

3rd Annual FRONTENAC CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) originated 118 years ago, when 17 people chose to celebrate Christmas by observing and counting birds. Since then, the CBC has grown into the largest Citizen Science project worldwide. See www.birdscanada.org/volunteer/cbc/ for more information.

Count Day weather on **Saturday, December 16** was perfect for a day outdoors: Sunny, relatively mild, and no wind. Participant numbers doubled over last year, with **46 field surveyors and four feeder-watchers counting birds in the Frontenac CBC circle**. Together, we surveyed nearly 400 km of road by vehicle, and covered more than 60 km of road and trail by foot. Some survey groups were quite large, with seven, ten, and 11 people! Kudos to our experienced leaders, all of whom did an incredible job of sharing birding tips and boundless enthusiasm, engaging novice birders and more advanced team members alike.

The 2017 count tallied 3,053 individual birds from 49 different species. Clearly, more eyes means more birds seen: 797 more birds than last year, and double the number counted in 2015. Also, our biggest variety of species yet – 11 more species on Count Day than in previous years, and 14 new additions to the Frontenac Circle list! An enormous **THANK YOU** to all the field surveyors and feeder-watchers, and also to the many others who supported and promoted the Frontenac CBC. We hope to count on you again next year: Saturday, December 15, 2018!

Goodbye to a Friend

In September, we were saddened to learn that one of our dedicated participants from the past two Frontenac CBC's, Tom Rae, had died. Tom, a Friends of Frontenac Park member, was always keen to explore the park's trails in search of birds, and incredibly modest about his strong avian ID skills. Our sincere condolences go out to his family.

Tom climbs over the stile at Frontenac Provincial Park's eastern boundary during the 2015 CBC.

Photo: S. Smith



The Frontenac CBC is proudly hosted by The Friends of Frontenac Park, and we are grateful for the support of our partner organizations:



BIRD STUDIES CANADA
ÉTUDES D'OISEAUX



Frontenac



2017 Frontenac CBC Summary

Chickadees always hold a spot in the “Top 3”, and juncos rose to 2nd place this year. But, from only 29 in 2015 to more than 500 in 2017, European Starling was an unfortunate surprise as the most abundant species in our circle.

In summer and fall, birders were reporting large numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatch in the Frontenac area, and this trend held true on count day.

Cold temperatures in the previous week caused most open water to freeze, and few waterfowl and gulls remained.

No owls were detected during 45 minutes of nocturnal surveying on the south shore of Loughborough Lake.

One Common Redpoll, a lingering Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and a large flock of Red-winged Blackbirds were notable additions to the Frontenac CBC species list. During Count Week (3 days prior to and 3 days following count day), Great Blue Heron, Barred Owl, and Snow Goose were observed within the Frontenac circle.

Youth Survey Team

Christmas Bird Counts aren’t just for adults! Seven youth between the ages of 11 and 15 participated on Team 5, and together these young surveyors accomplished a lot: Morning road surveys, assisting with CBC For Kids (see p.3), and an afternoon trail survey at Frontenac Provincial Park!

The Kingston Teen Naturalists will publish a write-up of their Frontenac CBC survey experience in the March 2018 edition of *The Blue Bill*: <http://kingstonfieldnaturalists.org/bluebill.html>.

Species	Count
Canada Goose	150
Trumpeter Swan	5
Trumpeter/Tundra Swan	5
American Black Duck	18
Mallard	119
Common Goldeneye	1
Hooded Merganser	14
Common Merganser	22
Ruffed Grouse	6
Wild Turkey	60
Common Loon	1
Northern Harrier	1
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1
Cooper’s Hawk	3
Sharp-shinned/Cooper’s Hawk	1
Bald Eagle	15
Red-Tailed Hawk	5
Rough-legged Hawk	3
hawk sp.	1
Ring-billed Gull	1
Rock Pigeon	24
Mourning Dove	141
Red-bellied Woodpecker	2
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1
Downy Woodpecker	31
Hairy Woodpecker	35
Downy/Hairy Woodpecker	2
Northern Flicker	1

Species	Count
Pileated Woodpecker	7
woodpecker sp.	1
diurnal raptor sp.	1
Northern Shrike	2
Blue Jay	253
American Crow	46
Common Raven	29
Black-capped Chickadee	307
Red-breasted Nuthatch	39
White-breasted Nuthatch	51
nuthatch sp.	1
Brown Creeper	12
Golden-crowned Kinglet	12
American Robin	71
European Starling	522
Cedar Waxwing	80
Snow Bunting	90
American Tree Sparrow	82
Chipping Sparrow	1
Dark-eyed Junco	465
Song Sparrow	4
Northern Cardinal	13
Red-winged Blackbird	85
Purple Finch	14
House/Purple Finch	5
Common Redpoll	1
American Goldfinch	140
House Sparrow	25
...and of course: bird sp.	24



“Winter Birds 101” Workshop and Dinner Social

Thirty people rounded up in Sydenham for a quick morning refresher on identifying the two dozen most likely species to be seen during the count. Many leaders use this opportunity to collect datasheets, assemble their teams, and socialize with other bird enthusiasts. At the end of the day, 30 people enjoyed a delicious buffet at The Point Restaurant.



Never worry about not knowing enough about birds to participate in the Frontenac CBC – we’ve got you covered!

Christmas Bird Count for Kids!

This year, the afternoon Christmas Bird Count for Kids took place at beautiful Frontenac Provincial Park. With audio-visual support from the Youth Team, seven families learned about winter birds through a short presentation and specimen display, after which we set out in search of birds. Our 1.5 km hike through the Arab Gorge tallied seven species, including excellent views of one adult and one third year Bald Eagle soaring side-by-side overhead. Meanwhile, the Youth Team donned snowshoes and set off to survey Big Salmon Lake Road and the Corridor Trail. Everyone wrapped up with a results sing-along to the tune of “The Twelve Days of Christmas” – but with our own unique twist, of course!

Christmas Bird Count
For Kids!



Immature Bald Eagle following an adult.
Photo: F. Godbille

More Than Just Birds...

The Frontenac Christmas Bird Count is as much about having fun with like-minded souls as it is about counting birds, and 2017 was no exception. Highlights include:

- Two teams made special visits to ONFR’s geological attractions, the Holleford Crater and Frontenac park’s glacial pothole. At least, they tried: the pothole eluded Team 6.
- “**BIRD!!**” “*Could anyone ID it?*” (No) “*Did anyone see more than one?*” (No) “*Do we all agree we saw a bird?*” (Yes). And thus Team 5 tallies another bird.

Re: Three questions regarding Team 3/4 data - Re: CBC

Looks like Team 3 and Team 4 banded together for a 10-person three-legged race!

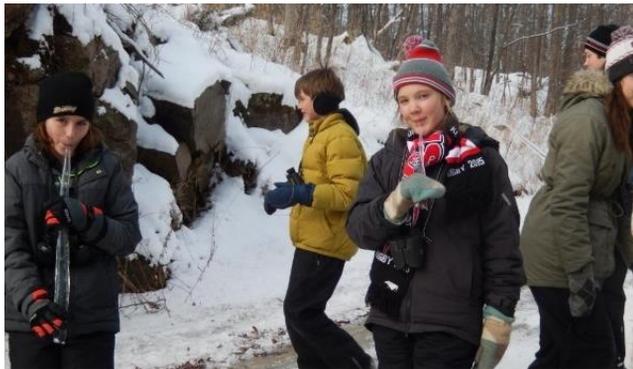
Gaye Beckwith
To Carolyn & Michael Johnson

Hi CAROLYN,
 First leg: betsy, gaye, Richard, Dianne, John and rob Kennedy drove 5 km, 45 minutes.
 Second leg: the entire groups hiked 3 km around Sydenham for 1 hour.
 Third leg: betsy, gaye, John, Richard and Dianne drove 30 km in two hours.
 Gaye

Sent from my iPad

On Jan 17, 2018, at 1:33 PM, Carolyn & Michael Johnson <bonta.johnson@sympatico.ca> wrote:

Hello members of ONFR Team 3/4, I'm finalizing CBC data entry after several delays, and am hoping members of the team might recall 1) How much time was spent driving (60 km), 2) How much time was spent walking (15 km), and 3) What the maximum number of parties was, since I'm assuming all 10 of you d...



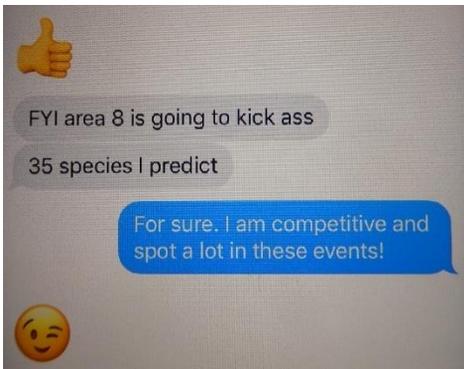
Team 5 took a break from enjoying birds to enjoy a taste of nature’s popsicles.



Photo: G. Rae

Steve came all the way from Sharbot Lake, and can now cross the Holleford Crater off his bucket list.

Pre-event text messages between Team 8 leader and Team 8 participant...



And The Winner is...

Congratulations to Team 8 on counting birds from a whopping 36 different species! We didn’t know that CBC’s were a competition – the rest of us will be sure to up our game next year. 😊

Honourable mention to Team 5 for counting more birds (“bird sp.”) than any other team!

Team 6 surveyed quiet backroads and laneways along the eastern edge of Frontenac park

Photo: S. Ramsay



One family came all the way from Stirling to enjoy birds, sunshine, hiking, and skiing!

“Our team had a blast – four chatterboxes on a treasure hunt on a beautiful winter day – what could be better?” (Steve, Team 2)

“Thanks for a great experience and accommodating us. My nephew really enjoyed it.” (Melanie, Team 5 – Youth Team)



Team 2 explored trails in Frontenac park and on Nature Conservancy of Canada properties.

Photo: G. Rae (... obviously!)



Great teamwork from the 11 members of Youth Team 5.

Thumbs up from Team 8 for high bird diversity, for great company, and for a delicious dinner.



Wrap-up

Results from the Frontenac CBC have been submitted to the National Audubon Society, while observations from CBC For Kids at Frontenac Provincial Park have also been shared with eBird Canada (<http://ebird.org/content/Canada>).