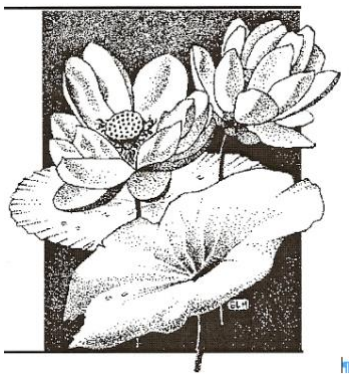
Lotus

Newsletter



FEBRUARY 2026

Christmas Bird Count — Woodhouse

Report by Adam Timpf

These are the results of the 39th Woodhouse Christmas Bird Count (CBC) held on Sunday, December 14th, 2025. The Woodhouse CBC is centred 7 km east of Simcoe, at the crossroads of Highway 3 and Cockshutt Road at Renton and roughly covers from Port Ryerse and Port Dover to Waterford and from west of Simcoe to east of Jarvis. This year there were 34 field birders covering the count area plus 12 feeder watchers.

Conditions were bitterly cold to start the day with temperatures of -15, light west winds (0-15 km/h), plenty of snow cover, and barely any open water away from Lake Erie or moving streams. It "warmed up" to about -7 by the afternoon, but the sun felt nice when it was poking out from the clouds. The cold temperatures leading up to the count and subsequent freeze up of inland bodies of water meant waterfowl was tough to come by and were detected in low numbers. Although Lake Erie was open, it was largely devoid of ducks, gulls, and other waterbirds for some reason.

Common Raven **Photo by Sue Drotos**

We tallied 89 species on the day, 2 more than the average of the last 10 years, and above the 39-year average of 85. There were 5 "count week" species that were found within 3 days of the count, but missed on the day. The count resulted in 1 new species being added to our count list - a Lincoln's Sparrow was found hanging out with a group of Swamp Sparrows. Most winters there are only 1 or 2 that are found in the province in December so this year it was our turn to host this handsome sparrow. This brings our all-time species list to 157.

We also set 4 new count highs. 15 Common Raven surpasses the 14 recorded in 2021, and this will get broken again as this species continues to recolonize Norfolk County and southern Ontario more broadly. 11 Hermit Thrush surpasses the 7 found last year, 94 White-throated Sparrow beats the 66 recorded in 2023, and 14(!) Yellow-bellied Sapsucker obliterates the previous record of 5 from last year. In fact, last year I didn't realize that we set the new high count for Yellow-bellied Sapsucker for any CBC in Canada at 5, and now we have just upped the Canadian record to 14! For some historical context on the Woodhouse Count, from 1987 to 2023, we only recorded Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 11 times on the count day. On most counts it was absent entirely, but occasionally 1 or 2 would be found. For whatever reason, there were a lot around this winter so it will be interesting to watch results from other CBCs and see if any other counts put up big numbers for this species.

Cont'd. on p.2

CBC — Woodhouse ...continued from Page 1

Total Individuals: 15,346 (top 3 species were Canada Goose, Slate-coloured Junco, and European Starling)
Average over all 39 years = 24,448
Average for the last 10 years = 18,031
Total Species: 89 + 5 count week. Count week species were: Cackling Goose, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Iceland Gull, American Pipit

New for Count
1 Lincoln's Sparrow

New Count Highs or ties:
14 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (5 in 2024)
15 Common Raven (14 in 2021)
11 Hermit Thrush (7 in 2024)
94 White-throated Sparrow (66 in 2023)
3 Ruby-crowned Kinglet (3 in 2024)
2 Peregrine Falcon (2 multiple times)

Other Notable Finds:
1 Northern Pintail
1 Red-shouldered Hawk (returning bird from last year perhaps)
1 Killdeer
1 Eastern Towhee
1 Gray Catbird
5 Fox Sparrow
1 White-winged Crossbill
1 Redpoll

Lowlights and Misses:
0 Horned Grebe (Last missed in 2014)
0 Cackling Goose (Last missed in 2010)
0 Gadwall (Last missed in 2013)
0 Mockingbird (Last missed in 2015)
5 Greater Scaup (Lowest since 1988)
2 American Kestrel (matches our lowest ever, and a far cry from when we would routinely tally 30-60 birds in the 1990s)
16 American Herring Gull (lowest ever)

Great Blue Heron	3	Bonaparte's Gull	17	American Robin	15
Trumpeter Swan	7	Ring-billed Gull	149	Gray Catbird	1
Tundra Swan	6	American Herring Gull	69	European Starling	1408
Canada Goose	5205	Great Black-backed Gull	1	Cedar Waxwing	31
Mallard	913	Rock Pigeon	411	Myrtle Warbler	4
American Black Duck	27	Mourning Dove	603	Eastern Towhee	1
Northern Pintail	1	Eastern Screech-Owl	1	American Tree Sparrow	540
American Green-winged Teal	1	Belted Kingfisher	3	Chipping Sparrow	1
Canvasback	3	Red-bellied Woodpecker	57	Field Sparrow	2
Redhead	2	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	14	Fox Sparrow	5
Greater Scaup	5	Downy Woodpecker	66	Song Sparrow	51
Common Goldeneye	135	Hairy Woodpecker	15	Lincoln's Sparrow	1
Bufflehead	94	Yellow-shafted Flicker	12	Swamp Sparrow	20
Hooded Merganser	6	Pileated Woodpecker	5	White-throated Sparrow	94
Common Merganser	266	Northern Shrike	2	White-crowned Sparrow	27
Red-breasted Merganser	51	Blue Jay	410	Slate-colored Junco	1868
Ruddy Duck	1	American Crow	405	Snow Bunting	132
Bald Eagle	17	Common Raven	15	Northern Cardinal	278
Northern Harrier	16	Horned Lark	54	Red-winged Blackbird	1
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4	Black-capped Chickadee	335	Rusty Blackbird	1
Cooper's Hawk	8	Eastern Tufted Titmouse	2	Common Grackle	4
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	Red-breasted Nuthatch	33	Brown-headed Cowbird	42
Red-tailed Hawk	78	White-breasted Nuthatch	72	Purple Finch	14
Rough-legged Hawk	3	Brown Creeper	18	House Finch	127
Golden Eagle	1	Carolina Wren	23	White-winged Crossbill	1
Peregrine Falcon	2	Winter Wren	13	Pine Siskin	89
American Kestrel	2	Golden-crowned Kinglet	45	American Goldfinch	188
Merlin	3	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	3	House Sparrow	578
Wild Turkey	78	Eastern Bluebird	68		
Killdeer	1	Hermit Thrush	11	**Total**	**89 Sp**

Christmas Bird Count — Fisherville
Report by the Haldimand Bird Observatory (Sarah Sharp)

This year marked Fisherville's 35th annual Christmas Bird Count, and although the weather was against us, the **twenty** dedicated counters made an amazing effort to once again document all of the birds in the area. The temperature ranged from -5ºC to 3ºC with wind gusts up to 40km/h from the Southwest. There was drizzle in the late morning turning to snow/freezing rain in the afternoon. A total of 45 collective hours were spent in the field counting birds, with a collective 430km travelled by car and 29km travelled by foot.

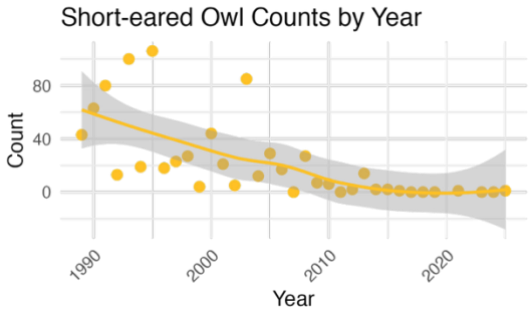
Thank you kindly to David Maida, Anne Marie Henry, Duane Brown, George Uimonen, Nicole Richardson, Andy Johnson, Jeff Skevington, Ruchard Skevington, Angela Skevington, Tom Thomas, Bill Smith, Amanda Anstice, Hugh McArthur, Julia Wever, Jacob Wever, Randy Wilson, Michael Kirchin, Audrey Heagy, Kim Fleming and Jay Buck for your contribution to valuable bird population data this year!

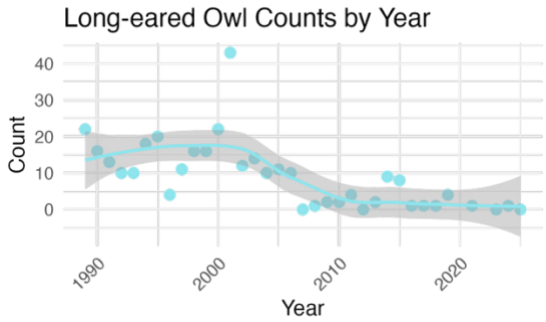
White-throated Sparrow **Photo by Sarah Sharp**

There were no new high counts this year, most likely due to low detectability due to the weather. However, some interesting species were found. The first Black Scoter since 2012 was found on Lake Erie. A Rusty Blackbird (a species at risk) was discovered in the count circle for the first time since 2017. A Gray Catbird was found on the count for only the 6th time. A Common Yellowthroat, a warbler that is uncommon in the winter, was found for the 5th time on the count.

There were new low counts for American Goldfinch (46), Black-capped Chickadee (93), European Starling (791), Great Blue Heron (0), House Finch (23), Northern Harrier (4), Red-tailed Hawk (42) and Rock Pigeon (153). Many of these lows could represent birds being difficult to detect due to the weather. The three most abundant species counted were Canada Goose (1675), Mallard (930) and House Sparrow (811).

A total of 13 owls were found, 9 Eastern Screech-owls, 3 Great Horned Owls and a singular Short-eared Owl. There used to be many more owls found on the Fisherville count, but habitat loss and other threats have caused their wintering populations in the area to decline.





Overall, on this year's count, birders counted **8082 individual birds** of **73 species**. Well done everyone! As always, we welcome any new participants, whether you are an advanced birder or a beginner, we will find a spot for you! Please email fisherville.birdcount@gmail.com if you are interested!

Cont'd. p.4

CBC — Fisherville ...continued from Page 3

Eastern Bluebird
Photo by Len Grincevicius

Canada Goose	1675	Bald Eagle	5	European Starling	791
Tundra Swan	5	Red-tailed Hawk	42	Northern Mockingbird	1
Mallard	930	Rough-legged Hawk	7	Eastern Bluebird	26
American Black Duck	121	Eastern Screech-Owl	9	Hermit Thrush	1
Northern Pintail	2	Short-eared Owl	1	American Robin	8
Redhead	7	Great-horned Owl	3	Cedar Waxwing	3
Greater Scaup	723	Red-bellied Woodpecker	28	House Sparrow	811
Black Scoter	1	Downy Woodpecker	31	House Finch	23
Long-tailed Duck	1	Hairy Woodpecker	4	Purple Finch	20
Bufflehead	240	Northern Flicker	3	American Goldfinch	46
Common Goldeneye	218	American Kestrel	9	Snow Bunting	15
Common Merganser	41	Blue Jay	161	American Tree Sparrow	134
Red-breasted Merganser	279	American Crow	104	Dark-eyed Junco	217
Wild Turkey	184	Common Raven	11	White-crowned Sparrow	6
Horned Grebe	24	Northern Shrike	2	White-throated Sparrow	12
Rock Pigeon	153	Gray Catbird	1	Song Sparrow	16
Mourning Dove	221	Black-capped Chickadee	93	Swamp Sparrow	4
Killdeer	2	Tufted Titmouse	11	Common Grackle	1
Bonaparte's Gull	17	Horned Lark	2	Red-winged Blackbird	17
Ring-billed Gull	216	Red-breasted Nuthatch	7	Brown-headed Cowbird	44
American Herring Gull	93	White-breasted Nuthatch	36	Rusty Blackbird	1
Great Black-backed Gull	3	Brown Creeper	4	Common Yellowthroat	1
Northern Harrier	4	Carolina Wren	19	Northern Cardinal	76
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	Winter Wren	1	**Total**	**73 Sp**
Cooper's Hawk	1	Golden-crowned Kinglet	10		

Christmas Bird Count — Long Point
Report by Stu Mackenzie

The 65th Long Point Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was held on Saturday, December 20, 2025, incorporating both the Long Point Family Winter Bird Count and the traditional formalized CBC. The count covers a ~24-kilometre diameter circle centred on the lighthouse south of St. Williams. Over 100 participants surveyed sixteen territories, contributing approximately 120 hours in the field, travelling 400 km by car and more than 110 km on foot. In total **27,710** birds were observed of **108** species.

Northern Harrier ***Photo by James Lees***

Highlights and Low-lights:
Green-winged Teal - First time missed on the count since 2016.
Virginia Rail – Tracks of a rail were found on fresh snow from the night before which was determined to be a Virginia Rail. This was the 17th for the count and the first since 1997.
American Woodcock – This was the 4th ever observed on the count.
Raptors - Conditions were favorable for a little raptor migration with observers noting good numbers of Red-tailed Hawks (51) and Northern Harriers (37).
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker – Highest count ever with 14 for this more fair-weather woodpecker. Previous high was 4 in 2010.
Red-bellied Woodpecker – Fourth highest count with 77 observed.
Northern Flicker – 2nd highest count with 89 since 1983 when 96 were observed.
Eastern Phoebe – Tied highest count with 2 observed; one was observed along Big Creek and another near Backus Mills.
Tufted Titmouse – Big miss. First time not observed on the count since 2009.
Carolina Wren – 2nd highest total with 49 observed.
Gray Catbird - Two were observed on the count.
Brown Thrasher - One was observed at the Port Rowan Wetlands for the 2nd year in a row.
Evening Grosbeak – One was observed at Turkey Point.
Lapland Longspur – 2nd highest count with 26 observed with a large flock of Horned Lark.
Field Sparrow – Notable number of 9 observed across the count area.
White-crowned Sparrow – Record high with 29 observed. Highest since 26 were observed in 2007.
White-throated Sparrow – 3rd highest total with 219.
Orange-crowned Warbler - 2nd on the count since the first was found in 2014. The Long Point CBC Bird of the Day was awarded to Nicole Richardson for finding this beauty.
Yellow-rumped Warbler – Far from any record, but 17 were observed, all in the Turkey Point lowlands.

A summary of the 65th Long Point Christmas Bird Count is up on the Long Point Bird Observatory Sightings Board here.

A very special thank you to all the participants, volunteers, and landowners and caretakers that allowed access to their properties for the count.

Preliminary results by area can be found here.

Orange-crowned Warbler Photo by Stu Mackenzie

See last page for Simcoe Advocate article by Norfolk Nature member, Lisa Timpf.

Red-tailed Hawk Cornell Lab Cam – From Hatch to Fledge

Let your mind rewind to spring as you relive the best moments from another successful nesting season on the Cornell Red-tailed Hawk Cam. Big Red and Arthur did it again! These birds frequent open areas like fields and roadsides, perched on hydro poles or trees. They hunt small mammals like mice, squirrels and rabbits with their sharp vision. They are identified by their broad wings and short brick-red tail.

Here are the top five highlights, condensed into less than 2 minutes. Enjoy!

Adult - Photo by Brian Sullivan - Macaulay Library

Top 5 Kestrel Highlights are Pure Joy

Catch up with this falcon family from the American Kestrel Cam of Cornell Lab! Join in as we look back at the top five moments of the 2025 kestrel season, when the hardworking parents successfully raised five feisty female fledglings in their nest box in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. Look here.

Adult Male - Photo by Michael JD - Macaulay Library

Why Native Plants

Article by Susan Berry, Nature London (with permission)

Why Native Plants?

In 2019, the Global Assessment Report on the state of nature issued by the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services indicated that one million species worldwide are at risk of extinction.

According to the World Wildlife Foundation (WWF), planting a native tree or plant can have cascading effects on supporting biodiversity in the ecosystem. Native plants are considered those that are indigenous to a geographic region and are adapted to local conditions including soil type, temperature, climate and light.

Golden Alexander (Ziziaa urea)
Photo by Jan Grincevicius

Why are native plants important?

A native plant encourages a variety of local insects and animals that have evolved alongside it and use it for food or shelter. In contrast, non-native species typically support only a small number of local species. This in turn contributes to biodiversity decline.

As habitat loss affects more and more species, the importance of native plants and even small, naturalized areas has been recognized. Our Carolinian Zone holds one third of Canada's at-risk species, as well as one quarter of the country's population. Many of the natural habitats in this region have been transformed and fragmented by human activity. Habitat loss and fragmentation limit the survival of many species (birds, insects, animals) that need connected habitat to migrate or move as needed. Even small, naturalized areas on roadsides and field margins, and small plantings in home gardens and on balconies add to connectivity.

Native plants that are adapted to the local climate and soil conditions tend to be more resilient and need less care and watering than non-native species. Many organizations offer specific information to help gardeners choose native plants suited to their growing conditions. These are listed in the resources below.

Wild Columbine (Aquilegia Canadensis) Photo by Jan Grincevicius

References and Resources

birdgardens.ca
Ontario Nature Blog: Going Wild for Native Plants
Ecological Landscape Alliance: Why Native Plants Matter
World Wildlife Fund: Restoring Nature One Garden at a Time

Nuisance Weed and Tall Grass Control Bylaw - Mississauga

By Lorraine Johnson, Master Gardener of Ontario

Now that the Ontario Superior Court has ruled that two key provisions of Mississauga's Nuisance Weed and Tall Grass Control bylaw are unconstitutional (the requirement that "grass" be kept below 20cm and that "nuisance weeds and weed seeds" be removed), what are the implications for naturalized and native plant gardens?

What the Court mainly and essentially did in the Ruck v City of Mississauga ruling is to affirm a 30-year-old decision over a naturalized garden. The 1996 Sandy Bell case affirmed the Charter-protected right to a naturalized garden. In Bell and now Ruck, the Courts didn't say that this right is absolute, but rather, that any infringement of that right must stand up to evidence-based tests.

Some public commentary has accused Wolf Ruck of "laziness" for the way he maintains his naturalized yard. On the contrary, I'd say that, with some notable exceptions (Toronto, Kingston, Dieppe NB, as a few examples), it's municipalities across the country that have been lazy in not adhering to the Bell decision of more than 30 years ago.

But no longer can municipalities claim not to be aware of the unconstitutional provisions contained in their property standards bylaws. It's now up to municipalities to reform their outdated, anti-ecological and unconstitutional bylaws in support of biodiversity and naturalized gardens.

[If you're interested in more detail about the Ruck decision, there's a longer piece here.

Blue Jays Grab Peanuts on the Ontario FeederWatch Cam

Watch Blue Jays flock in a burst of energy to grab peanuts from the tray on the Ontario FeederWatch Cam. As they jostle for position, several birds raise their crests—an aggressive signal toward their neighbors—while they zip onto the feeder, dodge and displace one another, and snatch a few peanuts before making a quick exit. Keep an eye out for behaviours like these at your own feeders to spot the daily struggles for dominance playing out in your backyard. To watch, go here.

Photo by Len Grincevicius

Ontario Nature BRIEFS

Ottawa Wildflower Seed Library still has seeds available for this year's orders. There are enough seeds in one package to result in 3-15 plants. Order now while supplies last!

In case you missed it in the flurry of environmental deregulation in 2025, another concern is changes to building standards, including removing bird friendly practices, as described by *The Pointer* in this article.

Your generous support helped us protect and restore more threatened habitats, advocate for stronger environmental protections, and inspire youth to do conservation in their communities. To show our gratitude, we've put together some highlights of what your support made possible. Thank you for all you do for nature in Ontario. Read Gratitude Report here.

Have a look at the Winter Issue of ON Nature magazine here.

To receive selected information by email, you can sign up:
ontarionature.org

Don Mills Receives Governor-General's Award

Don Mills, a local birder, has been honoured with the Governor General's Award for helping revitalize two endangered bird species. Much of the work he did with prothonotary warblers took place in Norfolk County. Read more here.

Thank You!

From Norfolk Nature to

Will & Morgan Partridge

Guardian Computing

For hosting our website

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hello Norfolk Nature members!

Anyone that has been complaining about our winters not being as snowy and cold as we remember in our childhood, well ..... Complain no more! It has definitely been a "real" winter in Norfolk with lots of snow, cold, wind, shoveling and school snow days. For those not enjoying it I hope you have a chance to get to a sunnier clime this winter for some relief. For those that don't mind — embrace it and pull out those snowshoes and skis!

We received another $15.000 donation to the Harry B. Barett Bursary this year, bringing our estimated total to over $110,000. Based on providing two bursaries annually of $2,000 each, the Board feels we have an excellent self-sustaining fund at this point! We'll review annually to ascertain whether we want to increase the bursary value or distribute to additional deserving students who are doing research work in Norfolk towards a thesis project.

Following member approval for $10,000 to hire a festival coordinator for the planned Norfolk Nature Fest in May 2027, we are now starting to make plans. A letter has been sent to fellow conservation organizations, along with the LPRCA, Norfolk County, and Long Point Eco-Adventures, inviting them to join a planning committee. A website is being developed, and a poster has been designed. We anticipate the formation of a festival committee in late March and a coordinator in place by May 1. There will also be a need for numerous volunteers so if you are interested, please let us know.

Warm Regards, Bernie

The next BoD Meeting will be held on March 24, 2026. The report from this meeting will be in the April issue of the Lotus.

Upcoming NN Events

April 10 – Timberdoodle Hike
April 25 – Star Party
May 10 – Mother's Day Wildflowers
May 17 – Birding by Ear
May 24 – Tour of LPBLT Restoration Properties
June 6 – Forest Bathing
Juine 20 – Caterpillars and Host Plants

Long Point Bird Observatory Newsletter

Did you Know

The Boreal Forest: A Land of Birds
The Boreal region is a massive expanse of forests, wetlands and waterways covering much of the northern hemisphere.
Learn more here.

Tell a friend about us.

The benefits of membership, membership forms and payment options are available at **www.norfolknature.org**

We welcome new members. Don't keep us a secret.

Norfolk Nature Meetings

Norfolk Nature meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month from September to April.
Meetings take place at the **Simcoe Recreation Centre, 182 South Drive, Simcoe.** The meetings are free and visitors are always welcome. Doors open at 6:30 pm, programs begin at 7:00 pm.

NN Mailing Address

Norfolk Nature
PO Box 995, Simcoe, ON
N3Y 5B3

Next Lotus Issue:

April 2026
Input dead line:
Friday, March 20, 2026

About Norfolk Nature

Norfolk Nature members participate in meetings and field outings, many of which are family-friendly**. Membership fees are $30 Individual and $50 Family.** Donations are eligible for income tax credits. Charitable registration # 11905869RR00001

Guest speakers present programs on interesting and relevant natural history and conservation topics. Club members receive the Lotus newsletter with articles on local natural history and club activities. Copies of the Lotus are available at meetings, by mail or by email and posted on the Norfolk Nature web site. Articles published in the Lotus reflect the views and opinions of the authors, but not necessarily those of NN.
www.norfolknature.org

2025-26 Directors and Coordinators with Project Information

Email: info@norfolkfieldnaturalists.org

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Woodhouse, Long Point Christmas Bird Count results

LISA TIMPF

Advocate Contributor

While many people were busy with holiday season activities, the period between Dec. 14 and Jan. 5 marked an important time for birding enthusiasts.

During that time frame each year, volunteers participate in annual Christmas Bird Counts, working within set 24-kilometre circles to tally as many different species and individual birds as possible over the course of a designated day.

The information helps researchers and conservation groups study long-term trends in bird populations across North America. Here in Norfolk County, there are two annual counts, the Woodhouse Christmas Bird Count and the Long Point Christmas Bird Count.

The Woodhouse Christmas Bird Count, which takes place on the first Sunday of the count period each year, fell on Dec. 14. The Woodhouse Count covers an area from Port Ryerse and Port Dover to Waterford, and from west of Simcoe to east of Jarvis. This year, 34 birders were out in the field, while 12 feeder watchers reported their results.

Count organizer Adam Timpf noted that conditions were "bitterly cold" at the start of the day, and the cold temperatures prior to the count led to many frozen bodies of water. As a result, waterfowl were seen in lower-than-usual numbers.

In total, 89 species of birds were counted, two more than the average for the last 10 years. A new species, the Lincoln's Sparrow, was added to the count list, bringing the Woodhouse Count's all-time species list to 157.

A total of 15,346 birds were tallied, with the top three species being Canada Goose, Slate-coloured Junco, and European Starling. The total number of birds recorded was lower than the 39-year average of 24,448.

On the positive side, the count either matched the record, or set a new record, for the number of birds of particular species spotted. Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker, Common Raven, Hermit Thrush, and White-throated Sparrow set new highs, while Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Peregrine Falcon matched previous records.

Several species that have been seen on past counts were not spotted on count day, including Horned Grebe, Cackling Goose, Gadwall, and Mockingbird. The numbers of Greater Scaup, American Kestrel, and Herring Gull either matched or fell below the previous low numbers.

(KEN BURRELL PHOTO)

Yellow-bellied sapsuckers, like the one pictured here, were seen in record numbers during both the Long Point Christmas Bird Count and the Woodhouse Christmas Bird Count.

The Long Point Count occurs on the first Saturday of the count period, which turned out, for the 2025 count, to be Dec. 20. The designated count area covers a 24-kilometre diameter circle centred on the lighthouse south of St. Williams.

This year's numbers included both the Long Point Family Winter Bird Count and the traditional Long Point Christmas Bird Count. Over 100 participants surveyed the area, sighting 27,710 birds from 108 species.

The 2025 Long Point Count results were average to slightly below average by recent standards. The number of species seen was higher than the long-term average of 102 species, while the total number of birds was well short of the 10-year average of around 42,000, noted count organizer Stu Mackenzie.

On the other hand, Dec. 20 is the latest date on which the Long Point count is typically held, and as noted in the count report, low temperatures and the fact that most waterways were frozen solid influenced the results. In particular, the 4,977 Sandhill Cranes tallied represents roughly half the number seen in recent years.

As was the case with the Woodhouse Count, Yellow-Bellied Sapsuckers were seen in record numbers. White-Crowned Sparrows also recorded a new high, while Eastern Phoebes tied the highest previous count record. Northern Flickers, Carolina Wrens, and Lapland Longspurs logged their second-highest totals.

Other noteworthy finds included an Orange-Crowned Warbler, only the second seen on the count since the first was spotted in 2014. An American Woodcock, sighted for the fourth time on the count, a Brown Thrasher, noted for the second year in a row, and an Evening Grosbeak were among the other interesting sightings.

As data from other counts rolled in, some trends have become evident, Woodhouse Count organizer Timpf noted. For example, throughout southern Ontario "a lot of counts had low waterfowl numbers due to the cold start to winter and water freezing up." He said the low numbers of ducks is the result of weather patterns this year, and not an indication of any population changes, which are "better assessed by looking at the long-term data sets over all the years."

Timpf also observed "other counts are also reporting abnormally high numbers of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers," citing Long Point's record as well as that on the Woodhouse Count.

"Our high forest cover and more southerly location probably explains why these two counts had the most sapsuckers in Ontario, but why the sudden spike this year is still a mystery. I expect on future counts the number will be more modest, although the trend line is probably creeping upwards with our warming climate." The Christmas Bird Count has been running for 126 years, and is North America's longest-standing wildlife census. The 2025 counts represent the 39th Woodhouse Christmas Bird Count, while the Long Point Christmas Bird Count marked its 65th year.

(STU MACKENZIE PHOTO)

An orange-crowned warbler was spotted for the second time in the history of the Long Point Christmas Bird Count.