The 126th Christmas Bird Count in Maryland and Delaware

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Weather and Highlights

Low count temperatures averaged just below 28 degrees F º (minimum low of 15 F º at Seneca and maximum low of 47 at South Dorchester). Average high temps were just below 41 degrees F º (minimum high of 28 at Catoctin Mountain and maximum high of 63 F º at South Dorchester. Highlights included **Cinnamon Teal**, a **Western Kingbird**, a reported **Myiarchus sp. Flycatcher**, **Black-chinned** and **Selasphorus sp. Hummingbird** and a **Western Tanager**. Some of the rarer songbirds also included **Lark Sparrow**, **LeConte's Sparrow**, a **White-eyed Vireo** and a **Nashville Warbler**. We welcomed a new Count to the Region this season (the first Baltimore City Count).

WATERFOWL

Four Delaware Counts and 5 Maryland Counts had Ross's Geese. Chesterville had 11 Ross's Geese (hc). Bombay Hook had 2, Lower Kent, Middletown, Rehoboth, Salisbury, and Triadelphia also each had one Ross's Goose, Cape Henlopen – Prime Hook had 2, and Ocean City had 3. Lower Kent had 5 Greater White-fronted Geese (very close to their high of 6 during count 121). Chesterville had 2 Greater White-fronted Geese. Bowie and South Dorchester each had a Greater White-fronted Goose for count week. Baltimore City had a Brant (us). Lower Kent had an amazing 49 Cackling Geese (hc). St. Michaels had 15 (hc), Bowie had 7 (hc), Seneca had 4 (hc), Milford had 4 (hc), and Rock Run had 3 Cackling Geese. Middle River had a a high of 4,041 Canada Geese (hc). Allegany had a near-high of 1,037 Canada Geese (their record high was 1,083). Lower Kent and Seaford-Nanticoke each had a Trumpeter Swan. Ocean City had 2,250 Tundra Swans and Chesterville had 1,468 (both hc). Cape Henlopen – Prime Hook had 336 Tundra Swans (more than usual; they have had up to 680 in count 119).

Bombay Hook had a **Cinnamon Teal** (us). Middle River had 1,101 Gadwall, Wilmington had 521, Crisfield had 100, and Loch Raven had 147 (all hc). Loch Raven had 10 American Wigeon (lc out of 8 counts). Loch Raven had 258 Mallards (hc out of all of their 8 counts). Allegany had 55 American Black Ducks (hc). South Dorchester 6 Green-winged Teal (significantly lower than usual for the count though the species has been missed on some previous counts.

Cape Henlopen – Prime Hook had 18 Common Eiders which was high for the count (they have had up to 71 in count 110). Annapolis - Gibson Island and Point Lookout each had a Common Eider (us). Middle River had a low of 8 (low but not the record low of 2 from count 116). Patuxent River had only 23 Common Goldeneye (low but has been missed). Bowie had 256 Hooded Mergansers and Triadelphia had 152 (both hc). Triadelphia had 5,504 Common Mergansers (hc), Loch Raven had 2,358 (hc), Milford had 204 (hc), Middle River had 193 (hc) Seneca had 147, and Washington County had 80 (all hc).

TURKEYS, DOVES, HUMMINGBIRDS, RAILS & CRANES

Wilmington had 1,426 Mourning Doves (hc). Sugarloaf had an all-time low count of 92 Rock Pigeons (lc; all-time). Cape Henlopen Prime Hook had a Selasphorus sp., that showed evidence of hybridization (us). Rehoboth had a Black-chinned Hummingbird (us). Jug Bay had 2 Clapper Rails

(us) and 3 Sora (us). South Dorchester had 2 Sora (us). Middleton had 37 (hc and 9th occurrence), Seneca had 3 (us), and Cape Henlopen – Prime Hook had 2 Sandhill Cranes (us).

SHOREBIRDS & GULLS

Cape Henlopen Prime Hook had 34 Sanderlings (low but they had as few as 20 long ago during count 65). They also had 3,955 Dunlin (hc). Crisfield had 184 Greater Yellowlegs (hc). Cape Henlopen Prime Hook had 2 Willets (us and 5th occurrence).

Ocean City had a Dovekie (13th occurrence) and 41 Razorbills (hc). Cape Henlopen Prime Hook had Razorbill for count week.

Cape Henlopen Prime Hook had a Black-legged Kittiwake for count week (us). Cape Henlopen Prime Hook had 6 Black-headed Gull (hc; all time high). South Dorchester had 2 (us) and Triadelphia had 1 (us; 3rd occurrence) Laughing Gulls. Jug Bay had an Iceland Gull (us). Rock Run and South Dorchester had Iceland Gull for count week. Rehoboth had 38 Lesser Black-backed Gulls (hc), Denton had 2 (hc; 2nd occurrence), and South Dorchester had one for count week. South Dorchester had a Glaucous Gull (us). Lower Kent had only 6 Great Black-backed Gulls (lc; lowest number across all 67 counts).

GREBES, LOONS & CORMORANTS

The only Red-necked Grebe was from Cape Henlopen Prime Hook (cw). Annapolis Gibson Island had a Great Cormorant for count week. Elkton had 141 Double-crested Cormorants (hc);

HERONS, EGRETS, PELICANS & NEW WORLD VULTURES

Crisfield had a Snowy Egret (us). Milford had 16 Black-crowned Night-herons (hc). Crisfield had 404 Black Vultures (hc). Patuxent River had 319 Turkey Vultures (hc).

HAWKS & EAGLES

Bombay Hook had a Golden Eagle (us). Milford had 49 Northern Harriers (hc). Loch Raven had 9 Sharp-shinned Hawks (hc). Middle River had 15 (hc) and Cape Henlopen Prime Hook had 12 Cooper's Hawks (hc). Crisfield had 191, Middle River had 119, Salisbury had 105, Bombay Hook had 95, Cape Henlopen Prime Hook had 91, Triadelphia had 68 and Washington County had 17 Bald Eagles (all hc). Triadelphia had 90 Red-shouldered Hawks (hc) and Washington County had 27 of them (hc). Port Tobacco had only 4 Red-tailed Hawks (lc) and 3 at South Dorchester was their second lowest ever having had only 2 in count 113 (lc). Lower Kent had a Rough-legged Hawk (their 22nd). Chesterville had one for count week.

OWLS, KINGFISHER, WOODPECKERS, FALCONS

Oakland had a Barn Owl found deceased (cw; us). Oakland had 5 Eastern Screech Owls (hc). Cape Henlopen Prime Hook had 6 Barred Owls (hc). Cape Henlopen Prime Hook had 4 Long-eared Owls (hc). Allegany had their second occurrence of Short-eared Owl (us).

There were several record highs for Yellow Bellied Sapsuckers this year. Triadelphia had 109, Wilmington had 83, Loch Raven had 61, Chesterville had 59, Middle River had 28, Oakland had 2 (all hc). At South Dorchester 11 was higher than normal (record high over 79 counts is 16) and Cape Henlopen Prime Hook's 13 is very near their record high of 14 from count 122). Triadelphia had 14 (hc), Oakland had 6 (hc), and Denton and Wilmington each had 2 Red-headed Woodpeckers. Wilmington had 284 Red-bellied Woodpeckers and Loch Raven had 203 (both hc).

Middle River had 4 American Kestrels (hc for this relatively new count). High counts of Merlins were 7 at Ocean City, 4 at Catoctin Mountain and Middle River, 3 at Middleton, 2 at Oakland (hc; us) and was considered slightly unusual at Jug Bay. Jug Bay had a Peregrine Falcon (us). Seneca and Bowie both had Peregrine Falcons for count week.

FLYCATCHERS, VIREOS, CORVIDS

Port Tobacco had a sighting of an apparent **Myiarchus sp.** with some limited details provided. A **Western Kingbird** on the Annapolis-Gibson Island Count was seen for about 1 month starting in late December. It was seen and photographed by many observers. Port Tobacco also had a **White-eyed Vireo** (us; photo). Single Blue-headed Vireos were found at Baltimore City (us), Saint Michaels (2nd occurrence), and Seaford Nanticoke (4th occurrence). Loch Raven had a high of 486 Blue Jays. Their new modest count high was 18 American Crows (hc). At South Dorchester, 102 was on the low side but they have had as few as 79. Seaford Nanticoke had 2,053 (hc), Loch Raven had 357 (hc) Fish Crows. High counts of Common Ravens were 76 at Triadelphia, 35 at Washington County, 13 at Middle River, 8 at Wilmington, and 3 at Chesterville (all hc). First occurrences of Common Raven were 2 at Lower Kent, 2 at Patuxent River, and 1 at Ocean City.

LARK, PARIDS, SWALLOWS, KINGLETS, WRENS, MIMIDS & THRUSHES

Lower Kent had 1,132 Horned Larks (hc), Loch Raven had 35 (hc). Chesterville had 139 Horned Larks (lc). Lower Kent had 40 Tree Swallows (hc; their 5th occurrence). Middle River had only 75 Carolina Chickadees (lc). At Port Tobacco 46 Tufted Titmice was a low (lc) and 39 at the newer Middle River count is their new record low count (lc). Washington County had 10 Red-breasted Nuthatches (hc). Triadelphia had 337 (hc) and Middle River had 11 (lc) White-breasted Nuthatches. Seaford-Nanticoke had 18 Brown-headed Nuthatches (hc). A single Brown Creeper on the Catoctin Mountain count was the lowest in all of their 77 counts (lc). Denton had 3 Brown-headed Nuthatches (us; 1st occurrence).

Jug Bay had a House Wren (us). Triadelphia had 66, and Oakland had 8 Winter Wrens (both hc). Jug Bay had a Sedge Wren (us). Allegany reported a Marsh Wren (us). Middle River had a low of 65 (lc) and Milford had a low of 56 (lc) Carolina Wrens. Triadelphia had a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (us). Golden-crowned Kinglets (23) and Ruby-crowned Kinglets (9) at South Dorchester were lower than normal (not record lows). Similar low counts at Cape-Henlopen Prime Hook were not record lows (Golden-crowned 15 and Ruby-crowned 5). The 10 Golden-crowned Kinglets at Milford is a record (lc).

Loch Raven had 373 and Wilmington had 358 Eastern Bluebirds, and Oakland had 45 (all hc). Chesterville had 4,188 and Middle River

Had 2,030 (both hc) American Robins. Cape Henlopen-Prime Hook

Had 34 (hc), Loch Raven had 9 (hc) and Oakland had 1 (us; their 4th) Gray Catbirds. Cape Henlopen-Prime Hook had 52, Triadelphia had 12, and Loch Raven had 5 Brown Thrashers (all hc). Loch Raven had 154 (hc) and Lower Kent had an all-time low of 37 (lc) Northern Mockingbirds.

STARLINGS, WAXWINGS, HOUSE SPARROW, PIPITS, and FINCHES

Middle River had 414 American Pipits (hc). Loch Raven had 252 and Middle River had 144 Cedar Waxwings (both hc). Seaford – Nanticoke with 2 and Catoctin Mountain with 1 (23rd occurrence) were the only **Evening Grosbeaks** in the Maryland / Delaware region this count period. Chesterville had 72 Purple Finches (hc), Cape Henlopen-Prime Hook had 29 (high but their record high was 87 in count 72). At Loch Raven 21 is their highest so far (hc). Lower Kent had 2 Lapland Longspurs (us; their 5th). Seneca had Lapland Longspur for count week. Saint Michaels had 4 Snow Buntings (13th occurrence) and Lower Kent had 1 (18th occurrence). South Dorchester had a Snow Bunting for count week.

SPARROWS

Middle River had 10 Chipping Sparrows (hc). Loch Raven had 130 Field Sparrows (hc). Cape Henlopen Prime Hook had low numbers for Field Sparrows 12 (has been missed). Point Lookout had a **Lark Sparrow** (us) and Cape Henlopen – Prime Hook had one for count week. Loch Raven had 28, Denton had 24 and Allegany had 23 Fox Sparrows (all hc). Middle River had 991 Dark-eyed Juncos (hc). South Dorchester had only 38 Dark-eyed Juncos 38 (lower than typical). Oakland had 53 White-throated Sparrows (hc). Ocean City had a **LeConte's Sparrow** (us; 3rd occurrence).

Loch Raven had 13 (hc), Allegany had 12 Savannah Sparrows (hc) and Oakland had 1 (us; 2nd occurrence). Patuxent River had an Ipswich Savannah Sparrow (us). On the Milford Count, 5 Savannah Sparrows was an all-time low count (lc). Allegany had 199 Song Sparrows (near to their all-time high of 202). On the Milford Count, 122 was a record low (lc). Loch Raven had 71 Swamp Sparrows (hc) while 15 at Milford was a record low (lc). Triadelphia had 171 and Loch Raven had 145 Eastern Towhees (both hc).

BLACKBIRDS & ORIOLES

Patuxent River had a Baltimore Oriole (us; 4th occurrence) and Chesterville had one as well (us; 2nd occurrence). Chesterville had very high blackbird numbers tallying 1,187,071 Red-winged Blackbirds (hc), 230,616 Brown-headed Cowbirds (hc), and 60,968 Common Grackles (hc). Milford had a high of 2,913 Brown-headed Cowbirds (hc). Port Tobacco had 62,892 Common Grackles (hc). Grackle numbers were down on other counts for example Cape Henlopen – Prime Hook had 5 (lc), Loch Raven had 2 (lc), and Sugarloaf Mountain had 1 (where it has been missed up to 4 times). South Dorchester reported having lower numbers than usual for all three species with 1,320 Red-winged Blackbirds, only 2 Brown-headed Cowbirds and only 4 Common Grackles. Fourteen Maryland Counts and 4 Delaware Counts had Rusty Blackbirds plus 2 (1 from each state) having Rusty Blackbirds for count week. These were high counts for Middle River having 81 (hc), Oakland with 60 (hc), and Loch Raven with 26 (hc).

WARBLERS

Baltimore City had 8 and Cape Henlopen – Prime Hook had 5 Orange-crowned Warblers, Baltimore City had 4, and Jug Bay had 3 (all hc) and Loch Raven had their first occurrence. Other Orange-crowned Warblers were at Jug Bay (3), Ocean City (3), Annapolis – Gibson Island (2), Rehoboth (2), Wilmington (2) Crisfield (1), Loch Raven (1), Middle River (1), Point Lookout (1), Seaford – Nanticoke (1), Seneca (1), Triadelphia (1), Bowie (cw) and Milford (cw). Allegany had had a Common Yellowthroat (us). Bombay Hook had 2 Common Yellowthroats. Cape Henlopen – Prime Hook, Seaford – Nanticoke, Jug Bay, and Southern Dorchester also each had a Common Yellowthroat. Middle River had a **Nashville Warbler** (us; their 3rd occurrence). Cape Henlopen – Prime Hook had one for count week (cw).

Three Delaware and 4 Maryland Counts had Palm Warblers. Most had singles but Chesterville had 5, Ocean City had 4 (unspecified), 3 (Western), and 1 (Yellow). Cape Henlopen – Prime Hook had 3 (unspecified). Fourteen Maryland counts had Pine Warblers (plus a 15th from Washington County with a count week observation). The biggest count was **25** from Crisfield. Three Delaware counts reported Pine Warblers with 13 at Cape Henlopen – Prime Hook (near the high count of 15 from last year). Cape Henlopen – Prime Hook had a very high count of 1,900 Yellow-rumped Warblers (hc), Middleton had 371 (hc), Triadelphia had 134 (hc), Washington County had 120 (hc), Middle River had 62 (hc), and Loch Raven had 36 (hc). South Dorchester had 224 listed as lower than usual. Oakland had 1 (us; surprisingly a first occurrence). Cape Henlopen – Prime Hook had a **Prairie Warbler** (us). Seneca had a **Wilson's Warbler** for count week.

TANAGERS, GROSBEAKS AND BUNTINGS

Cape Henlopen - Prime Hook had a **Western Tanager** (us). South Dorchester had lower numbers of Northern Cardinals than usual (45 individuals). Ocean City and Bombay Hook each had a Painted Bunting (us; Bombay Hook's 3rd occurrence).