

Birding Reports (November 2012)

Nov. 27, 2012 — A few birds that are in the area now include: Bald Eagle (3), Raven, Snow Bunting, Redpolls, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Wild Turkey (25), Juncos, Trumpeter Swan, Canada Geese, Mallards and Great-horned Owl. This could be a great year for winter finches and other winter birds coming down from Canada. So far Redpolls, Pine Grosbeaks, Evening Grosbeaks and Bohemian Waxwings are in the Brainerd area. Today several Pine Grosbeaks were seen in Pequot Lakes near the Chamber office. The Evening Grosbeak has been in recent decline over the past five-ten years with many locations being absent. They are now being seen and reported in our area so hopefully a few will stay through the winter. Happy Birding!

Nov. 15, 2012 — Area ponds and even some smaller lakes are beginning to freeze with recent below normal temperatures. Most of the waterfowl (ducks, geese and swans) are restricted to only larger bodies of water that still remain open. The water is frozen over at the Rice Lake/Lowell WMA site — unlike last year when 49 swans stayed here for a few weeks. A few new sightings this week include Pine Grosbeak, Northern Harrier, Buffle Head and Hooded Merganser. A good place to look for waterfowl this time of year is west of Brainerd to the Gull River/Sylvan Lake Dam. I've recently seen: Trumpeter Swans (6), Hooded Merganser (28) and Buffleheads (5). The Bufflehead is the smallest duck in the state and is also a cavity nester preferring flicker sites. Along Co Rd 18, I watched a male Northern Harrier for several minutes hunting a field until it dropped down and caught a mouse—very cool! Now is a good time to watch for birds at fruiting trees in town such as Starlings, Pine Grosbeaks, Robbins, Cedar and Bohemian Waxwings. The Pequot Lakes Chamber and Trailside Park area has a number of fruiting trees that is attracting about 25 Bohemian Waxwings. These birds are very nomadic and can travel in very large groups over great distances to devour every berry before taking flight again. Bald Eagles, Ravens, Ring-billed Gulls, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Pine Siskin and Junco are hanging around the area.

Nov. 11, 2012 — One uncommon bird found this week included an Oregon race of a Dark-eyed Junco. This species is just a western race of Dark-eyed Junco that has rusty sides and back. More swans (12) are now being seen at the Rice Lake/ Lowell WMA. Several new arrival this week include Hooded Merganser and Bohemian Waxwing. A small flock of Bohemian Waxwings were found in Pequot Lakes near the Chamber building feeding on the many fruiting trees. Here are few other sightings within the last week: Bald Eagle, Raven, Trumpeter Swan, Goose, Mallard, Coots, Northern Flicker, Pine Siskin, Robin, Starling, Common Loon and Ring-billed Gull. A huge raft of Coots numbering over 500 was found on Gull Lake at the Gull River boat launch. Many of the fruiting trees in the area are being visited by Robbins, Starlings and Waxwings. A few notable birds that were reported from the Bee-Nay-She Bird Club include the Redpolls, Pine Grosbeak and Northern Shrike. Happy Birding!

Nov. 2, 2012 — This past week brought little change in any new arrivals to the area. However, more Trumpeter Swans can be seen at several locations, including Round Lake, Nisswa Lake channel and at Rice Lake/Lowell WMA near Pequot Lakes. The Rice Lake location had 4 Trumpeter Swans and is one of the better spotting sites. The only raptors seen this week were several Bald Eagles and one Red-tailed Hawk. Not many immature eagles are visible. Robbins, Cedar Waxwings and Starlings can be found feeding on fallen fruit of Mountain Ash and Crabapple trees in the area. Other birds that are still present include Fox Sparrows, Juncos, White-throated Sparrows, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Ring-billed Gull, Pine Siskin, Red-winged Blackbird and Grackle. A new visitor to the area was a Barred Owl. Two winter plumage loons were found on North Long lake and Gull Lake. Happy Birding!

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— Judd Brink, bird guide/owner, [MN Backyard Birds](#) & [BirdsoftheByway.com](#)