



CINCINNATI BIRD CLUB

# THE PASSENGER PIGEON

VOLUME 51, ISSUE 9      DECEMBER 2015

## 116<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Traditionally, the December meeting and field trips are replaced by the local National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts. Details follow for these counts. We encourage all bird club members to get out and participate in as many counts as they can.

### Ohio River "Oxbow" Christmas Bird Count (28<sup>th</sup> Annual)

**Saturday, December 19, 2015**

Compiler: Jack Stenger  
(513) 503-3389  
jackstenger@gmail.com

### Hamilton-Fairfield Christmas Bird Count (Since 1919)

**Saturday, December 19, 2015**

Compiler: Mike Busam  
(513) 755-0057  
mbusam@gmail.com

### Western Hamilton County Christmas Bird Count (49<sup>th</sup> Annual)

**Sunday, December 20, 2015**

Compiler: Ned Keller  
(513) 349-3369  
nedkeller49@gmail.com

### Cincinnati Christmas Bird Count (67<sup>th</sup> Annual)

**Sunday, December 27, 2015**

Compilers: Jay Stenger  
(513) 522-4245  
jaystenger@cinci.rr.com  
Jack Stenger (513) 503-3389  
jackstenger@gmail.com

### East Fork Christmas Bird Count (32<sup>st</sup> Annual)

**Saturday, January 2, 2016**

Compiler: Joe Bens  
(513) 353-4229  
joebens@live.com

Other Counts in the area.

### Adams County

**Saturday, December 19, 2015**

Compiler: Mark Zloba  
(937)544-2880 ext. 12  
MZloba@cincymuseum.org

### Big Oak NWR

**Saturday, December 19, 2015**

Compiler: Joseph Robb  
joe\_robb@fws.gov

### Oxford Area CBC

**Saturday, December 19, 2015**

Compiler: Larry Gersbach  
larrygers@aol.com

For more information about Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts visit the web-site

<https://www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count>

### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- *National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts*
- *Field Trip Notes*
- *Bird Quiz*
- *Bird Quiz Answer*

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Follow this link to the National Audubon Society's history of Christmas Bird Count. With this historical account is a video of Chandler Robbins talking about the history of the counts. It's wonderful to watch.

<https://www.audubon.org/content/history-christmas-bird-count>



## FACEBOOK

The Cincinnati Bird Club is now on facebook at [https://](https://www.facebook.com/cincinnatibirdclub)

[www.facebook.com/cincinnatibirdclub](https://www.facebook.com/cincinnatibirdclub) Like our page and follow it for information about upcoming meetings,

field trips and other bird club information.

## EBIRD AND CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Every year more than 50,000 volunteers collect data in count circles for the National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts. The volunteers, including many Cincinnati Bird Club members, survey birds in count circles in North America, Central America, parts of South America, the Caribbean, the Hawaiian Islands and a few other regions. This data has been collected continuously since 1900 and has created a fantastic store of information about bird populations around Christmas time. National Audubon Society compiles this data and maintains the data base, so the question is, should I enter my Christmas Bird Count (CBC) data in [ebird](#) (the database maintained by Cornell University)?

The people at [ebird](#) encourage CBC participants to enter their data in the [ebird](#) database because CBC is compatible with the data that birders all over the world collect and submit to [ebird](#). I have entered my CBC data in [ebird](#) for several years now and here is what I do.

First, most count circles are broken down into sectors and different groups cover each sector. I choose a point in the middle of the sector I am covering and make it an [ebird](#) "Personal Location". From the time I enter the sector I start a global positioning system device (gps) that records my total mileage walking and reset the trip odometer in my car to record the miles driving. As I count birds through the day I add them to the [ebird](#) list using an app on my smart phone called [Bird Log](#) (android) or [ebird Mobile](#) (IOS). When the day is done I calculate the total time birding and enter it with the total mileage

using the list generated in "[Bird Log](#)" and then submit the list to [ebird](#). I use the comments area in the [ebird](#) checklist to note things like walking and driving mileage, observers and other pertinent information. If you don't have a smart phone or the [Bird Log](#) app, you can keep track of your sightings and enter them through the [ebird](#) web site when you are finished for the day.

Many times I will do a different sector in the afternoon than I do in the morning. In this case I will submit a separate list for each sector. If we meet for lunch in an area out of a sector that I am counting, I'll not include the time, mileage or birds seen on the [ebird](#) checklist. Remember that if the lunch location is within the count circle, the birds seen there should be submitted to the count compiler. Many times I have forwarded my [ebird](#) list for a sector to the compiler as my submission for that sector.

A few things to be aware of:

- If you are running a gps app on your smart phone to keep track of your mileage, you need to keep a close eye on your phone battery. The gps apps use a lot of power and will drain your battery much quicker than usual.
- If you are using [Bird Log](#) or [ebird Mobile](#) to enter your data, it will limit the number of miles that you can enter. Frequently I go over that limit. If this happens, enter a number in the mileage field, submit the list and when you get to a computer you can edit your submitted list on the [ebird](#) web site and enter the actual mileage.

Your CBC mileage will almost certainly be greater than the 5 miles that [ebird](#) suggests as a limit. However, the increased mileage is acceptable in the case of a CBC sector.

- If you survey the same sector in different years use the same personal location that you used in the past.

Information about the National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts can be found here: <https://www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count>

Information about [ebird](#) can be found here: <http://ebird.org/content/ebird/>

Information about [ebird Mobile](#) app for IOS can be found here: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/ebird-by-cornell-lab-ornithology/id988799279?mt=8>

Information about [Bird Log](#) app for android can be found here: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.ezbird.android>

Information about ebirding your National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count data can be found here: <http://help.ebird.org/customer/portal/articles/1010523>

Here is an example of an [ebird](#) list that I submitted for a count sector. <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S15966594>.

Have fun and enjoy the Christmas Bird Counts.

~Bill Stanley

### EBIRD LISTS FROM THE NOVEMBER 22, 2015 CAESAR CREEK TRIP

<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S25978175>

<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S25978174>

<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S25978173>

<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S25978176>

<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S25978172>

<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S25978171>

## DECEMBER BIRD QUIZ

**Rules:** Anybody is welcome and all are encouraged to participate. However, only paying members (it's only \$12 per year) are eligible for prizes and unadulterated bragging rights. To participate send your answers to me ([jackstenger@gmail.com](mailto:jackstenger@gmail.com)) by December 25.

All responses must be the official common English names used by the American Ornithologists' Union check-list ([Link](#)). This means they must be correctly spelled, capitalized, and hyphenated or else they are counted as wrong. Mind your plovers and quails. Also include any comments you have about the quiz bird, such as how you arrived at your ID, or how you felt about the picture. Venting is welcome. Any bird that is on the state list for Ohio, Indiana, or Kentucky is fair game. Whoever has the highest number of correct answers by the end of the Bird Club season (May) "wins." Any public discussion of quiz birds will result in a trap door opening up beneath the violator.

**Prize:** To be determined.

**Answers:** I will post the answer with a brief analysis in the next Bird Club newsletter. This will include a list of all those who guessed correctly. Don't worry, wrong guesses will not be published, so fire away: it's better to get a CBC quiz wrong than to have never participated. I think Alexander Wilson said that.

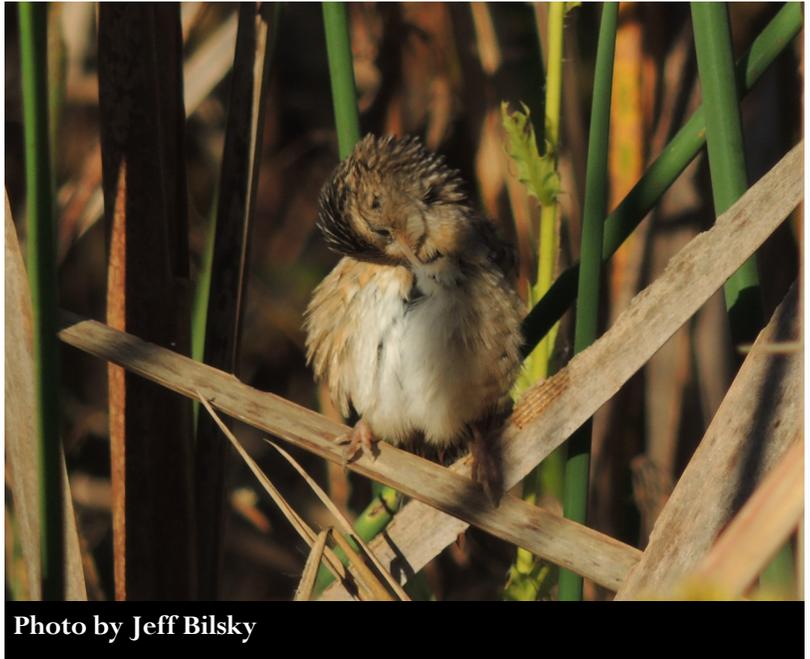


Photo by Jeff Bilsky

~Jack Stenger

## BIG OAKS NWR FIELD TRIP NOTES

The Cincinnati Bird Club went to Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge on November 28, 2015. It was raining most of the day, but that didn't slow us down. Joe Robb and Gary Stegner took the bird club members to many locations around the refuge.

Early in the morning a few of us watched a Golden Eagle as it flew off. Throughout the day we found American Tree and Swamp Sparrows. We also saw a Great Horned Owl as we drove down one of the refuge roads. Late in the day we found a Merlin that was very cooperative and allowed everyone to study it. Big Oaks NWR is large and has great areas of forest and grassland habitat with a few lakes. I look forward to going back in the spring or summer to see the birds that live in this unique place.

Thanks to Gary Stegner and Joe Robb for taking the bird club around the refuge and showing us the birds that live there.

The ebird list from the trip is here: <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S26050343>

~Bill Stanley



Photos by Bill Stanley



## November Quiz Bird Answer.



Photo by Bill Stanley

November's quiz photo is of a hawk, mid-glide, as it swoops from a telephone pole. This is a perplexing angle. Although the hawk is in flight, the field marks associated with flight – wing shape, wing patterns, and tail length – are not readily apparent. To add to the problem, the bird's underparts – what we'd see if it were perched – are not clear either.

Raptor identification begins and ends with shape and size. With these clues the bird can be generally classified as a *Buteo*, *Accipiter*, eagle-like bird, or falcon. In this photo, those clues aren't very useful so we must resort to Plan B, the tail pattern. The tail is pale with a dusky terminal band. If you flip through your field guide you

will only find one hawk with this pattern... Rough-legged Hawk. The pale upper breast and the dark brown belly patch confirm this.

Rough-legged Hawks are fun because their identification doesn't stop at the species level. They are one of a few raptors that can be reliably sexed *and* aged by their plumage. Adult male RLHA lack a contrasting brown belly band, making this bird an adult female or an immature. We can reliably identify this as an immature bird because it lacks the bold dark tail band of a female. Bill Stanley photographed this immature Rough-legged Hawk on the Bird Club field trip to Muscatatuck NWR on February 7, 2015.



LeConte's Sparrow found by Jeff Bilsky, Bill Hutchison and Bill Stanley in Highland County. Photo by Bill Stanley

## Birding Calendar

- Dec 12...Cincinnati Nature Center Bird Walk
- Dec 19...Ohio River "Oxbow" CBC
- Dec 19...Hamilton Fairfield CBC
- Dec 19...Adams County CBC
- Dec 19...Big Oaks NWR CBC
- Dec 19...Oxford Area CBC
- Dec 20...Western Hamilton County CBC
- Dec 27...Cincinnati CBC
- Jan 2...East Fork CBC

# DECEMBER 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2

## OTHER BIRDING OPPORTUNITIES

**Tufted Titmouse in flight.**

**Photo by Bob Ireton**

- Cincinnati Nature Center Saturday morning bird walk. December 12 Led by Mike Kravitz. Meet at 8:00am in

the Rowe Woods Parking lot. Open to all, non-members pay a parking fee. Call (513) 831-1711 for details.





## CINCINNATI BIRD CLUB

c/o Newsletter Editor  
3491 Bootjack Corner Rd  
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## Bird Club Membership

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Individual \$12.00 \_\_\_\_\_ Family \$15.00 \_\_\_\_\_ Student (under 18) FREE

Make your check payable to Cincinnati Bird Club, and mail to our Treasurer:

Lois Shadix ([lcshadix@fuse.net](mailto:lcshadix@fuse.net)), 2928 Saddleback Dr, Cincinnati, OH 45244

2015-2016 DUES:

IF YOU HAVEN'T SENT  
IN YOUR DUES YET  
FOR THE SEPTEMBER  
2015 - MAY 2016

BIRDING SEASON,  
PLEASE FILL OUT THE  
FORM AND MAIL IT IN  
ALONG WITH YOUR  
MEMBERSHIP FEES