

2015 Maryland Fall Count

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The annual Maryland Fall Count is held on the third weekend in September with the choice of Saturday or Sunday at the discretion of the county and/or compiler. In 2015, thirteen of Maryland's 23 counties submitted results. Eight counties counted on 19 September, five on 20 September (Table 1). Receiving results from thirteen counties is a slight improvement in participation for the Fall Count. For several counties this seasonal count has been a long held tradition, with this year being the 25th count for Allegany, 22nd for Howard, and 20th for Dorchester.

Table 1: 2015 Maryland Fall Count: participating counties, county codes, survey dates, and compilers.

County	Code	Survey Date	Compiler
Allegany	AL	20 September 2015	Chuck Hager
Washington	WA	19 September 2015	Doris Berger
Carroll	CA	19 September 2015	Don Jewell
Howard	HO	19 September 2015	Mike McClure, Chuck Stirrat
Baltimore	BA	19 September 2015	Joel Martin
Harford	HA	20 September 2015	Rick Cheicante
Cecil	CE	19 September 2015	Patricia Valdata, John Taylor
Prince George's	PG	20 September 2015	Dave Mozurkewich
Calvert	CT	20 September 2015	David Gillum
Kent	KE	20 September 2015	Walter Ellison, Nancy Martin
Caroline	CN	19 September 2015	Debby Bennett
Talbot	TA	19 September 2015	Wayne Bell
Dorchester	DO	19 September 2015	Harry Armistead

As would be expected, weather varied over the extent of the state and from Saturday to Sunday. Temperatures were generally cooler on Sunday with highs in the mid 70s °F with the exception of Allegany (66 °F) and Kent (84 °F), whereas all counts on Saturday had highs in the high 80s °F except for Washington County (65 °F). Lows ranged from 49 °F (Allegany) to 75 °F (Caroline). All reported calm to light winds. Most reported clouds early with

clearing throughout the day. There were no reports of precipitation for either day, however all counts on Saturday reported early morning fog lasting into mid-morning. Many compilers described the birding as slow with limited migrants.

A total of 209 field observers in 139 parties turned up 195 species and 56,083 individual birds (Table 2). They spent a total of 451.6 hours and covered 323.9 miles on foot and spent 31.0 hours stationary. Birders spent 168.8 hours and 1839.3 miles birding by car. Numerous observers spent 14.0 hours riding the Baltimore Harbor water taxi for views of two unexpected Brown Boobies first confirmed the day before the count. Observers covered 16.5 miles in 6.5 hours by other modes of transport. Participants in six counties reported spending 20.0 hours driving 69.4 miles while owling. Feeder watchers spent 40.5 hours.

Table 2. 2015 Maryland Fall Count: summary.

	AL	WA	CA	HO	BA	HA	CE	PG	CT	KT	CN	TA	DO	Total
Total Species	79	64	93	124	84	72	47	98	99	118	102	59	146	195
Total Birds	1538	1436	4944	9491	2994	1374	441	6821	5866	4214	5255	359	11,350	56,083
Start Time	7:00		6:00	5:30		7:00	8:00	5:45	3:45	5:40	4:30	8:00	4:45	3:45
Stop Time	16:15		21:15	23:45		19:00	15:30	19:10	19:00	22:00	22:30	12:05	19:45	23:45
Parties	8	3	12	41	29	4	2	11	6	4	8	2	9	139
Individual People	8	6	21	58	39	6	3	13	9	7	15	3	21	209
Hours Driving	4.8	15.0	22.6	27.3		6.0		11.2	6.9	21.0	19.0		35.0	168.8
Miles Driving	65.0	175.0	219.5	300.2		44.0		137.6	37.0	128.0	261.0		472.0	1839.3
Hours Walking	18.3	6.0	71.5	157.5	31.4	9.0	7.0	42.7	3.5	19.0	31.8	3.9	50.0	451.6
Miles Walking	16.8	6.7	40.5	126.5	14.1	5.0	3.0	38.6	22.8	10.3	10.5	2.2	27.0	323.9
Hours Boating					14.0									14.0
Miles Boating					14.0									14.0
Stationary Hours			4.0	10.0	5.1		4.0		1.4		6.5			31.0
Feeder Hours	4.0		6.2	11.0				8.3	2.0		9.0			40.5
Hours Owling			0.2	3.6				1.3	1.4		3.5		10.0	20.0
Miles Owling				5.0				1.8	0.6		12.0		50.0	69.4
Hours Other	4.0		1.0								1.5			6.5
Miles Other	16.0										0.5			16.5

There were two species that were write-ins to the distributed checklist for this count (Table 3). The two Brown Boobies (Figure 1) reported in Baltimore were the stars of the day. Their presence in Baltimore Harbor had been confirmed the previous day, which brought great numbers of birders to the site on 19 September 2015, the Fall Count date. An adult female and a sub-adult were observed perched on hawsers (heavy mooring ropes) between two docked ships, the SS *Denebola* and the SS *Antares*, and were also seen making brief flights. Many birders observed them via spotting scope from the Canton waterfront, about 0.5 mile from the birds. Many birders also employed water taxis or personal watercraft to obtain close views of the boobies, therefore the number of miles traveled by boat was unusually high (Table 2). The birds have been

extensively documented photographically, and at least one bird was still present into December 2015.



Figure 1. Adult female (left) and sub-adult Brown Boobies. Baltimore Harbor, Baltimore, Maryland, 19 September 2015 (photographed by Russ Ruffing).

The second write-in was the three Eared Grebes found at the Hurlock Wastewater Treatment Plant. This is the second record for this species on Dorchester Fall Counts. These birds had been observed several days before the count and continued to be seen for a couple days thereafter.

In addition, the following highlights were noted by compilers in their inputs. In Dorchester, the Wilson's Phalarope at Hurlock was a first record, the Olive-sided Flycatcher was a third record, and the Sedge Wren a first record for that count. In Kent, the Golden-winged Warbler and Connecticut Warbler were highlights along with a Summer Tanager and a pair of Red-headed Woodpeckers feeding fledglings at Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge. A calling (not seen) Willet in Prince George's County was accepted, as the observer is familiar with the call and the habitat was suitable, although it's appearance this far from the coast would be unusual. Brown Pelican sightings were high with 222 found in Dorchester.

Species with only a single individual found statewide included American Widgeon (Dorchester), Ruffed Grouse (Allegheny), American White Pelican (Dorchester), Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (Prince George’s), White Ibis (Dorchester), Black-bellied Plover (Kent), American Golden-Plover (Dorchester), Willet (Prince George’s), Ruddy Turnstone (Dorchester), Stilt Sandpiper (Talbot), Wilson’s Phalarope (Dorchester), Peregrine Falcon (Cecil), Olive-sided Flycatcher (Dorchester), Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (Carroll), Red-breasted Nuthatch (Caroline), Sedge Wren (Dorchester), Gray-cheeked Thrush (Talbot), Connecticut Warbler (Kent), Kentucky Warbler (Dorchester), Saltmarsh Sparrow (Dorchester), Lincoln’s Sparrow (Baltimore), White-throated Sparrow (Carroll), and Boat-tailed Grackle (Dorchester).

There were 43 species that were observed in only one county. Twenty of these were observed in Dorchester County, with the next highest number being three each in Baltimore and Kent Counties. This reflects in part the excellent coverage in Dorchester but also is likely due to the absence of other reports from the Lower Eastern Shore. Seventeen species were reported for all 13 counts.

Thank you to all participants and especially the compilers. The 2016 counts will be held on 17 or 18 September. I hope that more participants will enjoy the experience and additional counties will have volunteers who choose to organize a count in the future.

Table 3. 2015 Maryland Fall Count: observed species.

Species	AL	WA	CA	HO	BA	HA	CE	PG	CT	KE	CN	TA	DO	Total
Canada Goose	28	69	719	1022	126	399	51	627	95	106	96	49	656	4043
Mute Swan						2								2
Wood Duck	23	8	7	15		2		150	23	19	25	32	62	366
American Wigeon													1	1
American Black Duck	10			2						1	4		48	65
Mallard	38	15	62	81	94	87	33	176	182	174	48	23	892	1905
Blue-winged Teal								2		8	2		17	29
Northern Shoveler	1							1					23	25
Northern Pintail										3	5			8
Green-winged Teal	2			1	5			43		72			29	152
Hooded Merganser									2					2
Ruddy Duck										2			9	11
Northern Bobwhite											3		17	20
Ruffed Grouse	1													1
Wild Turkey	49	57				2		2	5	10	36		24	185
Pied-billed Grebe				3	3			15					2	23
Eared Grebe													3	3
Brown Booby						2								2
Double-crested Cormorant					7	214	4	18	53	47	160	19	124	646
American White Pelican													1	1
Brown Pelican													222	222
Great Blue Heron	2	2		37	15	11	14	29	18	31	12	1	54	226
Great Egret			13	2	3	8	18	42			20	2	56	164

Species	AL	WA	CA	HO	BA	HA	CE	PG	CT	KE	CN	TA	DO	Total	
Snowy Egret				1				2	54		1	12	89	159	
Little Blue Heron					9									9	
Tricolored Heron													4	4	
Cattle Egret										9	1			10	
Green Heron		1	4	8	3			2	2	2	3	2	2	27	
Black-crowned Night-Heron				1	14			1	2	3			1	22	
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron								1						1	
White Ibis													1	1	
Glossy Ibis											2			2	
Black Vulture		12	5	27	139	15	4	29	48	46	31	99	2	43	500
Turkey Vulture		64	31	163	199	18	30	16	59	111	186	239	6	218	1340
Osprey		2		2	5	4	2	2	6	7	11	5	1	8	55
Bald Eagle		1	1		6	1	4	20	13	46	54	10	2	108	266
Northern Harrier								1		5	2			7	15
Sharp-shinned Hawk		3		1	4	1	1			7	1			10	28
Cooper's Hawk		1		5	7	1		1	5	2	2	2		10	36
unidentified Accipiter								2						2	2
Red-shouldered Hawk		12	2	7	48	5	3		9	2	3	6		2	99
Broad-winged Hawk		18		35	4	2		1							60
Red-tailed Hawk		9	5	19	17	4	3	1	5		4	8		13	88
unidentified Buteo								2							2
Clapper Rail														3	3
Virginia Rail														7	7
Sora									3					1	4
Common Gallinule														10	10
Black-bellied Plover										1					1
American Golden-Plover														1	1
Semipalmated Plover					1									11	12
Killdeer		41	2	13	66	3	1		30	3	9	26	2	27	223
Spotted Sandpiper				3	2	1			20			6		4	36
Solitary Sandpiper				2						1					3
Greater Yellowlegs										1		30	31	62	
Willet								1							1
Lesser Yellowlegs				3	15				3	1	45		21	14	102
unidentified yellowlegs								2							2
Ruddy Turnstone														1	1
Stilt Sandpiper													1		1
Least Sandpiper				27	5				16		50	14	29	141	
Pectoral Sandpiper		1		4								1	11	17	
Semipalmated Sandpiper				4	3				2		23	26	17	75	
Short-billed Dowitcher														5	5
Wilson's Snipe												6	5	11	
American Woodcock		1										2		3	
Wilson's Phalarope														1	1
Laughing Gull					754				218	993	446	4	1193	3608	
Ring-billed Gull					37	11	37	183	220	120	160		98	866	
Herring Gull					49				300	11			231	591	
Great Black-backed Gull					19				1028	1			71	1119	
unidentified gull					25						20			45	
Caspian Tern					2			3		92			4	101	
Common Tern					1				3	1			1	6	
Forster's Tern								35	123	130	2		101	391	
Royal Tern									76	4			35	115	
Rock Pigeon		126	28	152	482	540	48	1	16	30	24	47	27	1521	
Mourning Dove		23	62	157	298	47	60		267	60	37	220	2	136	1369
Yellow-billed Cuckoo		1		5	1	1				1				4	13
Eastern Screech-Owl			1	2	7				2	3		2		22	39
Great Horned Owl					2				1	1	6			19	29
Barred Owl			1	2	6		1		3	3	12		6	34	
Common Nighthawk					4					1				5	
Chimney Swift		26	9	81	168	66	2		15	8	100	394	23	892	

Species	AL	WA	CA	HO	BA	HA	CE	PG	CT	KE	CN	TA	DO	Total	
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	6	8	27	50	3	4		7	15	11	27		5	163	
Belted Kingfisher	1	3	23	16	1	3	1	3	7	4	5	1	8	76	
Red-headed Woodpecker			6	1		1			6	4				21	
Red-bellied Woodpecker	27	23	79	211	11	13	1	54	40	18	33	2	19	531	
Downy Woodpecker	15	16	64	119	9	10	1	43	37	18	26	1	57	416	
Hairy Woodpecker	5	1	14	30	3	2		6	5	5	6	1	2	80	
Northern Flicker	15	13	28	58	4			27	9	12	11		28	205	
Pileated Woodpecker	13	13	14	43		1	1	11	10	4	18	2	18	148	
American Kestrel	1		6	11		3	4	10	3	3	5		46	92	
Merlin				1				1		1			1	4	
Peregrine Falcon							1							1	
Olive-sided Flycatcher													1	1	
Eastern Wood-Pewee	4	2	28	57	6	5	3	19	16	12	18	1	18	189	
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher			1											1	
Acadian Flycatcher			1	2				2	5		2		1	13	
Willow Flycatcher				2										2	
Trail's Flycatcher										1				2	
Least Flycatcher			1	1		2	1		1	2	1		1	10	
unidentified <i>Empidonax</i>	1			10		4		3			1		4	23	
Eastern Phoebe	6	4	34	50		4		15	14	4	11	2	2	146	
Great Crested Flycatcher				3				1	1	1	6	1	5	18	
Eastern Kingbird				2							2		1	5	
White-eyed Vireo		1	3	15		2		5	13	6	6		23	74	
Yellow-throated Vireo		1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1			1	9	
Blue-headed Vireo	1			2					1				1	5	
Warbling Vireo			1	2	1					1	2			7	
Philadelphia Vireo			1	2	1					2				6	
Red-eyed Vireo	3	1	10	19	8	3	2	4	9	16	4		13	92	
Blue Jay	67	39	259	559	32	32	9	130	83	74	96	18	121	1519	
American Crow	100	13	291	486	17	40	11	93	204	34	252	2	148	1691	
Fish Crow			12	130	20	22	1	1	38	102	14	44	12	396	
unidentified crow				109	2			153	23	4	26			317	
Common Raven	17	8	1	1										27	
Horned Lark	1		1	20							14			36	
Tree Swallow		30		4			14		5	117	484	10	145	809	
Northern Rough-winged Swallow			4							48	6	3	2	63	
Barn Swallow				13						5	3		6	27	
unidentified swallow										125				125	
Carolina Chickadee			39	175	316	29	23	8	96	132	53	107	10	129	1117
Black-capped Chickadee	65													65	
Tufted Titmouse	48	23	117	228	9	18	2	64	115	30	68	7	64	793	
Red-breasted Nuthatch											1			1	
White-breasted Nuthatch	33	18	56	120	11	10	4	30	24	9	12			327	
Brown-headed Nuthatch									6	3		1	100	110	
Brown Creeper				1							1			2	
House Wren	1	1	10	58	8	3		2	4	15		1	22	125	
Sedge Wren														1	
Marsh Wren														1	
Carolina Wren	21	31	90	233	12	8	6	92	74	21	48	1	72	709	
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher			5	18	3	3	1	2	4	8			26	70	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet			1	1		1							2	5	
Eastern Bluebird	37	14	83	154	1	36		46	26	60	70	4	43	574	
Veery				3					5	1				9	
Gray-cheeked Thrush												1		1	
Swainson's Thrush	1			1				2	1	1	1		1	8	
Hermit Thrush			1								5			6	
Wood Thrush			3	21	2			2	9	3	4			44	
American Robin	4	15	83	231	184	32		164	20	26	75	2	85	921	
Gray Catbird	12	12	225	449	45	32	1	47	25	28	13	8	44	941	
Brown Thrasher	1	2	14	13		2		4	6	4	5	1	5	57	
Northern Mockingbird	6	4	70	99	9	7	6	20	22	22	59		50	374	

Species	AL	WA	CA	HO	BA	HA	CE	PG	CT	KE	CN	TA	DO	Total
European Starling	174	358	520	752	273	47	95	1146	307	460	1080	3	646	5861
Cedar Waxwing	57	35	42	177	5	16	1	33	4	101	12	7	3	493
Ovenbird			2	2	1			1	1			1	3	11
Northern Waterthrush			1								1	1		3
Golden-winged Warbler										1				1
Blue-winged Warbler										1		1	2	4
Black-and-white Warbler	3		8	12	2	2	1	4	1	11	8	3	23	78
Prothonotary Warbler		2												2
Tennessee Warbler	1		2	1						8				12
Nashville Warbler			1					1	1					3
Connecticut Warbler									1					1
Kentucky Warbler													1	1
Common Yellowthroat	6		16	121	8	12		8	45	35	5	4	67	327
Hooded Warbler	1			1				1		1				4
American Redstart	1		2	39	9	2		13	11	31	19	1	35	163
Cape May Warbler			5	3				1						9
Northern Parula	1		1	3	3	1	1	2	4	6	2		10	34
Magnolia Warbler	4	3	3	40	2	5		7	3	4		2	9	82
Bay-breasted Warbler	3			1			1							5
Blackburnian Warbler				2									1	3
Yellow Warbler		2					1				3	1	8	15
Chestnut-sided Warbler				7	1			2		2			4	16
Blackpoll Warbler	3		1	1		1				1				7
Black-throated Blue Warbler				2	1			1		3	1		1	9
Palm Warbler			2	2				2	2					8
Pine Warbler	1	1	1	2	1		1	2	9	13	10		90	131
Yellow-rumped Warbler							2		3		5			10
Yellow-throated Warbler		1		1										2
Prairie Warbler	1								1				3	5
Black-throated Green Warbler	5		12	8	1	1		3		5				35
Canada Warbler	1			4										5
Yellow-breasted Chat				2					2		1		1	6
unidentified warbler				10							2			12
Eastern Towhee	8	5	15	47	2			2	13	8	3		4	107
Chipping Sparrow	57	4	43	135		32		29	22	47	117		69	555
Field Sparrow	1	2	16	4	3	2				4	6		2	40
Savannah Sparrow			1	3										11
Saltmarsh Sparrow														1
Seaside Sparrow														14
Song Sparrow	14	2	37	57	3	3		4	8		3		8	139
Lincoln's Sparrow					1									1
Swamp Sparrow			1	1					1				2	5
White-throated Sparrow			1											1
unidentified sparrow		4												4
Summer Tanager									7	1	2	1	5	16
Scarlet Tanager	2		6	8	2	1		3	1	7		1	4	35
Northern Cardinal	47	42	155	432	15	54	7	119	129	121	83	4	79	1287
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	2	1	3	11	1		2			1	1			22
Blue Grosbeak				3	1			10	5	28	14	1	39	101
Indigo Bunting			9	92		3		18	51	40		2	18	233
Bobolink				3						2			367	372
Red-winged Blackbird			183	5	5	23		664	103	83	67	4	2026	3163
Eastern Meadowlark				7						3	2			12
Common Grackle	1	250	5	12	4	3		950	68	139	325	5	1250	3012
Boat-tailed Grackle														1
Brown-headed Cowbird		20	36	223		70		247	250	90	56		157	1149
Baltimore Oriole				1				1						3
House Finch	11	16	65	79	3	30		31	20	5	23		5	288
American Goldfinch	98	30	168	373	25	45	6	48	73	72	41	8	71	1058
House Sparrow	28	11	141	250	83	29		162	141	45	230		53	1173