

December 2013. Snowbirding.

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Snowbirds. Residing in the northern parts of the U.S. and Canada, this uniquely American non-feathered species is actually a derivative of *Homo sapiens* that has adapted to the rigours of the cold climes of the north. Come the season of snow and chill, undertaking a migration rivalling the more familiar Snow Geese, leagues of these folk flee to the south, settling in the balmy delights of Florida and the like for the winter's duration. And so it will be for me, half a month enduring the snow of Lithuania, then aboard a jumbo jet to see the year out in sunny Florida, on the trail of the Snowbirds in the land of the Everglades and Merritt Island.

1-14 December. Birding in the Snow.

Birding in the snow, a bucketload of it arriving from the 5th onwards. Immediate upswing at the feeding stations - several hundred birds now massing in, Great Tits and Tree Sparrows the bulk, but plenty of variety in their midst. Three-toed Woodpecker still present, one Great Grey Shrike buzzing around the meadows, plus the regular Grey-headed and White-backed Woodpeckers on the feeders. At the new grain box, corvids eager to dine, a bunch of assorted Rooks, Hooded Crows, Jays and Ravens crowding in, a couple of Greenfinches already dropping in. An additional 70 kg of mixed grain and sunflower seeds added to the box! Overall, however concentrated on continuing the ringing at the feeding station, the species tallies for the current winter period being:

- Grey-headed Woodpecker - 1
- White-backed Woodpecker - 1
- Great Spotted Woodpecker - 7
- Middle Spotted Woodpecker - 1
- Great Tit - 182
- Blue Tit - 17
- Marsh Tit - 13
- Willow Tit - 3
- Nuthatch - 6
- Treecreeper - 1
- Jay - 6
- Bullfinch - 1
- Common Redpoll - 5

With the snow and ice, Beavers finally began to relent on their chewing endeavours on my trees, a far more welcome Red Squirrel reappearing on my feeders though. And with that, it's year over in Lithuania for me. Not a bad year it's been - 128 species on my land, several new species included, plus oodles of mammals and butterflies. Next stop, sunny pastures in Florida.... 18 December - 1 January 2014. Birding Florida, a two-week loop incorporating the Everglades, Lake Kissimmee, Merritt Island and other excellent localities, birds including specialities such as Florida Scrub Jay, Whooping Crane and Red-cockaded Woodpecker, mammals including West Indian Manatee. For full trip details, [CLICK HERE](#)