



# Bird Notes

From Northeast Kingdom Audubon  
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## Early Winter Birdfeeding Surprises.....the Climate?

The Four Seasons Garden Club of Orleans County recently welcomed me to their monthly luncheon to talk about birds. I was delighted to learn of the group's strong interest in bird feeding and bird watching. In fact, I may have convinced one member to purchase an IPOD that comes loaded with organized bird songs, known as a BIRDPOD. (See these at: [www.birdjam.com](http://www.birdjam.com)) The club and I found common ground when it comes to plantings for birds. Whether you plant Beebalm for the hummingbirds or shrubs and trees with berries, the result is the same....birds eat and we watch.

With the perennials and annuals long gone, birds are now very happy with the fruit and berry-laden trees and shrubs, as well as the seeds in the cones and catkins of the birches, poplars and alder trees. Apparently, what we have to offer our winter visitors is most attractive based on the reported sightings. Last month I mentioned that the crash of the seed crop in Canada would propel the waxwings, finches, grosbeaks, crossbills and others into our region. Well, from the New England states and New York, and even Central Park in New York City, the reports of Bohemian waxwings, pine and evening grosbeaks, common redpolls, etc. are being sent around the internet daily. These exciting birding surprises may, or may not be related to the much-talked-about *global warming*. However, with the entire world paying attention to this hot environmental topic, (pardon the pun), I am convinced that there will be more for us to learn about these changes in bird patterns.

For example, how can we explain the early data from the 5 year long Vermont Breeding Bird Atlas which shows that the tufted titmouse has expanded its range north (with only 1 breeding record in the first atlas 25 years ago), and that the eastern towhee has dramatically declined in the state? We hear about their habitat and why it might be changing. Development? Climate? We must listen to the reasons as they are discovered.

Meanwhile, I am already planning what yummy berried trees and shrubs to plant next spring. I prefer the hardy natives and will look for winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*) and northern bayberry (*Myrica pensylvanica*) for starters. My mountain ash has a long way to go. After watching 75+ Bohemian waxwings and 6 pine grosbeaks in different yards in Derby last week, I have started my catalog searching early. My climate was 9 degrees this morning.

This year, the Christmas Bird Count will be very exciting as these visitors should be staying around between December 14 and January 5, just in time for the count. To find out where any count will take place, log onto the National Audubon website, <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/getinvolved.html>. For counts in northern Vermont and New Hampshire, go to <http://www.ebird.org/VINS/news/cbc.html> (Vermont) or contact Charlie Brown at the Fairbanks Museum, 802/748-2372, ext.104; email: [cbrowne@fairbanksmuseum.org](mailto:cbrowne@fairbanksmuseum.org). In New Hampshire, go to [www.nhaudubon.org](http://www.nhaudubon.org), or contact Chris Martin at NH Audubon, 603/224-9909 ext.317, e-mail: [cmartin@nhaudubon.org](mailto:cmartin@nhaudubon.org).

Happy early winter birding!

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](http://www.nekaudubon.org). Art work by Robin Rothman.