

Blackford Christmas Bird Count  
2011 – 2012

Five teams consisting of 16 counters had a good day of birding while conducting the Blackford Christmas Bird count in Russell County on New Year's Eve. The number of species observed (67) was above average, but the number of individual birds (3205) was below average. The counters gathered after the count at the home of Jerry and Jane Thornhill for a compilation dinner of chicken gumbo and red beans and rice.

One new species was added to the count this year. Dave Worley found an Indigo Bunting. Six species [Canada Geese (224), Ring-necked Duck (7), Hooded Merganser (9), Golden Eagle (16), White-crowned Sparrow (148), and House Sparrow (48)] were observed in record numbers. Ruffed Grouse were missing for the second year in a row. It appears that this species is in decline. Also missing were blackbirds with only four Eastern Meadowlarks being observed. Speculation is that the warm weather, lack of snow in the north, and the presence of good food supplies there may have delayed migration.

Individuals participating in this year's count were: Tom and Laverne Hunter, Ed Morgan, Bob and Jean Montgomery, Peggy Herbert, Dave Worley, Jane and Jerry Thornhill, David Raines, Roger and Lynda Mayhorn, Don Carrier, Bob and Annie Riggs, and Cali Spicer.

The 67 species seen and their counts were:

Canada Goose	224	Downy Woodpecker	19	Song Sparrow	93
American Black Duck	4	Hairy Woodpecker	2	Swamp Sparrow	1
Mallard	172	Northern Flicker	11	White-throated Sparrow	40
Ring-necked Duck	7	Pileated Woodpecker	6	White-crowned Sparrow	148
Bufflehead	7	Eastern Phoebe	5	Dark-eyed Junco	28
Hooded Merganser	9	Loggerhead Shrike	3	Northern Cardinal	62
Ruddy Duck	2	Blue Jay	31	Indigo Bunting	1
Wild Turkey	17	American Crow	622	Eastern Meadowlark	4
Pied-billed Grebe	8	Common Raven	28	House Finch	14
Great Blue Heron	12	Carolina Chickadee	46	American Goldfinch	93
Black Vulture	17	Tufted Titmouse	48	House Sparrow	48
Turkey Vulture	12	White-breasted Nuthatch	23		
Bald Eagle	3	Brown Creeper	3	Total Species:	67
Northern Harrier	1	Carolina Wren	20	Total Individuals Counted:	3305
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	Winter Wren	2		
Cooper's Hawk	2	Golden-crowned Kinglet	1		
Red-shouldered Hawk	3	Eastern Bluebird	48		
Red-tailed Hawk	21	Hermit Thrush	3		
Golden Eagle	16	American Robin	103		
American Kestrel	12	Northern Mockingbird	39		
Killdeer	8	Brown Thrasher	1		
Rock Pigeon	12	European Starling	728		
Mourning Dove	189	Cedar Waxwing	17		
Eastern Screech-Owl	6	Yellow-rumped Warbler	26		
Great-horned Owl	1	Eastern Towhee	15		
Belted Kingfisher	11	Chipping Sparrow	5		
Red-bellied Woodpecker	19	Field Sparrow	16		
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2	Fox Sparrow	2		