



MH INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM

MANAGED BY GRASSLANDS NATURALISTS
BASED IN POLICE POINT PARK

33rd Annual Christmas Bird Count (2014)

Co-sponsored by the MH Interpretive Program and The Society of Grasslands Naturalists

Dear Birder:

Many thanks to the 40 participants who surveyed territories during this year's Christmas Bird Count (CBC) held on Sunday, December 21. Also, a big thank you goes out to the 21 feeder watchers who participated. The Interpretive Program continues to ask Hatters with feeders to monitor them and we have been able to maintain a core group of 15 - 25 observers. Having these folks participate is crucial as each year a few species are seen exclusively by feeder watchers.

Count day temperatures were relatively mild (Low = -4°/High = 4°C) and snow levels were low; no one reported any difficulty accessing survey locations in 2014. However, freezing rain did occur in the afternoon causing some observers to reduce their effort later in the day. All 24 territories were assigned and counted this year.

A total of 53 species was observed with 28,441 individual birds counted, which was a record high for the count. The previous high of 26,398 occurred in 2001. Both highs correspond with record counts of Canada Geese and relatively large observations of Mallards during those years. The 2014 total is 109% greater than last year and 135% above the 32-year average; however, it is important to note that movements of Canada Geese and Mallards can be quite lively and may lead to some double counting. The 53 species observed in 2014 represents a 10% increase from 2013 (48) and is fairly typical of the past 10-year average of 54. Generally when temperatures are "cold" (< -15°C), we see fewer species and count fewer birds than when temperatures are "mild" (near or above 0°C).

One species, Pine Siskin, was seen exclusively by feeder watchers. Also observed by a feeder watcher were 2 species seen during Count Week but not on Count Day: Harris's Sparrow (3) and Common Grackle (1).

As one might expect from the record high total, there were 9 species with recorded highs in 2014 (see Table 1). Of course, Canada Geese led the way with their record high of 17,447. Also of note were highs for Sharp-tailed Grouse and Northern Flicker.

The Corvid family, which includes American Crow, Black-billed Magpie, and Blue Jay, continued to show full recovery from lows associated with West Nile Virus (2004 to 2009). Crows had a second consecutive high year and the other 2 species were at or near their 32-year average. The key observation for Corvids was the record 15 Common Ravens that were counted in 2014; Ravens were observed on the first count in 1982 but not again until 2006. Since 2006, Ravens were observed in every year except 2007 and 2010 and only 1 to 2 individuals (6-year average = 1.3) were recorded.

Cedar Waxwings had a second year with a record high and were once again more numerous than Bohemian Waxwings (50 and 6 in 2014; 27 and 5 in 2013, respectively), which is unusual because Cedar Waxwings have been much less common than Bohemians on our CBCs historically (Long-term average = 17 and 285, respectively).

No non-native species had highs in 2014.

Regarding the Top Ten Species, Canada Geese were first, Mallards second at 6,117, European Starlings third at 1,115, and Rock Doves (Pigeons) fourth at 932 individuals counted (see List 1). The biggest change to the Top Ten was the appearance of Northern Flicker and Common Goldeneye in the 9th and 10th positions. As noted earlier, Flickers had a record high this year. These 2 species replaced Ringed-necked Pheasant and Eurasian Collared-dove in the Top Ten.

Species generally seen on our CBC that were seen in 2014 but not in 2013 included the following: Cackling Goose (3), Golden-crowned Kinglet (2), Pine Siskin (5), Snow Bunting (77), Rusty Blackbird (13), and Common Redpoll (22) (see Table 2).

Notable species absent from this year's count were Green-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Bufflehead, Redhead, Canvasback, Greater Scaup, Ring-necked Duck, Northern Goshawk, Cooper's Hawk, Mourning Dove, Snowy Owl, Short-eared Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Horned Lark, Harris's Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Evening Grosbeak, Purple Finch, American Goldfinch, and White-winged Crossbill (see Table 3).

Of these species, perhaps the one that stands out is the Horned Lark. This marks the 5th consecutive year of few to no observations (1 in 2010, 0 the past 4 years). Historically, Horned Larks averaged 287 individuals from 1982 – 1991 (range 1 to 1,151) and 54 from 1992 – 2013 (range 0 to 480). Discovering these types of potential trends are one of the main reasons we do the CBC.

A complete species list, along with data from the previous 3 years is enclosed. Birders interested in the results of this and/or other Christmas bird counts can find them at <http://web4.audubon.org/bird/cbc/hr/index.html>. Your comments are welcomed, and should be forwarded to the Nature Line at (403) 529-6225 or marty.drut@natureline.info.

Good Birding!
Bob Frew and Marty Drut, Compilers
January 8, 2015

Table1. Species with Record Highs and Lows in 2014:

Species	2014 Total	Previous High	Year of Prev. High
HIGHS:			
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	28,441	26,398	2001
Canada Goose	17,447	15,939	2001
Cacking Goose	3	1	2012
Sharp-tailed Grouse	117	104	2003
American Coot	12	10	2003
Northern Flicker	143	108	2011, 2010
American Crow	41	37	2013
Common Raven	15	2	2012, 2009
Brown Creeper	8	6	2003
Cedar Waxwing	50	27	2013, 2008
LOWS:	None Reported		

Table 2. Species seen in previous years that were not seen in 2013 but were seen in 2014:

Species	Number Seen	Year Last Seen
Cackling Goose	3	2012
American Wigeon	1	2012
Northern Pintail	1	2010
Lesser Scaup	1	2012
American Kestrel	1	2011
Red-tailed Hawk	1	2012
Golden-crowned Kinglet	2	2012
Townsend's Solitaire	1	2012
Pine Siskin	5	2012

Snow Bunting	77	2012
Rusty Blackbird	13	2012
Common Redpoll	22	2012
Red Crossbill	1	2008

Table 3. Species seen in most years that were not seen in 2014:

Species	Year Last Seen
Green-winged Teal	2013
Northern Shoveler	2013
Gadwall	2012
Bufflehead	2013
Redhead	2012
Canvasback	2008
Greater Scaup	2009
Ring-necked Duck	2012
Northern Goshawk	2012
Cooper's Hawk	2013
Mourning Dove	2013
Snowy Owl	2012
Short-eared owl	2010
Belted Kingfisher	2012
Horned Lark	2010
Harris's Sparrow	2013
White-throated Sparrow	2013
Evening Grosbeak	2007
Purple Finch	2009
American Goldfinch	2012
White-winged Crossbill	2012

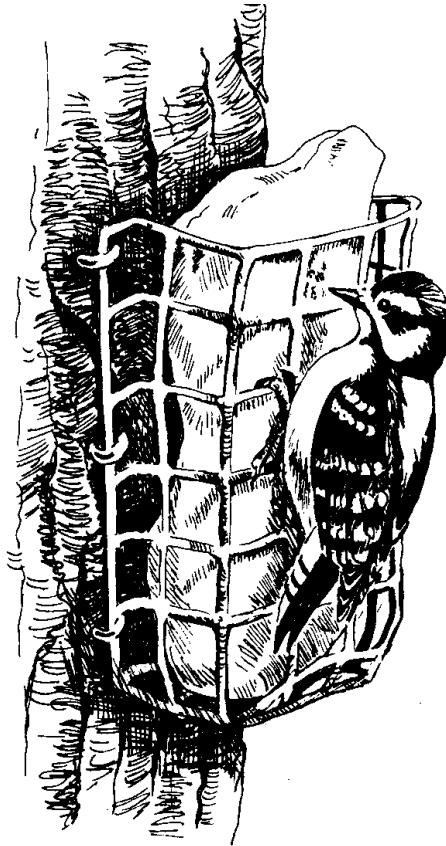
List 1. Top 10 Species:

Canada Goose -	17,447
Mallard -	6,117
European Starling -	1,115
Rock Dove (Pigeon) -	932
House Sparrow -	505
Black-billed Magpie -	499
Black-capped Chickadee -	280
House Finch -	279
Northern Flicker -	143
Common Goldeneye -	142



FIELD PARTICIPANTS:

Mark Schiebelbein
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Ben Verner
Martha Munz Gue
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Ian Turner
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Bob Frew
Gary Martin
Kevin Corcoran
Mackenzie Fai
Cam Lockerbie
Jim Knelson
Marty Drut
Dee Armstrong
Hugh Armstrong
Rob Gardner
Jo-Anne Reynolds
Catherine Reynolds
Monica Bartha
Jim Marshall
Dave McKenzie
Dale Holmes
John Slater
Alfred Keep
Corlaine Gardner
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Barry Anderson
Lauren Hider
Marie Stein
Darlene Black
Jim Black
Fay Felesky
Val Felesky
Charmaine Trottier



FEEDER WATCHERS:

Dale Branter
Chris Branter
Mike Burgess
Dalyce Burgess
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Keith Gerrard
Nelson Hogg
Phil Monteith
Linda Purchase
Clif Sackman
Jean Sandford
Craig Shannon
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Lorrie Sielski
Jack Simmonds
Judy Simmonds
Donna Stein
Ed Sturm
Bert Tymensen
Shawn Williamson

Count Week:
Jennifer Nygaard

SPECIES	Dec 21 *2014*	Dec 22 2013	Dec 16 2012	Dec 18 2011
Canada Goose	17,447	6,647	10,475	9,378
Cackling Goose	3	-	1 <i>NEW</i>	
White-fronted Goose	-	-	3 <i>NEW</i>	
Mallard	6,117	2,641	2,419	2,985
American Wigeon	1	-	2	2
Green-winged Teal	-	2	2	-
Northern Shoveler	-	2	2	-
Gadwall	-	-	3	5
Northern Pintail	1	-	-	-
Common Goldeneye	142	80	67	155
Bufflehead	-	2	2	3
Lesser Scaup	1	-	2	5
Redhead	-	-	1	-
Ring-necked Duck	-	-	-	2
Common Merganser	7	10	5	32
Hooded Merganser	-	-	CW ¹	-
American Coot	12	1	-	2
Bald Eagle	11	5	9	13
Golden Eagle	5	1	1	2
Merlin	4	2	7	2
American Kestrel	1	-	CW ¹	1
Prairie Falcon	4	1	2	7
Red-tailed Hawk	1	-	1	4
Rough-legged Hawk	6	4	1	14
Northern Goshawk	-	-	2	1
Cooper's Hawk	-	1	-	1
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	1	-	1
Gyr Falcon	-	CW ¹	-	1
Gray Partridge	25	55	21	77
Ring-necked Pheasant	103	165	41	73
Sharp-tailed Grouse	117	103	6	27
Rock Dove (Pigeon)	932	500	666	954
Eurasian Collared-dove	126	147	98	80
Mourning Dove	-	8	9	5
Great Horned Owl	11	5	2	6
Snowy Owl	-	-	4	-
Short-eared Owl	-	-	-	-
Northern Saw-whet Owl	1 <i>NEW</i>	-	-	CW ¹
Long-eared Owl	-	CW ¹	-	-
Belted Kingfisher	-	-	2	2
Downy Woodpecker	48	31	50	43
Hairy Woodpecker	2	7	4	9
Northern Flicker	143	88	109	108
Pileated Woodpecker	1	1	-	-

SPECIES	Dec 21 *2014*	Dec 22 2013	Dec 16 2012	Dec 18 2011
Horned Lark	-	-	-	-
Blue Jay	61	83	56	71
Black-billed Magpie	499	466	534	446
American Crow	41	37	15	34
Common Raven	15	1	2	1
Black-capped Chickadee	280	191	304	275
Red-breasted Nuthatch	72	31	113	87
White-breasted Nuthatch	8	7	6	4
Brown Creeper	8	4	2	2
Golden-crowned Kinglet	2	-	25	4
Townsend's Solitaire	1	-	2	4
American Robin	15	63	79	25
Varied Thrush	-	-	CW ¹	-
Bohemian Waxwing	6	5	203	346
Cedar Waxwing	50	27	14	10
European Starling	1,115	1,305	1,277	1,476
Northern Shrike	3	1	1	1
American Tree Sparrow	26	25	42	11
Harris's Sparrow	CW ¹	2	2	1
White-crowned Sparrow	-	1	-	-
White-throated Sparrow	-	1	-	-
Dark-eyed Junco	49	33	64	108
Pine Siskin	5	-	2	7
Snow Bunting	77	-	477	4
Common Grackle	CW ¹	-	1	-
Red-winged Blackbird	-	1	2	-
Rusty Blackbird	13	-	20	1
Common Redpoll	22	-	1,259	545
Hoary Redpoll	-	-	8	24
Pine Grosbeak	15	20	33	66
House Finch	279	329	389	609
Red Crossbill	1	-	-	-
White-winged Crossbill	-	-	7	-
American Goldfinch	-	-	3	20
House Sparrow	505	493	745	923

¹CW indicates species seen during count week

Count Statistics					
	Dec 21 *2014*	Dec 22 2013	Dec 16 2012	Dec 18 2011	33 Year Average
TOTAL SPECIES	53	48	62	59	45
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	28,441	13,636	19,706	19,105	12,615
Participants	40	31	35	38	36
Walking hours	54.0	45.5	52.0	49.0	45.0
Walking km	91.0	80.5	90.0	105.5	83.0
Driving hours	37.0	88.0	40.0	25.5	29.0
Driving km	643.0	531.5	636.5	403.0	434.0
Feeder hours	62.0	36.5	72.5	94.0	26.0
Temp °C min/max	-4/4	-21/-16	-8/0	-1/3	-12/-4
Snow cover	0-5cm	5-15cm	0-5cm	0-5cm	5-12cm
Weather - Sky	Cloudy Rain in PM	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Sunny	Cloudy	N/A

