



MH Interpretive Program

managed by Grasslands Naturalists based in Police Point Park

June 26, 2015

2015 SPRING BIRD AND FLOWER COUNT

Fellow Birders and Flower Watchers:

The 31st Spring Count was blessed with good weather – temperatures were seasonal (high 22° C, low 8° C) and winds were light (5-15 km/hr). With these excellent conditions, 126 species were observed, which was down from the near record high of 144 in 2014 but fairly typical for our count. Individual birds counted (9,152) were also down from last year but well above the average of 7,655 for 2011-2013 (see Data Summary Table, page 2).

One new species, long-billed dowitcher, was observed in 2015. There were 7 species with record high counts (see Table 1, page 2) as well. Species included our 2 non-native upland gamebirds (gray partridge and ring-necked pheasant), 2 hawks (Cooper's and red-tailed), 2 sparrows (clay-colored and vesper), and the northern rough-winged swallow. American coot experienced a record low in 2015; for the first time since the count began, no coots were observed.

Species missing from this year's count that are usually seen included cinnamon teal, sharp-shinned hawk, American coot, Caspian tern, common tern, eastern phoebe, white-breasted nuthatch, brown creeper, Swainson's thrush, and cedar waxwing.

Less frequently seen species noted in 2015 were greater scaup (2), bufflehead (2), red-breasted merganser (1), pied-billed grebe (1), western grebe (2), double-crested cormorant (6), golden eagle (2), loggerhead shrike (1), ruby-crowned kinglet (1), Le Conte's sparrow (1), chestnut-collared longspur (2), and pine siskin (4) (see Species Data Table, page 5).

The top five for 2015 were American robin (858), European starling (812), Canada goose (481), house sparrow (465), and red-winged blackbird (452). The only difference from 2014 was American robin moved ahead of European starling in this year's order.

One species was seen during count week but not on count day: northern saw-whet owl.

As for flowers, 66 species were observed in bloom, which was relatively high compared to the previous years (except 2012) and somewhat surprising because of the dry conditions this spring (see Data Summary Table, page 2 and Flower List, page 4).

Count effort was excellent in 2015. Participants (38) were up from last year and observation hours were similar; the past 2 years have shown a marked improvement in both areas from previous years (see Data Summary Table, page 2). Many thanks to all those who volunteered their time this year!

Yours truly,
Marty

Marty Drut
Count Compiler

New Species Observed in 2015: Long-billed Dowitcher

Table 1. 2015 Spring Bird Count All Time High and Low Observations.

2015 Spring Bird Count - Highs and Lows			
Species	High	Previous High	Year
Gray Partridge	43	33	1995
Ring-necked Pheasant	131	130	2014
Cooper's Hawk	4	2	Several
Red-tailed Hawk	24	19	2009
N. Roughed-winged Swallow	39	29	2000
Clay-colored Sparrow	191	168	2009
Vesper Sparrow	150	137	2008
Species	Low	Previous Low	Year
American Coot	0	4	2013

DATA SUMMARY 2011 - 2015					
	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Total Individuals	9,152	10,114	7,426	7,740	7,801
Total Bird Species	126	144	130	113	126
Total Flower Species	66	60	51	65	46
Participants	38	37	32	26	32
Total Km Walked	123.5	139	100.5	69.5	71
Total Km Driven	434	272	199	415	215
Hours of Observation	99	99.5	71.25	69.75	62.75
on foot:	52	70	59.25	32.25	39.25
by car:	37	29.5	22	37.5	23.5
feeder:	10	2	0	5	6

PARTICIPANTS

Mark Schiebelbein
Dan Schiebelbein
Milt Spitzer
Elaine Spitzer
Ian Turner
Angela Turner
Ben Velner
Rick Carrier
Gary Martin
Janet Connolly
Rob Wapple
Lorrie Sielski
Monica Bartha
Phil Horch
Annalora Horch
Lisa Bey
Donna Steele
Sue Higgins
Eileen Cowtan
Cam Lockerbie
Jim Knelson
Michael O'Shea
Marty Drut
Corine Korf
Liam Gale
Madison Schank
Debbie Schank
Hugh Armstrong
Dee Armstrong
Jo-Anne Reynolds
Dave McKenzie
John Slater
Rob Gardner
Corlaine Gardner
Barry Anderson
Lauren Hider
Lisa James
Thelma Berg



Wildflowers in Bloom 2015 (66 Species):

- Prairie Onion (*Allium textile*)
- Star-flowered Soloman's-seal
(*Maianthemum stellatum*)
- Willow (*Salix sp.*)
- Pale Comandra (Bastard Toadflax)
(*Comandra umbellata*)
- Yellow Umbrella-plant (*Eriogonum flavum*)
- Sand Dock (*Rumex venosus*)
- Field Chickweed (*Cerastium arvense*)
- Mouse-eared Chickweed
(*Cerastium vulgatum*)
- Wild Mustard (*Brassica kaber*)
- Shepherd's Purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*)
- Tansy Mustard (*Descurainia sophia*)
- Dame's Rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*)
- Pennycress (Stinkweed) (*Thlaspi arvense*)
- Golden Currant (*Ribes aureum*)
- Saskatoon (*Amelanchier alnifolia*)
- Three-flowered Avens (*Geum triflorum*)
- Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*)
- Common Wild Rose (*Rosa woodsii*)
- Two-grooved Milk Vetch
(*Astragalus bisulcatus*)
- Purple Milk Vetch (*Astragalus dasyglottis*)
- Low Milk Vetch (*Astragalus lotiflorus*)
- Missouri Milk Vetch
(*Astragalus missouriensis*)
- Narrow-leaved Milk Vetch
(*Astragalus pectinatus*)
- Common Caragana (*Caragana arborescens*)
- Black Medic (*Medicago lupulina*)
- White Sweet Clover (*Melilotus alba*)
- Yellow Sweet Clover (*Melilotus officinalis*)
- Early Yellow Locoweed (*Oxytropis sericea*)
- Golden Bean (*Thermopsis rhombifolia*)
- Wild Vetch (*Vicia americana*)
- Wild Blue Flax (*Linum lewisii*)
- Leafy Spurge (*Euphorbia esula*)
- Skunk-bush (Fragrant Sumac)
(*Rhus trilobata*)
- Scarlet Mallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*)
- Early Blue Violet (*Viola adunca*)
- Pincushion Cactus (*Corypantha vivipara*)
- Prickly-pear Cactus (*Opuntia polyacantha*)
- Fireweed (*Epilobium augustifolium*)
- Scarlet Butterfly-weed (*Gaura coccinea*)
- Red-osier Dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*)
- Showy Milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*)
- Moss Phlox (*Phlox hoodii*)
- Narrow-leaved Puccoon
(*Lithospermum incisum*)
- Butter and Eggs (Toad-flax)
(*Linaria vulgaris*)
- White Beard-tongue
(*Penstemon albidus*)
- Smooth Blue Beard-tongue
(*Penstemon nitidus*)
- Tartarian Honeysuckle (*Lonicera tatarica*)
- Common Lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*)
- Common Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)
- Low Everlasting (Pussy-toes)
(*Antennaria aprica*)
- Small-leaved Everlasting (Pussy-toes)
(*Antennaria parvifolia*)
- Tufted (Low) Fleabane
(*Erigeron caespitosus*)
- Colorado Rubberplant
(*Hymenoxys richardsonii*)
- Woolly Groundsel (*Senecio canus*)
- Common Dandelion
(*Taraxacum officinale*)
- Yellow Goat's-beard (*Tragopogon dubius*)

Others observed (not in taxonomic order):

- Tumble Mustard
(*Sisymbrium altissimum*)
- Flixweed (*Descurainia sophia*)
- Low Larkspur
(*Delphinium bicolor*)
- Hemp Dogbane (*Apocynum cannabinum*)
- Sow Thistle (*Sonchus sp.*)
- Pineapple Weed (*Matricaria discoidea*)
- Scentless Chamomile
(*Matricaria perforata*)
- Narrow-leaved Hawkweed
(*Hieracium umbellatum*)
- Western Canada Violet (*Viola canadensis*)
- Mountain Ash (*Sorbus sp.*)

Species	May 24 2015	May 25 2014	May 26 2013	May 27 2012	May 28 2011
Canada Goose	481	668	615	313	543
Wood Duck	3	3	2	7	2
Gadwall	36	26	42	18	35
Eurasian Wigeon	-	1	-	-	-
American Wigeon	25	8	35	11	26
Mallard	291	284	248	303	238
Blue-winged Teal	52	191	27	105	62
Cinnamon Teal	-	10 high	4	6	10 high
Northern Shoveler	55	177	37	85	144
Northern Pintail	35	36	16	42	49
Green-winged Teal	5	13 high	-	10	8
Canvasback	6	29	9	47	26
Redhead	1	13	7	3	13
Ring-necked Duck	-	4	-	-	4
Greater Scaup	2	-	2	-	-
Lesser Scaup	7	15	24	27	9
Bufflehead	2	-	2	12	-
Common Goldeneye	11	4	10	12	2
Hooded Merganser	-	2	-	-	-
Common Merganser	16	8	18	12	4 low
Red-breasted Merganser	1	-	-	-	-
Ruddy Duck	-	6	-	-	5
Gray Partridge	43 high	30	14	8	2
Ring-necked Pheasant	131 high	130 high	77	55	35
Sharp-tailed Grouse	4	3	2	-	3
Pied-billed Grebe	1	-	-	-	1
Horned Grebe	2	31 high	-	1	2
Eared Grebe	7	11	-	2	46
Western Grebe	2	-	1	3	-
White Pelican	23	17	58	66	79
Double-crested Cormorant	6	-	8	-	-
Great Blue Heron	40	110	47	40	22
Turkey Vulture	9	13	12	1	5
Osprey	-	2	-	1	-
Bald Eagle	3	3	6	1	5
Northern Harrier	5	2	1	3	6
Sharp-shinned Hawk	-	-	-	-	2
Cooper's Hawk	4 high	2	-	1	2
Broad-winged Hawk	1	-	-	-	-
Swainson's Hawk	35	28	20	16	13
Red-tailed Hawk	24 high	15	11	7	7
Ferruginous Hawk	1	1	2	1	1
Rough-legged Hawk	-	-	-	1	-
Golden Eagle	2	-	-	2	-
American Kestrel	12	8	9	5 low	11

Species	May 24 2015	May 25 2014	May 26 2013	May 27 2012	May 28 2011
Merlin	7	7	4	4	5
Prairie Falcon	6	5	7 <i>high</i>	1	1
Yellow Rail	-	-	-	-	1 NEW!
Virginia Rail	-	-	-	-	1
Sora	1	2	1	3	4
American Coot	- <i>low</i>	24	4 <i>low</i>	9	34
Sandhill Crane	-	CW	-	-	-
Killdeer	38	31	16 <i>low</i>	39	26 <i>low</i>
Black-necked Stilt	-	-	-	-	-
American Avocet	2	15	2	4	5
Solitary Sandpiper	-	12	-	-	4
Willet	7	7	16	2 <i>low</i>	4
Spotted Sandpiper	25	19	20	28	5 <i>low</i>
Upland Sandpiper	3	1	-	-	-
Long-billed Curlew	10	9	3	8	3
Marbled Godwit	48	10	36	6 <i>low</i>	16
Semipalmated Sandpiper	-	1	28 <i>high</i>	-	-
Baird's Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	-
"Peeps" Species	-	2	-	-	15
Long-billed Dowitcher	4 NEW!	-	-	-	-
Wilson's Snipe	22	17	8	22	17
Wilson's Phalarope	31	49	10	57 <i>high</i>	8
Franklin's Gull	50	92	44	200	9
Ring-billed Gull	265	101	174	842	88
California Gull	45	19	44	164	15
Herring Gull	-	-	4	-	-
"White-headed Gulls"	11	1	10	12	3
Caspian Tern	-	1	2	-	1
Common Tern	-	1	-	10	-
Black Tern	1	1	-	-	-
Rock Pigeon	281	289	219	486	233
Eurasian-collared Dove	35	59 <i>high</i>	23 <i>high</i>	7	13 <i>high</i>
Mourning Dove	248	275	214	109	97
Great Horned Owl	16	7	5	3	3
Short-eared Owl	-	-	-	-	1
Northern Saw-whet Owl	CW	-	-	-	-
Common Nighthawk	-	-	-	-	-
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	-	1	-	-	-
Belted Kingfisher	3	4	3	6	1
Red-headed Woodpecker	-	-	-	CW	-
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	-	1	-	-	-
Downy Woodpecker	18	26	14	12	30 <i>high</i>
Hairy Woodpecker	3	3	2	3	3
Northern Flicker	51	62	85 <i>high</i>	33	47
Pileated Woodpecker	2	2	1	3 <i>high</i>	1

Species	May 24 2015	May 25 2014	May 26 2013	May 27 2012	May 28 2011
Western Wood Pewee	-	7	5	2	-
Willow Flycatcher		1	-	-	-
“Trail’s Flycatcher” = (Alder & Willow Flycatcher)	-	-	-	-	-
Least Flycatcher	55	74	40	44	139 high
Empidonax Species	7	-	-	-	1
Eastern Phoebe	-	-	1	-	-
Say’s Phoebe	4	3	1	2	-
Western Kingbird	39	77	58	55	11
Eastern Kingbird	47	72	73	24	28
Loggerhead Shrike	1	-	-	3	-
Northern Shrike	-	1	-	-	-
Warbling Vireo	11	26	31	20	7
Red-eyed Vireo	2	7	14 high	-	2
Blue Jay	16	21	26 high	6	7
Black-billed Magpie	259	246	243	148	89 low
American Crow	153	89	87	71	68
Common Raven	1	2	2	-	-
Horned Lark	13	17	13	1 low	26
Tree Swallow	119	156	113	80	82
Violet-green Swallow	5	25	17	28	13
N. Roughed-winged Swallow	39 high	11	20	4	8
Bank Swallow	115	30	25	97	46
Cliff Swallow	77	10	33	3 low	105
Barn Swallow	29	75	26	43	94
Swallow Species	-	2	-	10	-
Black-capped Chickadee	69	88 high	32	39	72 high
Red-breasted Nuthatch	16	9	18	13	14
White-breasted Nuthatch	-	2	-	-	-
Brown Creeper	-	3 high	-	-	-
Rock Wren	5	16	13	4	9
House Wren	231	187	180	102	195
Marsh Wren	-	-	1	-	2
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	-	-	-	1
Mountain Bluebird	2	2	-	-	-
Townsend’s Solitaire	-	1	1	-	-
Veery	-	5	4	-	3
Gray-cheeked Thrush	-	2	2	-	-
Swainson’s Thrush	-	51	18	4	18
Hermit Thrush	-	3	-	-	-
American Robin	858	762	555	628	732
Gray Catbird	29	61	19	23	49
Brown Thrasher	30	37	26	6 low	19
European Starling	812	1,146	793	562	1,048
Sprague’s Pipit	16	5	4	1	7

Species	May 24 2015	May 25 2014	May 26 2013	May 27 2012	May 28 2011
Cedar Waxwing	-	26	36	10	4
Tennessee Warbler	4	11	2	-	11
Orange-crowned Warbler	-	6	-	-	7
Yellow Warbler	335	439	327	215	417
Magnolia Warbler	-	-	-	CW	-
Yellow-rumped Warbler	2	2	4	-	2
Palm Warbler	-	1 NEW!	-	-	-
Blackpoll Warbler	-	4	-	-	7
American Redstart	1	5	-	2	-
Ovenbird	-	1	2	-	3
MacGillivray's Warbler	-	-	-	3	-
Common Yellowthroat	22	25	8	7 low	9
Wilson's Warbler	-	1	-	-	-
Canada Warbler	-	1	-	-	-
Yellow-breasted Chat	4	4	1	1	3
Warbler Species	2	-	-	-	4
Western Tanager	-	CW	1	-	-
Spotted Towhee	27	25	12	18	15
Chipping Sparrow	100	325 high	165	15	149
Clay-coloured Sparrow	191 high	122	87	23	107
Brewer's Sparrow	-	-	-	-	-
American Tree Sparrow	6	9	-	-	1
Vesper Sparrow	150 high	87	74	55	22
Lark Sparrow	16	20	24	13	15
Lark Bunting	4	9	4	7	-
Savannah Sparrow	78	85 high	73 high	20	53
Grasshopper Sparrow	5	1	2	-	-
Baird's Sparrow	5	6	1	-	1
Le Conte's Sparrow	1	-	-	-	-
Song Sparrow	16	26 high	16	2	2
Lincoln's Sparrow	-	-	2	-	-
White-throated Sparrow	-	-	9	-	1
Harris's Sparrow	-	-	4	-	-
White-crowned Sparrow	1	16	3	-	7
Sparrow Species	-	-	-	40	-
Dark-eyed Junco	1	2	2	-	-
Chestnut-collared Longspur	2	-	3	-	2
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	2	1	1	-	2
Black-headed Grosbeak	-	-	-	-	1 high
Lazuli Bunting	5	10	1	2	1
Bobolink	-	1	-	-	-
Red-winged Blackbird	461	479	438	505	378
Western Meadowlark	452	408	184	257	217
Yellow-headed Blackbird	48	69	56	55	111
Brewer's Blackbird	333	305	159	335	252

Species	May 24 2015	May 25 2014	May 26 2013	May 27 2012	May 28 2011
Common Grackle	417	273	214	310	344
Brown-headed Cowbird	120	130	49	80	128
Baltimore Oriole	48	58	34	35	35
Purple Finch	-	-	1	-	5 <i>high</i>
House Finch	93	128	74	53	61
Red Crossbill	-	-	20 <i>high</i>	1	-
Common Redpoll	-	1	3	-	-
Pine Siskin	4	-	13	1	-
American Goldfinch	53	42	26	45	98
House Sparrow	465	558	432	307	312
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	9,152	10,114	7,453	7,740	7,801
TOTAL SPECIES	126	144	130	113	126