

## Clarion County CBC 2025

The Clarion Christmas Bird Count was held once again on Saturday, December 20 for the 39th year. Like last year, the weather was very cold in the morning at 12 degrees, but there was no snow or rain, and little wind throughout the day. Just a bare inch of snow covered the ground, and most of the water that day was frozen except for the rivers and larger creeks.

Twenty-three folks hit the road and trails for the day and 9 others volunteered their time watching their bird feeders. There was a total number of 69.75 volunteer hours, including 4.5 hours of nocturnal birding. The total of species was lower than last year at 53, more like the average total for most years. Once again many thanks go out to Mal Hays for coordinating field routes and Cindy Bonner for getting out the info to feeder watchers and then pulling all that data together.

Some species with numbers of note are Common Mergansers, with a good total of 5 birds found on the Clarion River. Wild Turkeys were up from last year with 102, and Great Blue Herons made the list with a single sighting. Northern Harriers were way down from last year with just 2 birds found, whereas Bald Eagles had a pretty good showing at 10. Red-shouldered Hawks were also well represented at 5, and Rough-legged Hawks at 4. A few hardy souls made it out in the early morning for owling, helping to reach a great total of 13 Eastern Screech-owls, 3 Great Horned owls and 5 total Short-eared Owls.

A new species was added when a Peregrine Falcon was seen for the first time in the history of the count. Brown Creepers had a good day with 11, and a single Hermit Thrush was found hanging on near Sligo, hopefully making it through the bitter winter. Northern Mockingbirds are usually present in small numbers, but 6 was a good showing this year. Cedar Waxwings have been low recently and only a single bird was seen this count. Purple Finches were in low numbers, just 11 pine siskins were seen at feeders, and a single red-winged blackbird was tallied.

Like last year, several species were once again sadly absent from the count, including ruffed grouse, horned larks, and belted kingfisher. As bird populations change over the years, the Christmas bird count will hopefully continue adding to the knowledge we have of our winter species. This count is a great opportunity for all of us that cherish birds to contribute our efforts to this great example of long-term citizen science, so make plans to share in the 2026 count this December !