

# ChequamegonChirps



**January 2024 Volume 43 Number 1**

The January meeting will be at the Medford Library at 7:00 P.M. the third Monday of the month on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Joe Scott will have two presentations, one of which will be how birds of the same species have different accents. I don't know what the second one will be, but I think both will be accompanied by bells, whistles, interpretive dance and costumes. January is also a good time to pay annual dues if you haven't done that.

Recently there was a winner in a national lottery where someone won gobs of money when he or she matched up an impossible amount of numbers. On December 11 there was another winner of crazy odds. What are the chances of identifying an unbelievable bird on an area Christmas Bird Count? To find another bird of this species you would need to travel about 1,000 miles south to find the next crested caracara. Their usual territory is on the southern tips of Florida, Texas, and along the Mexican border. It is assumed this is probably the individual who was in the Ashland area this spring. It hung around there for weeks before disappearing to who knew where. That is until Connie Decker and her granddaughter recorded it on the Willard count. To say Connie was sort of excited would be like saying the Pope is sorta Catholic. She contacted the other counters so they could see it and take some pictures. The bird had been hanging around a large dairy and was seen by employees who thought it was a pileated woodpecker. The last I've heard is the Caracara was seen a few days later about a mile from where Connie first saw it. I suspect she could be talked into giving more details at the meeting.

Caracaras are the national emblem of Mexico. This vulture like scavenger reaches the northern limits of its range in Florida, Texas and Arizona where it is local. No other bird of prey has such a varied diet as the caracara. Walking about on long legs and flat claws, it scratches like a chicken for worms and insects. It catches skunks, prairie dogs, opossums, rats, squirrels, snakes, frogs, crabs and even young alligators. They carry small turtles by gripping the edge of the shell with its eagle like bill, then tear out the flesh bit by bit to feed its young. It often scavenges with vultures; where it may dominate the carcass. Their long neck and legs as well as white on wing tips, head, and tail help with identification.

**2024 Audubon Christmas Bird Counts organized by local compilers  
Comparison Data**

Summary 2024	ClamLake 12-23	Gilman 01-01-25	Medford 12-28	Spencer 12-14	Willard 12-21	
Party Hours	43	51.75	42.75	52.75	45.75	236
Total Species	23	38	37	39	39	56
Total Individuals	919	2312	3842	5862	2995	15,930
Canada Goose				1		1
Mallard			28	100		128
Ring-necked Pheasant		38		4		42
Ruffed Grouse	11	9	6		2	28
Wild Turkey		74	132	74	75	429
Bald Eagle	CW	11	3	16	29	59
Northern Harrier		2		10	1	13
Sharp-shinned Hawk				1	1	2
Cooper's Hawk			1		1	2
Red-tailed Hawk		5	3	12	24	44
Rough-legged Hawk		10	3	11	18	42
Crested Caracara					1	1
American Kestrel		2	4	17	4	27
Merlin				1		1
Rock Pigeon		71	411	402	443	543 ↵
Mourning Dove		55	111	222	139	1,324 ↵
Eurasian Collared-dove				2		2
Barred Owl	3	1			3	7
Short-Eared Owl					2	2
Belted Kingfisher				1		1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	CW	10	24	10	33	77
Downy Woodpecker	7	29	43	28	29	136
Hairy Woodpecker	20	18	22	13	23	96
Northern Flicker			1			1
YB Sapsucker			CW			
Pileated Woodpecker	8	4	10	3	12	37
Woodpecker sp.	1	1			7	
Northern Shrike	1	2	1	6	5	15
Canada Jay	2					2
Blue Jay	6	49	56	76	136	379
American Crow	2	168	180	240	213	803
Common Raven	37	46	30	3	18	134
Horned Lark				37	5	42
Black-capped Chickadee	218	188	311	98	167	992
Tufted Titmouse					1	1
Red-breasted Nuthatch	150	7	47	8	16	228
White-breasted Nuthatch	10	25	62	24	42	163

Summary 2024	Clam Lake 12-23	Gilman 01-01-25	Medford 12-28	Spencer 12-14	Willard 12-21	
Brown Creeper	1	4	3			8
Golden-cr. Kinglet	4	8	7	4	5	28
American Robin			1	5	10	16
European Starling		378	1689	3779	363	6,209
Bohemian Waxwing	1					1
Cedar Waxwing			20	8	41	69
American Tree Sparrow	1	23	21	45	183	293
Fox Sparrow		1				1
Pine Grosbeak	1					1
Dark-eyed Junco		64	40	78	293	475
Snow Bunting					81	81
Northern Cardinal		10	15	26	42	93
Purple Finch	13	15	28			56
House Finch		10	27	19	20	76
Red Crossbill		12	1			13
White-winged Crossbill	124	170	157	41	60	552
Common Redpoll	118	148		1		267
Pine Siskin	32	228	26			286
American Goldfinch	149	284	140	102	187	842
Evening Grosbeak		1				1
House Sparrow		131	178	334	260	903

You can view current and historical Audubon Christmas Count data on the internet to compare all counts.

*Thank you to everyone who participated in the counts this year.*

*This summary compiled by Ken Luepke and Connie Decker*

Count compilers are : Keith Merkel : Clam Lake  
 Joe Scott : Medford  
 Ken Luepke : Spencer / Willard / Gilman

Audubon Christmas bird counts continue to provide a wealth of information for research purposes. Rain, wind, fog, number of counters, road conditions can all have large impacts on individual counts. Those variables can make the counts more memorable if not productive. The entirety of the counts is what counts. Kudos to all the organizers whose time and efforts provide a valuable service.



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Club contacts

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### January and February Events

Full moons January 13—February 12

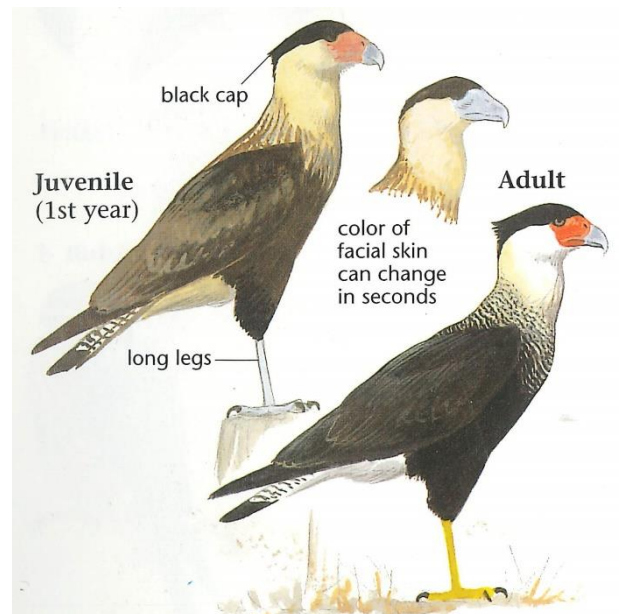
Great horned owl egg laying starts

Day length starting to increase noticeably

Measurable snow in January?

Horned larks are on their journey northward.

Ice fishing now possible.



Crested Caracara