay	105
Crow	100
Black-capped Chickadee	235
Tufted Titmouse	34
White-breasted Nuthatch	55
Brown Creeper	15
Carolina Wren	3
Robin	6
Hermit Thrush	2
Olive-back Thrush	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	23
Dedar Waxwing	2
Northern Shrike	3
Starling	1621
Myrtle Warbler	1
House Sparrow	3428
Meadowlark	61
Cowbird	5
Cardinal	239
Goldfinch	322
Towhee	1
Junco	1249
Tree Sparrow	2568
Field Sparrow	3
Song Sparrow	73

Total species: 54
 Total individuals: 11,671

MORE SPARROW HAWKS?

Mr. Lee Curtis of Dexter writes asking if there is any evidence of an increase in the population of Sparrow Hawks in Michigan since the passing of the Hawk-Owl Law.

Prof. Van Tyne of the University says he has seen no substantial evidence of such increase, though Sparrow Hawks seem to be more common in winter than in summer, perhaps because they can be seen more easily. All of which points up the fact that much more needs

to be done by professionals as well as amateurs of the state in observing, counting, and banding of such relatively common birds.

CONSERVATION BOOKLETS

Within the past two years the Mich. Dept. of Conservation has published "The Life and Times of Mich. Pheasants" by R.A. MacMullan, and "Red Foxes in Michigan" by David A. Arnold. Each is based on scientific studies extending over a period of years, but each is written in a most readable style. Cartoons, created with a delightful sense of humor, illustrate main points in the text.

Aside from the wealth of scientific information presented in a relatively few pages, perhaps the outstanding feature of these booklets is that they delineate basic principles of game management, which is to say also, concepts involved in the conservation of natural resources. To be successful, any animal must have adequate food, shelter, and safe breeding places. Stocking of pheasants, for example, is not only expensive but it also is essentially useless if the area stocked lacks adequate food and cover to support and give protection to the birds.

The time has come when the conservation of all natural resources is of vital importance to the welfare both material and spiritual of the United States. The facts are available - awareness of the need still slumbers.

Published as a public service, these two excellent booklets are available, free of charge, by writing to the Michigan Dept. of Conservation, Lansing 26, Mich.

---Andrew J. Berger