

## 2020 Spring Migration Counts in North Carolina

---

**Marilyn Westphal**

*P.O. Box 1427*

*Hendersonville, NC 28793*

[mjwestph@ret.unca.edu](mailto:mjwestph@ret.unca.edu)

Needless to say that Covid-19 caused havoc in 2020 and made it very difficult for many count areas to conduct spring counts. Because of problems accessing some areas, and the limitations caused by team members needing to social distance, only about half of the usual count areas were able to complete counts. In some cases count coordinators had to resort to less orthodox methods to complete their counts, but they got the job done. Only ten areas completed counts, three from the mountains and seven from the piedmont, compared to the usual total of 19 to 21 over the past 15 years, seven to eight from the mountains, 12 to 13 from the piedmont, and one from the coast. Since no coastal areas were included this year, many typical coastal species were missed. However, many of the individual counts had excellent results, so the birds were certainly present. Total species (197) was naturally well below the average (234), but above the average for counts completed during years when no coastal count was conducted. Total individuals (51,491) were about 30,000 to 35,000 below the average year, which isn't bad considering there were half the usual count areas. There were also a little more than half (238) the usual number of participants (415).

In the mountains, the Watauga count had to resort to less orthodox procedures as a result of sudden wintry weather conditions. As a result, some areas were covered more than once, and the results were much higher than average. Also, although both of the high elevation mountain counts were completed, none of the counts that include mountain valleys in the southern mountains were carried out, so the total numbers were skewed towards the higher elevation species, and some of the lower elevation species in that area were missed altogether. In contrast, the piedmont area was well represented from east to west.

Although many species were missed, many unusual birds were found in areas they don't often occur. These include such species as Red-necked Grebe and Philadelphia Vireo on the Greensboro count, Red-throated Loon and Horned Lark on the Kerr Lake count, six American Bitterns, a Snowy Egret and a Vesper Sparrow on the Durham count, Glossy Ibis, Swallow-tailed Kite, and Dickcissel on the Chapel Hill count, Vesper Sparrow, Golden-winged Warbler, and Wilson's Warbler on the Watauga count, and Cerulean Warbler on the Rockingham count.

Most common species found in the mountains included Dark-eyed Junco, Chestnut-sided Warbler, American Robin, Eastern Towhee, and Golden-crowned Kinglet. Some of these may show up as most common because the count was skewed towards higher elevation species. In the piedmont, the most common species were Double-crested Cormorant, Northern Cardinal, Carolina Wren, Red-eyed Vireo, and American Crow. Some species missed include Bachman's Sparrow, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, and Peregrine Falcon. The absence of the Southern Pines and any coastal counts were the main cause for the missing sparrow and woodpecker. The Peregrine Falcon has been

absent the last couple of years mainly because the once reliable pair at Devil's Courthouse seems to have given up nesting there.

Hopefully the Covid-19 pandemic will have abated sufficiently enough that more areas will be able to complete counts in 2021 and 2022.

Details of individual counts including names of compilers and participants as well as count highlights and a list of species found exclusively on each count follow.

## **Mountains**

**Pisgah Ridge, Great Balsam and Plott Balsam Mountains IBA** – count dates spanned from May 15-20 with teams selecting one of those days to do their section, 83 species, 3266 individuals, 25 participants in 12 parties, 66.87 party-hours. Elevation ranges for this count run from 3500 to 6100 feet. Weather: Excellent over most of the count period with one morning of intermittent rain. Temperature 45-75°F.

**Compiler:** Marilyn Westphal ([mjwestph@ret.unca.edu](mailto:mjwestph@ret.unca.edu))

**Participants:** Miles Buddy, Seth Buddy, Kevin Burke, Tim Carstens, Nancy Casey, Ron Clark, Robert Emmott, Tom Flagg, Robert Johnson, Stacy Johnson, John Koon, Gail Lankford, Charlie Lankford, Dave Minnich, Nora Murdock, Naomi Otterness, Catherine Reid, Kittie Reynolds, Russell Roe, Marcus Simpson, Alan Smith, Sidney Snyder, Marilyn Westphal, Connie Wulcovicz and Stan Wulcovicz

**Exclusives:** Northern Saw-whet Owl, Black-capped Chickadee

**Notes:** It was an unusual count in an unusual situation. As the coronavirus epidemic closed parks and national forests it looked like the count would have to be cancelled, but about 10 days before the typical start date the Blue Ridge Parkway announced that it would be reopening the road on May 15<sup>th</sup>, the typical start weekend for this count. It required some scrambling to find volunteers, but fortunately there were a lot of people anxious to get out and do some birding in remote areas where social distancing was easy. The virus did cause some complications forming teams as they couldn't ride in the same car, but most areas are largely walked anyway, and some sections were split up to make it easier. A few areas were still inaccessible, but most were covered. The count suffered a couple of disasters with one participant slipping on wet rocks early in the count and breaking her arm, and another slipping at the end of the count and breaking her leg, but both are recovering well.

Despite the late organization and accidents, 83 species were counted, which is higher than average, 3266 individuals counted, also higher than average, during 66.87 team hours, which was about average. Overall it was quite a typical count with few unusual species found. Gail and Charlie Lankford found a Black-billed Cuckoo and Nancy Casey and Russell Roe found one Yellow-rumped Warbler along Black Balsam Road where it is believed a small colony has attempted breeding for the past few years. With only one found the colony may have either moved or given up. Two teams, Nora Murdock/Robert Emmott and Kevin Burke/Ron Clark found Red Crossbills. Two teams, Kevin Burke/Ron Clark and the Johnsons/Barbara Reynolds found late Ruby-crowned Kinglets, always suspicious as far as possible breeding. The Black-capped/Carolina Chickadee conundrum continues with most birds from Black Balsam to the end of the parkway singing the Black-capped song. Alder Flycatcher numbers were down (23), but not

surprising as some of the prime area for them wasn't accessed, but Least Flycatchers were quite abundant (57) as their territories are more widespread along the parkway.

As usual the most abundant species was Chestnut-sided Warbler (389) and second most abundant was Dark-eyed Junco (241, although plentiful, fewer than usual). These were followed by Blue-headed Vireo (203), Eastern Towhee (192), Black-throated Green Warbler (169), Golden-crowned Kinglet (156), Black-throated Blue Warbler (149), American Robin (147), Canada Warbler (136), and Veery (132).

Many thanks to all the volunteers who quickly responded to the call and made this another successful count, and special thanks to those injured in the cause.

Marilyn Westphal

**Black Mountains IBA** – count period ran from May 23-28 with teams selecting one of those days to complete their section, 60 species, 1602 individuals, 15 participants in 11 parties with some teams covering a second section on a different day, 28.90 party-hours. Weather: Typical May weather for Mount Mitchell area, cold early and sometimes foggy early, then warming by mid-morning with some sun later. Elevation range for this count is 3000 to 6684 feet with most of the count area above 4000 feet. This count has been conducted since 2006 with 2008 missed because of road closures.

**Compiler:** Marilyn Westphal (mjwestph@ret.unca.edu)

**Participants:** Robert Emmott, Chris Jacquette, John Koon, Charlie Lankford, Gail Lankford, Dave Minnich, Nora Murdock, Mike Resch, Barbara Reynolds, Mark Simpson, Alan Smith, Sidney Snyder, Simon Thompson, Marilyn Westphal

**Exclusives:** none

**Notes:** As with the Balsam Mountains Count, this count required last minute recruiting for participants as we did not know whether the area would reopen before the count period. Fortunately, most of the area did reopen on time, although the two forest roads were still closed and the trails between the park and the forest roads were closed, so less area was covered than typical for this count. Because of the virus there were also limitations for teams traveling together.

As a result of the limitations, the total bird count (1602) was lower than average as were the total party-hours (28.90), but the total species count (60) was typical for the area. Most notable misses were Turkey Vulture and Ruby-throated Hummingbird and, although not missed completely, there was only one Ruffed Grouse. The only relatively unusual species found was a Magnolia Warbler, although they have been appearing in the area near Mount Mitchell in late May and early June for the past few years and there may be some attempted breeding. There was also one Yellow-rumped Warbler, which has also been found at Mount Mitchell in the past few years and may also be attempting to breed.

Most common species found were as follows: Dark-eyed Junco (239), which seems to have bounced back from a couple of lower count years, Golden-crowned Kinglet (199), Black-throated Green Warbler (117), Blue-headed Vireo (104), Winter Wren (91), Eastern Towhee (71), Veery (68), Hermit Thrush (63, first time in the top ten), Blackburnian Warbler (62), and Canada Warbler (61). Once again, Pine Siskins, Red Crossbills, Least and Alder Flycatchers were present, but in low numbers.

Thanks again to the participants who this year stepped up on short notice to volunteer for the count- Marilyn Westphal.

**Watauga County** – Count date May 10th, 141 species, 4735 individuals, 31 participants in 13 teams, 164.80 party-hours. Weather: Mostly sunny with snow showers early. Temperatures 25-60°F. Wind light to 30mph.

Compiler: Guy McGrane (badgerboy@wilkes.net)

Participants: Meredith Boothe, Bob Cherry, Nicholas Cline, Martha Cutler, Gina Diggs, Steve Dowlan, Bill Dunson, Margaret Dunson, Elizabeth Faison, Pat Geiger, Richard Gray, Katie Griffith, Tonya Lee, Merrill Lynch, Travis Marceron, Guy McGrane, Sheryl McNair, Wes McNair, Arthur Merschat, Janet Paulette, Janice Pope, Silas Powell, Max Ramey, Amy Renfranz, Shelley Ryal, Sarah Schnackel, Debbie Shetterly, Jimmie Shetterly, Curtis Smalling, Charlie Sykes, and Theresa Waldspurger.

**Exclusives:** Lesser Scaup, Short-billed Dowitcher, Willow Flycatcher, Purple Finch, Vesper Sparrow, Golden-winged Warbler, Swainson's Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Wilson's Warbler

**Notes:** The 2020 Watauga County spring count, was the third year in a row, for this relatively new count. This year, the schedule was somewhat unconventional in response to challenging conditions, both the pandemic virus situation and the very unusual late season cold front that brought winter-like conditions on the originally scheduled day of the count, May 9. Many of the participants were not going to be able to spend much time birding on that day, and we also wanted to give birders a chance to extend their birding into less crowded times at some of our more popular birding spots, so we made it a three-day count, from May 9 thru May 11.

The combination of this extended count period and birders staying alone resulted in significantly higher effort than in past years, and likely higher effort than we will have in future counts as well. Our party hours were 165, compared to 50 and 42 the previous two years. So the numbers may be skewed higher this year than past or future, as shown by our very high species count of 141, not including domestic species. This compares to 115 and 102 in our first two years, 2018 and 2019.

Consistent with regional findings, shorebird numbers were way up this year, and newly finished floodplain restoration work at Brookshire Park, provided extensive bare, wet mudflats, which attracted lots of shorebirds, increasing this trend.

Our most notable birds included a Short-billed Dowitcher at Price Lake, a first area report in about 40 years, a Lincoln's Sparrow along the Watauga River, very tough to find in spring here, a Virginia Rail which continued through the count weekend at the Boone Greenway, 14 Semipalmated Plovers, a bird reported only a few times before ever in the county, and a pair each of Mockingbirds and Blue Grosbeaks, tough to find here, were noted at lower elevation in the eastern end of the county. Also notable were five species of wrens, including Sedge and Marsh Wren.

Our respectable count of warbler species, at 27, included a Wilson's Warbler, quite a rare migrant in the northern mountains, although there seemed to be a statewide flush of them this spring. Seven of the warbler species appeared to be strict migrants, and numbers of those were quite low as usual in spring here, mostly with just a few birds each.

Birds missed that we can usually find without too much trouble in the spring included Ruffed Grouse, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Barred Owl, Whippoorwill, Great-crested Flycatcher, and Swainson's Thrush. Ruffed Grouse seem to be declining very

quickly, and it has been almost impossible to hear one drumming anywhere in the area in the last ten years or so, perhaps indicating that even where present, there is no need for territorial behavior. Yellow-billed Cuckoo seemed to return to the county somewhat later than usual this year.

Guy McGrane

## **Piedmont**

**Iredell County** – count date April 26th, 107 species, 2506 individuals, 11 participants in three parties, 25.00 party-hours. Weather: Partly cloudy, wind calm, temperature ranged from 49-71°F. Count circle is centered on the South Yadkin River bridge on Chipley Ford Rd in northern Iredell County.

**Compiler:** Ron Underwood (rongto@gmail.com)

**Participants:** Debbie Birnley, Cynthia Dickerson, Bill English, Larry Marlin, Johnny Marshall, Caroline Martin, Janice Powell, Garnet Underwood, Ron Underwood, John Whitaker and Mark Whitaker

**Exclusives:** Eurasian Collared Dove, American Pipit

**Notes:** Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, our count was conducted on a limited basis, with no meet-up prior to the count, and no post-count luncheon. Despite these limitations, we had good participation and a nice variety of birds.

Ron Underwood

**Rockingham County** – count date April 30th, 124 species, 2343 individuals, seven participants in four parties, 19.50 party-hours. Weather: Heavy rain and flash flooding overnight and at dawn, the rest of the day was cloudy with temperature 58-68°F.

**Compiler:** Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)

**Participants:** Clay Barham, Penny Barham, Brian Bockhahn, Debbie Irving, Janet Ledbetter, David Pennebaker, Martin Wall, Cara Woods, and Tony Woods.

**Exclusives:** Cerulean Warbler

**Notes:** The 8th Rockingham County Spring Bird Count was held on Thursday April 30, 2020. Nine observers in four parties tallied a record high 124 species (average 112, previous high 118) and 2343 birds (average 1874). Totals were led by 109 Northern Cardinals, 99 Mourning Doves and 98 American Robins. Additional species seen during count week: Eastern Wood-pewee, Blue-winged Warbler, American Redstart and Rusty Blackbird.

First Count Records: a single Semipalmated Plover was on a farm pond at first light off Ledbetter Road, and I cannot believe it took eight years to finally get a Chestnut-sided Warbler, and by two parties!

Other goodies include two parties with two different Bald Eagles for second count record (now nesting in area), our second Black-billed Cuckoo in Waterfalls territory, second Bank Swallow over Mayo Mountain ponds, second Gray-cheeked Thrush on Mayo Mountain loop trail, second Cerulean Warbler in Waterfalls territory, second Swamp Sparrow in Airport section and second Baltimore Oriole at Mayo Mountain ponds.

Third Lesser Yellowlegs in Stoneville area, third Least Sandpiper on Ledbetter Road,

third Least Flycatcher around Mayo Mountain ponds, third Cliff Swallow and three parties with our third Ruby-crowned Kinglets.

Misses: Sharp-shinned Hawk, Eastern Screech-owl and Blackpoll Warbler.

A side note, instead of the rare dragonfly, on the summit of Cedar Mountain I was able to record video/audio a pair of Mountain Chorus Frogs! In NC this species is only known from Cherokee county, NC, further evidence of this unique county.

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count.

Brian Bockhahn

**Greensboro** – count date May 2nd, 128 species, 7578 individuals, 41 participants, 132.50 party-hours. Weather: A perfect spring day, temperature 43-74°F. Skies were partly cloudy, and the wind was light from the southwest, averaging 5 to 10 mph with occasional gusts to 15 mph. We really couldn't have asked for better weather

**Compiler:** Elizabeth Link (elzlink@yahoo.com)

**Participants:** Nancy Adamson, Carolyn Allen, Frank Cashwell, Megan Damico, Scott DePue, Jim Eldrett, Lynne Gray, Chris Groh, Amy Hanson, Asha Khopkar, Elizabeth Link, Henry Link, Clarence Mattocks, Julien McCarthy, Shelley McDiarmid, Lynn Moseley, Roberta Newton, Lane Oldham, Judith Pait, Ann Presnell, Emily Reeve, Judy Roy, Danny Royster, Wallace Sills, Brian Stadler, Melanie Stadler, Ann Steighner, Linda Sumner, Paul Sumner, Emily Talbert, Andrew Thornton, Emily Tyler, Ann Van Sant, Anita Vigorito, Joe Vigorito, Ann Walter-Fromson, Matt Wangarin, Stella Wear, Tom Wear, George Wheaton, and Melissa Whitmire.

**Exclusives:** American Black Duck, Red-necked Grebe, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Forster's Tern, Philadelphia Vireo

**Notes:** The Spring Bird Count was held in Greensboro on Saturday, May 2nd, 2020. Because of the quarantine and stay-at-home orders in place for the COVID-19 pandemic, our count teams were a bit different than usual. Teams broke up and covered their territories in ones or twos, found a way to get around without piling into one car, a few birded in their neighborhoods, and altogether we ended up with 40 people counting, which is about average for us, and pretty good coverage of our count circle.

Our species count was 128, and the number of individual birds counted was 7568 both of which are right about average for our count circle. We had a combination of winter birds that are sometimes gone by the time we do the count, such as Greater Scaup, Hooded Merganser, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet; and late-arriving birds such as Acadian Flycatcher and Mississippi Kite that frequently haven't arrived by the time we do the count. While we have sometimes gotten the Mississippi Kite on count week, this is only the second time they've actually appeared on the count.

Oddities included a Red-necked Grebe, seen by Matt Wangarin on Lake Townsend. The bird had been spotted on the lake at various times for at least a couple of months and was still hanging out on count day. Other species that we don't usually pick up included Forster's Terns, Caspian Tern seen on Count Week, a Philadelphia Vireo, which has only been seen on the count three previous times, spotted by Melanie Stadler's group, and Blue-winged Warbler.

Many thanks to everyone who helped with the count. Your efforts are appreciated more than ever!

Elizabeth Link

**Chapel Hill** – count date May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 135 species, 11,214 individuals, 48 field observers in 27 teams with one feeder watcher, 161.60 party hours. Weather: Low 55F, high 85F; wind SW 5-12 mph; clear, no rain.

**Compiler:** Will Cook ([cwcook@duke.edu](mailto:cwcook@duke.edu))

**Participants:** David Anderson, Steve Backus, Jin Bai, Patsy Bailey, Jon Bennett, Brian Bockhahn, Norm Budnitz, Jim Capel, Fleeta Chauvigne, Carol Chelette, Will Cook, Maria de Bruyn, Nan DeWire, Barbara Driscoll, Tom Driscoll, Kent Fiala, Cynthia Fox, Jim George, Mary George, Steve Graves, Jan Hansen, Loren Hintz, Karen Hogan, Bo Howes, Judy Jones, Elizabeth Keating, Larry Kim, Gerald King, Gene Kingsley, Anne Miller, David Murdock, Judy Murray, Vicki Nebes, Alex Nickley, Ben Nickley, Elaine Norwood, Joe Norwood, Don Pelly, Jelmer Poelstra, Marc Ribaud, Margaret Scott, Roger Shaw, David Smith, Judy Smith, Richard Snow, Paul Taille, Margaret Vimmerstedt, and Bruce Young

**Exclusives:** Glossy Ibis, Swallow-tailed Kite, Dickcissel

**Notes:** The Chapel Hill spring count on Sunday, May 3, 2020, recorded an exceptional 135 species, our highest in 34 years! The high count was helped by the count date being the earliest in 10 years, with a combination of high observer effort and good luck with soaring vagrants and migrant thrushes and warblers. This year's species total of 135 was 16 above the 10-year average of 119 and the total number of birds, 11,214, was well above the average of 7694. Effort on the count was outstanding, the highest since 1986, with 161.60 party hours (average 118.50). However, the number of birds per party hour, 69.40, was not far above the average of 65.30

Remarkably we found two new species for the count, which was initiated in 1952 and has been conducted annually since 1957: Glossy Ibis and Swallow-tailed Kite. The Glossy Ibis was seen by Jelmer Poelstra at the Cub Creek arm of Jordan Lake as it soared with an Osprey and a few vultures, then glided away to cross the Morgan Creek arm of the lake eastward. The Swallow-tailed Kite was seen by Steve Backus (in his kayak) as it soared with Turkey Vultures over the Bush Creek arm of Jordan Lake. Both are first records for the count, though we did have a count week Swallow-tailed Kite in 2012. Other stellar rarities included our third Red-breasted Merganser (Brian Bockhahn at Jordan Lake), our second Mississippi Kite (Jin Bai, Dogwood Acres), first Warbling Vireo since 1994 (Marc Ribaud, Jordan Lake), and our second Dickcissel (Jan Hansen). Other species we usually miss included Northern Bobwhite, American Woodcock, Bonaparte's Gull, Caspian Tern, American Kestrel, two Gray-cheeked Thrushes, four Cape May Warblers, two Bay-breasted Warblers, and Blackburnian Warbler.

We had an incredible number of record highs: 86 Wood Duck (average 30), 211 Black Vulture (average 63), 200 Turkey Vulture (average 99), 44 Barred Owl (average 15), 51 Red-headed Woodpecker (average 17), 136 Downy Woodpecker (average 67), 27 Hairy Woodpecker (average 11), 37 Pileated Woodpecker (avg 21), 120 Great Crested Flycatcher (average 83), 111 Acadian Flycatcher (average 71), 104 Brown-headed Nuthatch (average 71), 35 Veery (previous high 16 in 1978, average 4), 33 Swainson's

Thrush (average 13), 187 Gray Catbird (average 65), 50 Orchard Oriole (average 17), and 93 Black-and-white Warbler (average 17).

There were no big misses or record lows, though the count of 23 Song Sparrows is far below the average 49 and lowest since 2001.

Team honors: Jan Hansen had an amazing 94 species at University Lake and the western portion of the count circle, followed by Brian Bockhahn at Stagecoach Road, with 90. Jelmer Poelstra, covering Cub Creek at Jordan Lake, counted the most individual birds, with 915.

We had 48 field counters in 27 parties (average 38 in 19 parties), with one feeder watcher. Thanks to all counters for their efforts on this stellar day!

Charles W. "Will" Cook

**Durham** – count date April 26<sup>th</sup>, 138 species, 7912 individuals, 24 participants in 14 parties, 79.00 party-hours. Weather: Mostly clear skies, light winds, temperature 54°-74°F.

**Compiler:** Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)

**Participants:** Jeff Blalock, Brian Bockhahn, Vern Bothwell, Gail Boyarsky, Norm Budnitz, Sebastian Burgess, Jim Capel, Will Cook, Tom Driscoll, Randy Emmitt, Bo Howes, Elizabeth Keating, Gene Kingsley, Thomas Krakauer, Matt Lawing, Marcia Mandel, Carol McRae, Brian Murphy, Don Pelly, Jelmer Poelstra, Roger Shaw, Deck Stapleton, Steve Stevans, and Fleeta Wilkinson.

**Exclusives:** American Bittern, Snowy Egret, Northern Harrier, Merlin, Rusty Blackbird

**Notes:** The Durham Spring Bird Count was held on Sunday April 26, 2020. One for the record books we had record high 24 observers in 14 parties tallied 138 species (average 117) and 7910 total birds (average 4445) led by 941 Double-crested Cormorant, 308 Northern Cardinal and 260 Red-eyed Vireo.

Highlights were many, new to the spring checklist were calling Virginia Rail (fourth record) in Little River section, Snowy Egret (second) at the Ellerbe Creek mouth area, Mississippi Kite (third) over a backyard near the Eno River, Warbling Vireo along Panther Creek/hickory hill (first), Gray-cheeked Thrush at Eno River boat ramp (first, but several around this season), and one Sedge Wren (third) at Flat River Waterfowl Impoundment.

We lit up the "rarer" list with several, admittedly I need to update this old checklist format and put these on the expected side! Bonaparte's Gull (three parties and pretty plumage), Herring Gull, Red-breasted Merganser (two parties), Common Loon (four parties), American Bittern, Northern Harrier (three parties), Merlin (two parties), Greater Yellowlegs, Chuck-wills-widow, Bank Swallow (two parties), Magnolia, Cape May and Blackburnian Warblers, Rose-breasted Grosbeak (four parties), Bobolink (two parties), Rusty Blackbird and Baltimore Oriole (three parties).

Misses: for the second year in a row we missed Rock Pigeon, I even checked all bridges. And I won't be greedy, but other species shamelessly undetected this year included Hooded Merganser, Northern Bobwhite, American Woodcock and White-crowned Sparrow.



Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count!  
Brian Bockhahn

**Falls Lake** – count date April 27<sup>th</sup>, 126 species, 5770 individuals, 23 participants in 15 parties plus one feeder watcher, 71.60 party-hours. Weather: Mostly clear skies, moderate winds, temperature 48-68°F.

Compiler: Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)

**Participants:** Herb Amyx, Pat Amyx, Brian Bockhahn, Norm Budnitz, Sebastian Burgess, Will Cook, Ed Corey, Tom Driscoll, Kevin Durso, Sandy Durso, Marti Kane, Gene Kingsley, Kyle Kittleberger, Elliot McDowell, Carol McRae, Brian Pendergraft, Josh Southern, Deck Stapleton, Sara Steffan, Steve Stevens, Patty Tice, Karen Walencik, and Tom Walencik.

**Exclusives:** None

**Notes:** The 17th Falls Lake Spring Bird Count was held on April 27, 2020. Twenty-two observers in 15 parties and one feeder counter tallied our second highest 126 species (average 114, high 130) and our highest total of 5770 total birds (average 4004).

Most numerous birds were 420 Double Crested Cormorant, 297 Ring-billed Gull and 242 Northern Cardinal.

First Records: a whopping three Sedge Wrens in a field at Olive Grove game lands and a Lincoln's Sparrow in a field at the north end of Beaverdam Lake, check those fields, wow! A count week Marsh Wren was new for the spring checklist, in the same spot as the Sedge Wren and all were photographed!

Other Goodies: two parties had Cape May Warbler (second count record). Kpark in the lower lake had our second Gray-cheeked Thrush and a count week Greater Yellowlegs (second). Two parties had Common Raven (third record). Bank Swallow, Blue-winged Warbler, Veery, Bobolink and Baltimore Oriole were also found.

Misses: Nothing off A-list but we missed Sharp-shinned Hawk, Caspian Tern, Whippoorwill and Common Nighthawk.

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count!  
Brian Bockhahn

**Kerr Lake** – count date April 28<sup>th</sup>, 125 species, 4567 individuals, 12 participants in seven parties, 55.05 party-hours. Weather: Cloudy skies, light winds, temperatures 38°-62°F.

Compiler: Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)

**Participants:** Brian Bockhahn, Ann Brice, Adam D'Onofrio, Paul Glass, Bill Lindemuth, Joyce Lindemuth, Fred Lobdell, Grace McCrowell, Carol McRae, Evan Spears, Deck Stapleton, and Elizabeth Wooten.

**Exclusives:** Ring-necked Duck, Sora, Red-throated Loon, Loggerhead Shrike, Horned Lark

**Notes:** The 17th Kerr Lake Spring Bird Count was held on April 28, 2020. Twelve observers in seven parties tallied 125 species (average 119) and 4567 birds (average 3916) led by 565 Double-crested Cormorant, 265 Ring-billed Gull and 211 Yellow-rumped Warbler.

A Sora from Dick Cross WMA, and Loggerhead Shrike from Palmer Springs were new to the spring count checklist.

Other Goodies: Rarity list was well represented with Blue-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Red-breasted Merganser, Red-throated Loon (three years straight), Pied-billed Grebe, American Kestrel, American Woodcock, Horned Lark, Marsh Wren (third) and Veery.

Misses: Coopers Hawk, Solitary Sandpiper, Hairy Woodpecker (first miss), Black-throated Green Warbler, Savannah Sparrow and Baltimore Oriole.

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count!

Brian Bockhahn

Appendix: Please see the [appendix](#) for a chart of data from these counts.