



Bird Notes

From Northeast Kingdom Audubon
1302 Main Street, Saint Johnsbury, Vermont 05819

For Immediate Release

Birding in a Winter Wonderland

“Gone away is the bluebird, Here to stay is the new bird” A friend recently asked me if I remembered that line from the 1934 Christmas song, “Walking in a Winter Wonderland”, by Richard B. Smith, made famous by the Andrew Sisters and Perry Como. He wanted to know what the new bird is. I explained that the bluebirds are not entirely gone yet, and may in fact stay around in winter if they find berries and other food. Yes, Mr. Smith, there are new birds that come and stay with us in winter, and I would say that they are the finches, with a few additions.

Some late fall stragglers are moving on now, and have already been picked up on the first Christmas Bird Counts. During the snowless weeks preceding Christmas, some unusual birds and greater than expected numbers of others were logged in to the Count. Don't forget, you can find out what birds have been counted on line at www.audubon.org/bird/cbc.

The winter visitors from the north are starting to show up and that makes winter birding all the more exciting. Before the new snow, I scanned some nearby meadows and fields for a snowy owl or two, and was thrilled to find 100's of snow buntings sweeping along low to the ground. This time the Lapland longspurs and horned larks were not in the group, but you never know. Finches like white-winged crossbills and pine grosbeaks will sometimes leave their preferred conifers and gather in the dirt roads, or trees with berries and cones. Finches such as the purple finch, goldfinch, pine siskin, common (maybe hoary) redpoll and the larger evening grosbeak, may be showing up at your feeder soon with the usual woodpecker assortment. Getting deeper into the woods is easier on snow now, offering a greater chance to see the unusual northern or three-toed woodpecker.

So remember this little tune, **Birding in a Winter Wonderland**, sung to the tune of Walking in a Winter Wonderland, when you are birding this winter. Happy Birding!

Song birds sing, are you listening
From the lane, something's whistling
A beautiful sight, we're happy all right
Birding in a winter wonderland

Gone away is the bluebird,
Here today is a new bird
The finches in song, as we bird along,
Birding in a winter wonderland

In the meadow we could spot a snowy
And pretend that it is not alone
We'll ask all neighbors if they've seen it
They'll say that other birds have come and gone.

Christmas Count, we'll conspire,
Then we meet, by the fire
To face unafraid, the lists that we've made
Birding in a winter wonderland.

In the forest we might see a three-toed
And pretend that there was more than one
We'll tell all our friends who didn't see it,
And that in my opinion's half the fun.

See the hawks, ain't it thrilling
Though your nose gets a chilling
We frolic and play, and promise to stay
Birding in a winter wonderland.

Carolyn E. Boardman is a board member of NEK Audubon living in Brownington, Vermont. NEK Audubon is one of 8 chapters of Audubon Vermont and part of the National Audubon Society. NEK Audubon is a non-profit organization that encourages people's enjoyment of birds, wildlife and natural habitats through field trips, programs and publications. For more information about meetings, field trips and special events visit www.nekaudubon.org. Art work by Robin Rothman.