

Backyard Birds & Coffee No. 34

The Day after Christmas Home Tour

By
Clyde Wilson

The temperature is 67 degrees at 9 a.m. The sky is overcast with a light drizzle, and it is not spring as one might think, but rather the day after Christmas in Bracey, Va.

I walk out on my deck. That squeaky clean glass sound I hear is not my boys cleaning the bathroom mirror but three Flickers calling back and forth to each other. Six Crows do their morning fly-over looking for any leftovers that may have been thrown out the night before. The Juncos, increasing in numbers, are feeding at the feeder and on the ground. Forty American Robins fill the air with voices that command my attention in an aha moment. Six House Finches chime in along with two Goldfinches and a White-throated Sparrow, and I enjoy this serenade along with my cup of Vermont Maple Crunch.

What a way to kick start my morning — in nature.

Onto the upper dam at Kerr Dam off Route 4 for some digi-scoping with the party. The light is not great for my Cannon EOS 7D. But I attach my Samsung phone to the scope and I'm ready even in bad light.

Look, there up above, it's an immature Eagle. And out on the water, Ring-billed and Bonaparte's Gulls (see pic).

The Bonaparte's Gull is smaller than the Ring-billed and has a black mantle with black wing tips, but during breeding it has a black hood. We hear the loud yodeling call of the Common Loon and see several Horn-billed Grebes (see pic). Five Canada Geese fly over as we focus in on a Pie-billed Grebe.

We turn to go back to the car and spot two Bluebirds and 10 Juncos feeding on the ground by a River Birch. That's two more species for the list.

Then to North Bend only to find a few birds and a couple of brothers down from Richmond doing some fishing. One of them pulls in a 2-pound largemouth bass. Out in the water near them were more Pie-billed and Horned-billed Grebes and a Great Blue Heron.

Now off to Tailrace Park, except the car refuses to start. The fishermen are ready to help, but I don't have any battery cables with me. I took them out to jump another vehicle the other week and forgot to put them back in my birdmobile.

A quick prayer, "Lord I need cables and a jump." I start walking and a few minutes later I hear the sound of a backhoe running. It's John and his son. I had met John this past summer on the water when I was taking pictures of the Brown Booby. He and his son just happen to be working. John remembered me and was glad to help. I don't know the cause, but the car has given me no more problems since. Prayer does work, even in the small stuff.

Now that the birdmobile is in motion we move onto Tailrace Park. We quickly

spot another immature Eagle sitting near the top of a Poplar Tree with several Black Vultures roosting nearby. The 50 residential Cormorants are there along with the Rock Pigeons that you can always find roosting on the ledge of the dam just above the windows. Six Great Blue Herons, several Blue jays, Cardinals, a Northern Mockingbird, and then we spot and hear some winter visitors to our area — the Golden Crown and Ruby Crowned Kinglets.

This was the excitement of the day as we were overshadowed with 10 Kinglets at one time. These are small, active birds that often hover to feed. Getting a picture of them is like trying to get one of a humming bird. I did see them through my binoculars but it was a real challenge to get a picture of one. The Golden Crown was a bit too fast for me, but a female Ruby Crown did oblige me by landing on a nearby branch (see pic).

Thirty species this tour, a great morning. That's it for now. Join us again next week as we look back on the old and into the new. Happy New Year!

Birding notes and quizzes

VSO Winter Field Trip, North Carolina Outer Banks, Feb. 5-7, 2016. We always have great waterfowl, shorebirds and raptors, along with a wide assortment of land birds. Register with Meredith Bell, trip coordinator, at merandlee@gmail.com or (804) 824-4958.

Past articles of Backyard Birds & Coffee are online at www.backyardbird-coffee.com, plus we bird somewhere daily. Email or call for reservations. There is nothing like getting into nature.

Kerr Lake Bird Club meets monthly. Like us on Facebook. Kerr Lake Bird Club's January meeting will be held on Jan. 15 at the home of Bill and Joyce Lindenmuth at 6 p.m.

Last week's quiz winner of "What bird is this?" It helps to be a birder. The correct answer, Yellow-rumped Warbler, was sent in by Joyce Lindenmuth. Congrats Joyce on winning lunch for two at Backyard Birds & Coffee.

This week's quiz, "What bird is this?" See pic. Email your answer and you could be the next lucky person to win a great surprise. Hint: notice the activity of the picture, and it will help ID the bird.

Email your quiz answers comments, questions and/or birding stories to joinclyde@gmail.com. Or Tweet me @clydejoinclyde. Visit us soon at our Bracey location. Look for the yellow birdhouses and the big yellow building with the red roof. There you will find birdfeeders, bird food, flags, wind chimes and other gifts. A great place for a quiet lunch and delicious coffee and tea, oh yeah, and chocolate. Open Monday-Saturday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., but you'll have to wait until the holidays are over as we are closed to spend time with family and friends and will reopen Jan. 4 at 8 a.m.

Take time to enjoy our beautiful birds and remember not to drive and bird like I do.



A Horned Grebe



A Ruby-crowned Kinglet



Bonaparte's Gulls



What bird is this?

Bulldogs

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on a 7-0 run to take a 51-19 lead on Zion Jackson's three-point play at the 3:15 mark.

The Bulldogs showed more energy over the last three minutes of the quarter as Reavis and Sharmane Alexander scored four points apiece to help Brunswick trim the lead to 55-31 going into the final quarter.

The Bulldogs were able to whittle the lead down to 16 after forcing several turnovers and getting two buckets by Alexander and a rebound and putback by Xavier Thompson at the 4:33 mark.

Dragons

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while Bethel improved to 4-3.

The Bruins came into the game riding high after knocking off Woodside HS, the top-ranked team in the 6A ranks, just five days earlier.

Sykes said he is proud of his team's start to the season, especially with so many games on the road to open the campaign.

"We've been on the road for most of them," said Sykes. "We will enjoy getting to play at home in January."

Sykes said standout sophomore guard Keldon Johnson will likely return at the end of January after he completes rehab on a broken ankle that he sustained prior to the state of the regular season.

The Pride ended the game on an 8-1 run however to claim the lopsided victory.

Sheppard led the Pride with 25 points while Wallace Ransome added

12. Alexander led Brunswick with 16 points while Reavis added 11.

Brunswick met Northwest Halifax HS in a consolation game

on Monday while KIPP played Greenville HS in the winner's bracket of the eight-team tournament.

The Eagles dispatched Northwest Halifax in the opening game of the tour-

namment behind 11 dunks and 34 points from senior forward Jordan Peebles.

KIPP	20	18	17	12	-67
Brunswick	9	4	18	13	-44

KIPP - Sheppard 25, Jackson 7, Khedi 9, Adams 8, Ransom 12, Newell 5, Wilkins 1.

Brunswick - Easter 3, Reavis 11, Stith 6, Walker 2, Alexander 16, Smith 2, Thompson 4.

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