

Date: Sun, 31 Jan 2010 07:34:26 -0600

Reply-To: XXXXXXXXX

Sender: Birding discussion list for Texas <texbirds@LISTS.TEXBIRDS.ORG

From: XXXXXXXXX

Subject: Re: [texbirds] How to count 'zillion' geese?

My father, Harold H Burgess, as a US Fish and Wildlife Refuge Manager counted ducks and geese in this way.

In the part of the flocks that the distribution is even: count 10 birds, note the area, expand 10 times, note that area (that's 100), expand 10 times, note that area (that's 1000), expand that area 10 times, note that area (that's 10000), and continue to get to 1 million. This can be done very quickly with practice. This method has been calibrated and the error range is known. This method is very useful for making comparisons.

I once applied this method to red-wing blackbirds at a Christmas Bird Count as these flew over the loess hills back to Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge. There were flocks after flocks streaming back from feeding. Hazel and Fitzhugh Diggs and I spent about a half hour counting these flocks at the end of a full day together. I am sure that I under counted the birds.