

65th!

66th BRONX-WESTCHESTER CHRISTMAS COUNT
December 26, 1988

Eighty-one observers took advantage of clear brisk weather to participate in the 1988 Bronx-Westchester Xmas Count. This year was a special event for me. It was my 32nd Bronx-Westchester count, my fifth year as compiler and the first when my wife Barbara officially joined me as co-compiler. My first count in 1957 was a memorable experience. At the direction of Bill Ephraim, who then ruled the Pelham party with a firm hand, I was assigned as a rookie to cover Baychester Swamp, an exhausting and tortuous 3 mile walk over creeks, marshes and small hills. My diligence was rewarded with a Palm Warbler and a Vesper Sparrow. During lunch, Bill awarded me the coveted "swamp-rat" medal and I have been hooked on Christmas Counting ever since. Today, that area is Coop City and now I spend my mornings tramping over on 8-story high toxic-waste dump. It is a dirty job but I do love it.

Results for 1988 were rather disappointing. Only 112 species were noted, well-below our excellent count % of recent years but close to our 20-year average of 114. All parties reported lower species totals compared to 1987 with the exception of the "East Bronx" which benefited from an expanded area and thorough coverage by a large and diligent group of observers. Many normally occurring species were missed but several exciting finds were uncovered. Two new species were added to the all-time list which now stands at 206: Tricolored Heron (Pelham-Bob Rucht & John Caspers who both earn the Rookie-of-the-year Award for their discovery); Grasshopper Sparrow (Police Riding Stables, Pelham - Rich Cech). Other interesting reports included a Chipping Sparrow in Rye (I. Burke, first since 1983), Phoebe in Scarsdale (J. Moyle, D. Walsh, first since 1962), our ever faithful Barn Owl, (at a roost in the Orchard Beach Bath house discovered by Bob De Candido in 1982) Eurasian Wigeon and Lesser Bl.-backed Gull at their traditional haunts, Peregrine Falcon, and 2 House Wrens (Yonkers, Ardsley). Our count record remains at 124 (1973, 1985). Given deteriorating and shrinking habitat over most of our count circle, I doubt that we will ever reach that peak again. Perhaps we can convince the NAS to count the Wild Turkey in Bronx Park and the guinea fowl sp. in Pelham next year.

The number of individuals tallied was 40,049, close to last years figure and to our 10-year average of 48,065. Impressive high counts included 40 Gadwall, 124 Great Cormorants, 38 Carolina Wrens and 83 Great Blue Herons. For comparison, high counts of the latter 2 species in 1957 were 5 and 41 respectively. Unusually low numbers of winter finches, Red-br. Nuthatch, Myrtle Warbler, Rusty Blackbird, Red-shouldered Hawk and Dunlin were present in our area.

The Tally

Rare birds in **boldface**. (L) signifies unusually low numbers.
Underlining indicates new high count.

Common Loon 1	Clapper Rail 1	Cedar Waxwing 17
loon sp. 2	Killdeer 14	Starling 2539
Pied-b. Grebe 3	Greater Yellowlegs 10	Myrtle Warbler 3 (L)
Horned Grebe 29	R. Turnstone 6	Palm Warbler 1
Great Cormorant <u>124</u>	Purple Sand. 42	Cardinal 338
Double-c. Cormorant 5	Dunlin 1	Towhee 5
Great Blue Heron 83	Snipe 1	Tree Sparrow 330
TRICOLORED HERON <u>1</u>	Laughing Gull 1	CHIPPING SPARROW 1
Black-c. N. Heron 8	Bonapartes Gull 74	Field Sparrow 22
Mute Swan 131	Ring-b. Gull 4444	Savannah Sparrow 13
Snow Goose 3	Herring Gull 6229	GRASSHOPPER SPARROW 1
Brant 52	LESSER BL-BACKED GULL 2	Fox Sparrow 17
Canada Goose 6307	Gt. Bl.-backed gull 301	Song Sparrow 350
Wood Duck 16	Rock Dove 1255	Swamp Sparrow 13
Green-w. Teal 1	Mourning Dove 709	White-th. Sparrow 929
Black Duck 2574	Barn Owl 1	Junco 858
Mallard 3011	Screech Owl 5	Red-w. Blackbird 149
Mallard Hybrid 9	Horned Owl 14	Meadowlark 1
Pintail 20	Long-eared owl 2	Rusty Blackbird 1
Shoveler 48 (L)	Kingfisher 16	Grackle 71
Gadwall 40	Red-b. Woodpecker 18	Cowbird 24
EURASIAN WIGEON 1	Yellow-b. Sapsucker 1 (L)	Purple Finch 2 (L)
Am. Wigeon 205	Downy Woodpecker 177	House Finch <u>938</u>
Canvasback 718 (L)	Hairy Woodpecker 26	Pine Siskin <u>3</u>
Ring-n. Duck 1	Flicker 8	Gold Finch 277
Greater Scaup 3819	PHOEBE 1	House Sparrow 1272
Lesser Scaup <u>289</u>	Horned Lark 3	
Oldsquaw 102	Blue Jay 323	Count Period Species
Goldeneye 261	Crow 1185	Barred Owl
Bufflehead 910	Chickadee 687	Sawhet Owl
Hooded Merg. 35	Titmouse 311	Rose-Ringed Parakeet
Common Merg. 3	Red-b. Nuthatch 1 (L)	Marsh Wren
Red-b. Merg. 359	White-b. Nuthatch 122	
Ruddy Duck 260	Brown Creeper 7	
Harrier 7	Carolina Wren <u>38</u>	
Sharp. sh. Hawk 9	HOUSE WREN 2	
Coopers Hawk 4	Golden-cr. Kinglet 16	TOTAL SPECIES = 112
Red-sh. Hawk 1 (L)	Hermit Thrush 6	
Red-tailed Hawk 49	Robin 63	
Rough-legged Hawk 1	Catbird 14	
Kestrel 4	Mockingbird 167	
Peregrine Falcon 1	Br. Thrasher 4	TOTAL INDIVIDUALS = 44,089
Pheasant 50 (L)	Water Pipit 1	