

# Delaware County Bird Club NEWSLETTER



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## DCBC December 8 Program: Pre-CBC with Rich Bradley

By Rich Bradley

It is nearly Christmas Bird Count season again. We will be conducting the 37th annual Delaware Reservoir CBC on Dec. 14. The count circle was originally initiated by Drs. Jed Burt and Sally Waterhouse of Ohio Wesleyan University in 1988. Over 36 years our count has enjoyed consistent support with about 17 to 40 field participants, organized into about nine to 11 parties. The number of birds detected on CBCs are often presented as birds-per-party-hour. That statistic is used to compensate for differences in coverage.

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### December 8 meeting of the Delaware County Bird Club

Rich Bradley, who has acted as the compiler for the Delaware Reservoir CBC for the past 12 years will provide a brief history of the National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count as well as some of the discoveries made during more than a century of this project. Specifically, how has the avifauna has changed, and how is the count conducted in the era of eBird.



Photo from the 2024 Delaware Christmas Bird Count. (Photo by Rich Bradley)

## DELAWARE COUNTY BIRD CLUB PROGRAMS

The Delaware County Bird Club in-person meetings and program presentations have resumed. They take place on the fourth Monday of each month, September through April, except in November and December when they are held on alternate days to accommodate the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Meetings are held in the lodge at Deer Haven Park at 4183 Liberty Road, Delaware Ohio, 43015. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., programs begin at 7 p.m., and are followed by reports of local bird sightings and socializing. Meeting dates can also be found on the Preservation Parks of Delaware County calendar at this link: <https://preservationparks.recdesk.com/Community/Calendar>

### Delaware County Bird Club Staff:

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# Summary of the 125th CBC (2024-2025)

National Audubon Society

The Christmas Bird Count celebrated its 125th year with a record-breaking count. Over 83,000 participants came together across the hemisphere to count birds as part of one of the longest-running formal community science bird survey in history. You can read the full written summary, the Canadian summary (coming soon), the U.S. high count article, regional summaries, and the Canadian high count article, or explore all CBC results below. At the National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count website.

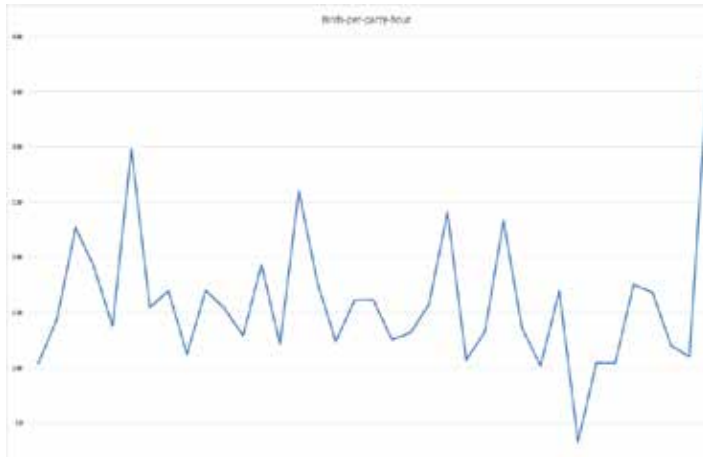
## The 125th CBC at a Glance

### Participation:

- **83,109** participants (including 72,457 field counters and 10,652 feeder counters)
- **2,693** circles counted
- **3,769** compilers
- **21** countries or territories
- **42** new circles (23 or 54.8% outside the U.S.)

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The following graph illustrates that there has been quite a bit of variation, but there is no obvious long-term trend. In a few years we had particularly high counts. Sometimes that reflects one species, for example last year had an exceptionally large number of European Starlings (19,081). The long-term average is just over 4,600 starlings, so finding 19K is amazing.



## Wild Turkeys on our CBC

For the first twelve years of our CBC no Wild Turkeys were detected. That changed in 2000 when two were spotted. Our counts of turkeys have gradually increased, sometimes flocks are reported, with highs of 45 in 2005, and 54 in 2009. We still miss them on occasion; sometimes they are found during the count week, but not on count day.

## The Birds:

- **44,259,423** birds counted
- **2,503** species plus 426 identifiable forms and hybrids
- 40 new species, 90% of which were documented in three newly established circles in Peru

Three most abundant species:

- **Red-winged Blackbird** (8.1 million)
- **Snow Goose** (3.2 million)
- **European Starling** (2.8 million)

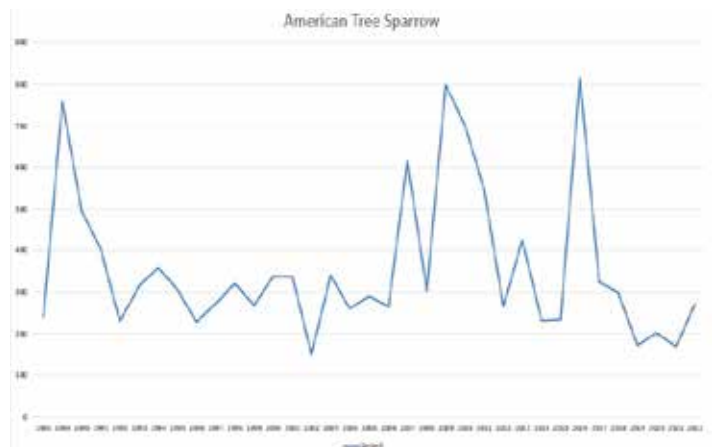
## CBC Across the Decades

At 2,693, the 125th CBC had the highest number of circles surveyed yet for the program, surpassing the previous high record of 2,677 during the 124th CBC. Recent decades have seen increasing growth in countries outside of the U.S., beginning with a surge of Canadian counts just after the year 2000 when Birds Canada began partnering with Audubon to facilitate the CBC in Canada. More recent years have seen growth in Latin America and the Caribbean; over the past several years, over half of all of the newly-established circles have been outside of the U.S. and Canada.



(Photo by Rich Bradley)

There are many species that have dramatic variation between years. One of those that spring to mind is the American Tree Sparrow. We have many in some years, and very few in others.

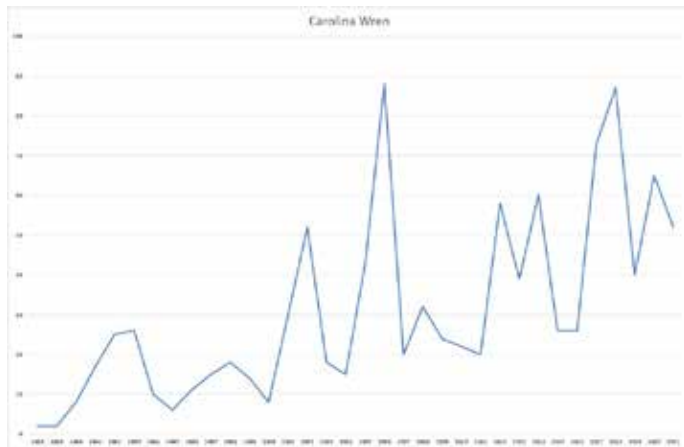


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## Delaware CBC information

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One notable change is the number of Carolina Wrens. The number of this species counted have fluctuated from year to year, but there is a clear positive trend. Statewide the species has been gradually recovering from the big crash which occurred during the blizzard winter of 1978. That was a tough winter for many birds, and Carolina Wrens were nearly extirpated from most of Ohio.



Obviously, the weather has a lot to do with how many birds are detected. Perhaps surprisingly, great weather doesn't always mean many birds. When it is cold, birds need to be out searching for food, and those days are sometimes tally the most birds. The most famous species on our count for this is the Horned Lark. In days with heavy snow cover, we find dozens of larks. They flock to the open road edges, and are easy to detect. On warmer counts, with no snow, the open brown fields make larks invisible. For me, the highlight of birding is participating in Christmas Bird Counts. I've done it since 1967 (in California) and I really look forward to this annual tradition.

There are many CBC's in Central Ohio. Here are a few dates for local counts:

Delaware Reservoir	December 14
Columbus	December 14
Big & Little Darby Creek	December 21
Killdeer Plains	December 28
Glacier Ridge	December 31
O'Shaughnessy Res.	December 31

You can find contact information for the compiler/organizer for each count on the National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count website.

**Richard A. Bradley** earned an B.S. in Zoology and M.A. in Biology at California State University, Long Beach. His master's thesis work was on the endangered Belding's Sa-

## Can you identify this?



Answer will be in our next issue. The mystery bird photo for December was taken on February 20, 2025 at Goose Pond Indiana.

**Last month's answer:** The mystery bird for November was an immature Red-tailed Hawk.

vannah Sparrow (song dialects and population surveys). He has worked at the Florida Game and Fish Commission as a research biologist working on bird population censuses and at the Florida Museum of Natural History and the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History as a curatorial assistant in Ornithology. He earned a Ph.D. in Biology at the University of New Mexico where his dissertation research was on population biology of scorpions. He held a fixed-term lectureship at the University of Sydney (Australia) between 1983 and 1987 studying bird song as well as spider foraging ecology and population regulation. Dr. Bradley is currently an Associate Professor Emeritus at the Ohio State University, Department of Evolution, Ecology and Organismal Biology. Current research focuses on spider population biology, biodiversity assessment, sampling and patterns of the biogeography of spiders. His current project is the digitization of the spider collection at the Museum of Biological Diversity at Ohio State.



A CBC after-party from a previous year. (Photo by Rich Bradley)