**68th Peterborough Christmas Bird Count Results**

By Martin Parker, Count Compiler

On Sunday, December 15th 64 members and friends of the Peterborough Field Naturalists (PFN) ventured into the field in search of our wintering birds. Another 16 individuals monitored the birds visiting their feeders, yard and neighbourhood. This tradition of the Peterborough Field Naturalists commenced in the late 1940’s and now continues annually. Since the 1963 Christmas Bird Count, all the counts have been conducted in accordance with the protocol established by the National Audubon Society and Bird Studies Canada. The count is conducted within one calendar day and within a circle of diameter 15 miles. The maps for the Peterborough CBC are available for viewing on the PFN website: [www.peterboroughnature.org](http://www.peterboroughnature.org)

The complete summary of the Peterborough CBC following this article.

The grand total of 56 species of birds were spotted on Count Day, consisting of 10,686 individuals.

The results of the five previous counts were 65 species in 2018, 60 species in 2017, 50 species in 2016, 58 species in 2015 and 67 in 2014. The number of individuals were lower than the average of 13,736 over the previous five years.

A number of factors contributed to the lower number of species and individuals. The cold weather in November which resulted in extensive ice coverage of some of our local lakes and other water bodies resulted in a decline in the variety and number of water birds. For example the 53 Canada Geese represents the lowest total over the past five years. On the 2018 there were 1,169 Canada Geese, and in 2017 there were 3,765 and in 2014 there were 5,795. On the 2016 count there were only 71 Canada Geese. The cold weather also effected the number of other waterfowl species. On the 2015 count there were 11 species of waterfowl vs. 7 on this year’s count. Once our local water courses freeze over in the fall waterfowl leave and do not return until the rivers and lake open in March.

The slight wind on the morning of the count created difficulties in finding owls. This year only Great Horned Owls were recorded. Five species were found or heard the previous year.

Two species of birds were found on this year’s count for the first time ever. They were:

One **Canvasback** on the Otonabee River near the waste water treatment plant by the Area 6 team

Two **Turkey Vultures** were observed in on the morning of the count – one in the area of the marsh at the north end of Fairburn Street, and in the area of Anne Street and Monaghan Road.

This brings the total number of species recorded on a Peterborough CBC to 136.

New record high numbers and other highlights are:

**Horned Grebe** – the one individual on Little Lake represent only the third time this species has been recorded on this count

**Peregrine Falcon** – two were recorded, one at the Quaker Oats building and the other at Loggerhead Marsh. The second time two individuals have been observed on the count

**Red-bellied Woodpecker** – the 16 individuals ties the previous high of 16 on the 2017 count

**American Crow** – the 1,641 individuals exceed the previous high of 953 on the 2016 count

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** – this is the 7th time this species has been recorded on a Peterborough CBC

**Winter Finches**

Birders across the southern part of the province each fall wonder if there will be an influx of winter finches in the winter month. This year the forecast was that were would not be a sufficient movement to the south this winter. The count results reflect the absence of winter finches. The following species were not reported on this year’s Peterborough CBC: Pine Grosbeak, Red Crossbill, White-winged Crossbill, Hoary Redpoll and Pine Siskin. Only 1 Common Redpoll and 7 Evening Grosbeaks were seen. The 342 American Goldfinch are more than the average over the past five count. This absence of winter finches has been duplicated on other counts in Central Ontario

A special thanks is extended to all the count participants for their efforts on count day.