

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

All across North America, in every Canadian province, every American state, many Central American countries and numerous West Indian islands the Christmas Bird Counts are the big birding event of the year.

During the period December 17-January 2, in all of these areas, groups of people will try to amass, in a single calendar day, the biggest possible list of birds in a designated area. By tradition, the "count area" is a circle of 15 mile diameter. Within this circle, the count organizer will field as many observers as possible, grouped in parties, each with a section of the circle that they will cover. Apart from its attraction as a social and sporting event, the counts shed much light on the early winter distribution of different bird species, where they are, and in what numbers. All of the information from across the continent is published in the July-August issue of the journal AMERICAN BIRDS (available in the library at U.P.E.I.), the editors of which organize and run the annual extravaganza.

The first Christmas Bird Count was held in 1900 and they have grown every year since. The counts began on P.E.I. in the early 1970's.

On P.E.I. we have two official count areas and another "for the fun of it". Following each count day, a pot-luck supper is held that evening for the counters to thaw out over hot chocolate and excellent cuisine while swapping stories of the day's events. The competition is friendly and the company enjoyable.

This year's count dates have been established as follows:

| | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| P.E.I. National Park | - Sat. Dec. 22 |
| Hillsborough | - Sat. Dec. 29 |
| Montague | - Sat. Jan. 5 |

Volunteers are needed to host the pot-luck suppers again this year so please help out

For more information about getting involved in the count day activities contact organizer Geoff Hogan (894-5995) or Jane Symmes (675-4806). or Sid Watts

NORTHUMBERLAND STRAIT FIELD TRIP

On Saturday October 13, 8 people boarded the Wood Islands ferry for a bird-watching trip across the Strait. It was a sunny, clear, mostly warm day and despite a cool breeze a great number of bird species were sighted: altogether 18 species of birds as well as 2 seals.

| | |
|--|--|
| Common Loon-16 | Semi-palmated Plover- 10 |
| Red-throated Loon-3 | Black-bellied Plover- 5 |
| Storm Petrel species - 1 skimming the waves. | Greater Yellowlegs- 1 |
| Gannets-mature and immature | Sanderling- 73 |
| Double-crested Cormorant- numerous | Great Black-backed Gull- several |
| Great Blue Heron- 25+ | Herring Gull, Ring-billed Gull-several |
| Black Duck- 2 | Bonaparte's Gull- 60+ |
| Bufflehead- 1 female? | Tern species-3+ several immatures |
| White-winged Scoter- 5 and 1 immature | Harbour Seal-1 |
| Surf Scoter- 16+ | Grey Seal-1 |
| Merganser species-1 | |

Altogether it was a successful and enjoyable field trip.

Submitted by Jamie Burton.