

Bird counters sharpen pencils

By Thoity Nowicki
special writer

Now is the time of year when serious birders take counts of southeastern Michigan's many species of birds.

Fifty years ago, the Detroit Audubon Society began taking censuses of birdlife that came south for the winter and those which are permanent residents.

On one full day around Christmas, a group of birders organizes its efforts to cover an area 15 miles in diameter. Each group is given a map of its section and data sheets (see sample) to record species and numbers of individuals seen.

In this region, there will be three chances for you to participate this season:

• Dec. 15 — Oakland County Audubon Society Christmas count. Call 531-9222.

The yearly count has become a nationwide activity. Christmas counts are conducted from Florida to Alaska. Southern states may count more than 200 different species. An Alaska group braved eight hours of frigid temperatures to see only a dozen or so birds.

• Dec. 16 — Detroit Audubon Society count. Call 527-6851 for information.

• Jan. 5 — Kensington Metropolitan count. Call naturalist Bob Hotelling at 685-1581.

BIRDING, OR bird watching, is a year-around activity in Michigan.

It's great fun to identify and watch birds in the spring when they return north to breed from their wintering grounds in South America.

In fall and winter, different species move south, just far enough to avoid the harsh winter of their northern breeding grounds.

And then you can watch those species which remain all year in one area, no matter what the weather.

During eight hours in the field, counters drive the roads and walk the fields to count and accurately identify all birds seen. Over a 40-year span, 118 different species of birds have been identified — species like barn owls, warblers, bluebirds, hawks and woodpeckers.

ON AN AVERAGE census day, 50 species and 7,600 individual birds are counted. Information collected from these yearly counts reveals population trends for the species.

Some species — like red crossbills, which actually have crossed mandibles — arrive north every five or six years. Cardinals appear to decline in numbers and then rise again every 10 years. The reasons for these cycles are still not known, but the Christmas count data has helped raise the question.

BLUE JAY	1111 1111
COMMON CROW	13 + 111 11
BLK-CAPPED CHICKADEE	111 111 111 111 111
TUFTED TITMOUSE	111 111 1
WH-BREASTED NUTHATCH	111 111 111 1
RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH	111
BROWN CREEPER	111
AMERICAN ROBIN	11
GOLD-CROWNED KINGLET	11
RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET	111
CEDAR WAXWING	25 + 17 + 111 11

T. NOWICKI

A tally sheet for a bird count shows each species and the numbers of individuals a group identifies.

The yearly count has become a nationwide activity. Christmas counts are conducted from Florida to Alaska. Southern states may count more than 200 different species. An Alaska group braved eight hours of frigid temperatures to see only a dozen or so birds.

If you decide to participate, you will meet fine people, contribute to our knowledge of birds and, if you dress properly and take along a Thermos of hot cocoa, have a good time.

The writer is a freelancer whose college degrees are in biology.

32,000 tons of salt ready for Oakland snowy roads

More than 100 trucks and graders are ready to clear Oakland County roads of snow and ice this winter.

"We are confident of our ability to cope with most southeastern Michigan snow and ice conditions," said John L. Gruba, managing director of the Oakland County Road Commission.

Occasionally a storm's intensity, high winds, deep freeze or mid-rush snow start will get ahead of us, but nothing has stopped us yet."

Work will be plow drivers, salt truck drivers, loaders, dispatchers, mechanics, traffic signal crews, supervisor, managers and planning staff —

ready at all hours of day and night, Grubba said.

ROAD CREWS are based at six county garages — in Southfield, Troy, Pontiac, Milford, Lake Orion and Davison.

Crews are on duty at night shifts in all but the Davison garages. Crews are put on overtime, if necessary, he said.

"We have 32,000 tons of salt in storage, which is about two-thirds of a winter's needs. The remainder will be delivered during the season."

"General procedure is to salt until

one inch of snow accumulates, and then to plow, often salting simultaneously. Salt is not used on unimproved roads nor generally on subdivision streets. Salt use annually averages 50,000 tons.

Sand and slag are used as needed on hills, curves and intersections.

"In temperatures below 10 degrees, salt is relatively ineffective, and travel may be safer if it's not used. Also, high winds often blow pavements relatively clean, and using salt would just make the snow stick."

OAKLAND HAS 2,500 miles of county roads and streets. The Road Commission also serves 251 miles of state highways under contract. They have different priorities, Grubba said.

• "First, we must keep traffic moving

safely on heavily-travelled routes, which have the greatest potential for serious accidents and provide outlets for traffic from subdivisions."

"Freeways and other main roads carrying 40,000 or more vehicles daily are top priority. We attempt to have equipment on them at the forecast of bad conditions and remain on them as necessary to achieve 75 percent bare pavement."

• "Other main roads carrying 5,000 to 40,000 vehicles daily are second priority. We attempt to have equipment on them at the start of bad conditions, and to remain on them until we have at least clear wheel tracks."

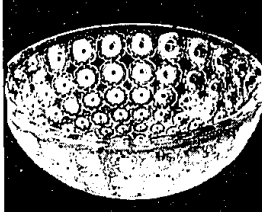
• "Residential subdivision streets are the last priority. As soon as possible, but sometimes not until a day or

two after heavy storms, equipment is assigned to these. Often, only one lane is plowed until all subdivision streets in a district are opened."

Snow and ice control costs an average of \$3.8 million a year in Oakland,

including the cost of cleaning state highways under contract. The breakdown: salt and materials, \$1.2 million; equipment, \$1.2 million; regular wages \$302,000; overtime, \$287,000; fringes, \$270,000; overhead, \$472,000.

LALIQUE



INNER CIRCLE
AT GORMAN'S
MICHIGAN'S FINEST GIFT AND BRIDAL REGISTRY

Located at
Gorman's Gallery

2145 Telegraph (North of 12 Mile Rd.) Phone: 353-9886
Open Daily 10 to 6; Monday, Thursday & Friday 10 to 9

THE GIFT ANYBODY WILL LOVE



GET THE TOTAL HEALTH PACKAGE NOW AT HAMILTON PLACE

75% OFF
INTRODUCTION

HAMILTON PLACE
ATHLETIC & SOCIAL CLUB
30333 Southfield Rd.
(Near to Congress Building between 12 & 13 Mile Roads)
CALL 646-8990

Holiday Greetings from BIRMINGHAM the City of Christmas Lights

- Listen to carolers strolling in downtown Birmingham throughout the shopping season.
- PARK FREE in Birmingham with Validated Parking. Free parking Dec. 15 - Dec. 25 in all attended parking structures after 6 p.m.
- Visit Santa at the Chamber of Commerce Office, Merrill at Heurich, Monday through Saturday, Noon 'til 4:30 p.m.

One Mile of Sparkling Lights Line Birmingham's Downtown Streets. Visit Birmingham's over 200 Shops and Services.

DENTURE WEARERS
Are you having trouble with your dentures?

Having made a special study of denture wearers and their problems for the last 17 years, I may be able to help you. If you have any of the following problems: looseness, sore spots, poor lower ridge, even no lower ridge, "floating" lower denture, incorrect bite, inability to eat properly, teeth too short, or other unnatural appearance. No charge for consultation. Insurance, Visa and Mastercard accepted.

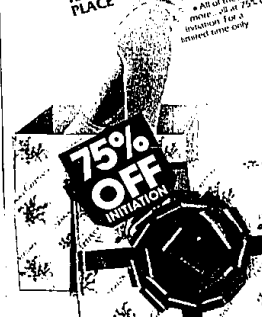
Phone or write for your FREE copy of my published easy-to-understand articles on how you may be helped with your denture problems.

complete Dentistry for Children & Families

MANUEL J. KANER, D.D.S.
29911 WEST SIX MILE (JUST W. OF MIDDLEBELT) • LIVONIA
261-4320

COSMETIC BONDING
for your own natural teeth is available to beautify your smile.

UNDERSTATED ELEGANCE



A Patek Philippe watch is a fine piece of jewelry. The classic design and fine craftsmanship are timeless. For men, the 18K gold bracelet with quartz movement, white roman numeral dial.

Somerset store only.

CHARLES W. WARREN
JEWELRY DESIGNER
SOMERSET STORE

A UNIQUE GIFT IDEA
A Gift Certificate for Custom Shirts MEN'S or LADIES' executive custom shirtmakers inc.

207 S. WOODWARD
(Next to Birmingham Theatre)
642-0460

MON-SAT 9:30-6:00
Validated Parking

GREENSTONE'S
Creators of fine jewelry for over 55 years

Exquisite Cultured Pearls!

Our incomparable selection of fine cultured pearls, in every size from 2mm to the rare 10mm. Because we import directly, our pricing and selection are unsurpassed.

Fine single necklaces begin at \$290. Ear studs from \$24.

Photo enlarged to show detail.

Special Holiday Hours: Mon-Fri. 9:30-7:00
Saturday 9:30-5:30

528 N. Woodward Avenue • Birmingham
4 blocks North of Maple • 642-2650
Major Credit Cards Welcome

Gifts...that last for everyone including you

CHRISTMAS SALE

- Decoy door mats \$24.95
- 16 x 24 rug oriental des. 7.99
- India oriental mat 25.00
- Oriental design rug 12.00
- Thick China Handmade 19.99
- Silk-look prayer rug 19.99
- 2 x 3 nylon oriental 14.99

French tapestries in many designs

543-5300

Best
carpets & area rugs

Come in and see many unique ideas for gifts at Best. And at affordable prices. Give something really different this year and enjoy the glow. You'll be amazed at the variety of choices you'll find.

Woodward just South of 12 Mile, Royal Oak • Open 'til 9 Mon., Thurs., Fri.

The Pro Football Hall of Fame Presents
Their Deeds and Dogged Faith

will be at
The Birmingham Bookstore

Tues., Dec. 18
6-8 p.m.
for an autographing of
The Pro Football Hall of Fame's
Their Deeds and Dogged Faith
\$19.95

the BIRMINGHAM BOOKSTORE
263 Pierce 647-2665

Mon-Fri. 10-9
Sat. 10-5:30
Sun. 12-5

Visit Santa
Mon. & Th. 7-9 p.m.