



MH Interpretive Program

managed by Grasslands Naturalists
based in Police Point Park

July 7, 2017

2017 MEDICINE HAT SPRING BIRD AND FLOWER COUNT

Fellow Birders and Flower Watchers:

The 33rd Spring Count (May 28) was blessed with good weather – temperatures were seasonal (high 22° C, low 7° C) and winds were moderate (4-32 km/hr). With these excellent conditions, 128 species were observed, which was down 2 species from 2016 but fairly typical for our count in the past 4 years. However, individual birds counted (8,529) were the lowest since the 2013 total of 7,426 (see Data Summary Table, page 2). Of note, all the Icterids were down from 2016 including an all time low for Baltimore Oriole (15) (see Species Table, page 5). Other species down in 2017 were Canada Goose, Mallard, Great Blue Heron, Ringed-billed Gull, Rock Pigeon, Black-capped Chickadee, Vesper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, and House (English) Sparrow.

Despite some species with lower numbers, 3 species had high counts and 2 species tied a previous single year high count (see Species Table, page 5). All time highs were observed for Cooper's Hawk, Eurasian-collared Dove, and Red-breasted Nuthatch. Species matching previous single year high counts were Broad-winged Hawk and Violet-green Swallow. Conversely, there were 3 species with low counts in 2017. One was the afore mentioned Baltimore Oriole and the other 2 (Eastern Kingbird and Common Yellowthroat) matched previous single year low counts. One new species was observed in 2017: Black Swift (2). No species were seen exclusively during count week but not on count day.

Species missing from this year's count that are usually seen included Common Tern, Black Tern, Golden Eagle, Solitary Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Common Nighthawk, Eastern Phoebe, Loggerhead Shrike, Brown Creeper, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Mountain Bluebird, Townsend's Solitaire, Yellow-rumped Warbler, American Redstart, Wilson's Warbler, Grasshopper Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Pine Siskin.

Less frequently seen species noted in 2017 were Wood Duck (1), Western Grebe (1), Osprey (4), Broad-winged Hawk (3), Upland Sandpiper (2), Short-eared Owl (5), Pileated Woodpecker (1), Say's Phoebe (4), Veery (2), Hermit Thrush (3), Orange-crowned Warbler (1), American Tree Sparrow (2), Baird's Sparrow (3), Lincoln's Sparrow (2), and Chestnut-collared Longspur (3).

The top 10 for 2016 were European Starling (1,168), American Robin (787), Canada Goose (533), Common Grackle (442), Black-billed Magpie (401), Yellow Warbler (387), Western Meadowlark (378), Red-winged Blackbird (355), Rock Pigeon (312), and House Wren (285). Despite lower numbers in 2017, Canada Goose, Rock Pigeon, and 3 in the blackbird family (Common Grackle, Western Meadowlark, and Red-winged Blackbird) made the top 10.

As for flowers, 68 species were observed in bloom, which was down from 2016 but still relatively similar when compared to previous years (see Data Summary Table, page 2 and Flower List, page 3).

Count effort was excellent in 2017. Participants (38) and observation hours (101.5) were down slightly from 2016 but similar in both areas to 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 2017: Black Swift

Table 1. 2017 Spring Bird Count All Time High and Low Observations.

2017 Spring Bird Count - Highs and Lows			
Species	High	Previous High	Year
Cooper's Hawk	6	4	2015
Broad-winged Hawk	3	3	1991
Eurasian-collared Dove	81	80	2016
Violet-green Swallow	61	61	2010
Red-breasted Nuthatch	32	22	2010, 2009, 1996
Species	Low	Previous Low	Year
Eastern Kingbird	12	12	1997
Common Yellowthroat	7	7	2012
Baltimore Oriole	15	19	2004

DATA SUMMARY 2013 - 2017					
	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Total Individuals	8,529	9,977	9,152	10,114	7,426
Total Bird Species	128	130	126	144	130
Total Flower Species	68	75	66	60	51
Participants	38	41	38	37	32
Total Km Walked	123	166.8	123.5	139	100.5
Total Km Driven	530	509.5	434	272	199
Hours of Observation	101.5	105	99	101.5	71.25
on foot:	64.25	64	52	70	59.25
by car:	35.25	38	37	29.5	22
feeder:	2	3	10	2	0

PARTICIPANTS

Marty Drut
Mark Schiebelbein
Dan Schiebelbein
Milt Spitzer
Elaine Spitzer
Marie AuCoin
Ben Velner
Michael Velner
Rob Wapple
Bob Frew
Gary Martin
Ian Turner
Angela Turner
Cam Lockerbie
Jim Knelson
Mackenzie Fai
Colton Prins
Cash Moore
Donna Steele
Sue Higgins
Eileen Cowtan
Jo-Anne Reynolds
Wendy Blackwell
Ian Wallis
Dave McKenzie
Maia Petersen
Dale Holmes
Donna Robinson
Genevieve Mathieu
Ivan Zigmunic
Rob Gardner
Corlaine Gardner
Barry Anderson
Judy Anderson
Lauren Hider
John Slater
Jim Black
Darlene Black
Charmaine Trottier



Wildflowers in Bloom 2017 (68 Species):

- Prairie Onion (*Allium textile*)
- Pigweed (*Amaranthus sp.*)
- Kochia (*Kochia scoparia*)
- Star-flowered Soloman's-seal
(*Maianthemum stellatum*)
- Purple Iris (*Iris sp.*)
- Willow (*Salix sp.*)
- Common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*)
- Pale Comandra (Bastard Toadflax)
(*Comandra umbellata*)
- Yellow Umbrella-plant (*Eriogonum flavum*)
- Field Chickweed (*Cerastium arvense*)
- Mouse-eared Chickweed
(*Cerastium vulgatum*)
- Low Larkspur (*Delphinium bicolor*)
- Wild Mustard (*Brassica kaber*)
- Shepherd's Purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*)
- Tansy Mustard (*Descurainia sophia*)
- Dame's Rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*)
- Pennycress (Stinkweed) (*Thlaspi arvense*)
- Lance-leaved Stonecrop (*Sedum lanceolatum*)
- Golden Currant (*Ribes aureum*)
- Saskatoon (*Amelanchier alnifolia*)
- Three-flowered Avens (*Geum triflorum*)
- Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*)
- Prairie Rose (*Rosa arkansana*)
- Common Wild Rose (*Rosa woodsii*)
- Two-grooved Milk Vetch
(*Astragalus bisulcatus*)
- Purple Milk Vetch (*Astragalus dasyglottis*)
- Missouri Milk Vetch
(*Astragalus missouriensis*)
- Narrow-leaved Milk Vetch
(*Astragalus pectinatus*)
- Tufted Milk Vetch (*Astragalus spatulatus*)
- Common Caragana (*Caragana arborescens*)
- Wild Licorice (*Glycyrrhiza lepidota*)
- Black Medic (*Medicago lupulina*)
- White Sweet Clover (*Melilotus alba*)
- 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*)
- Yellow (Nuttall's) Prairie Violet
(*Viola nuttallii*)
- Pincushion Cactus (*Corypantha vivipara*)
- Prickly-pear Cactus (*Opuntia polyacantha*)
- Silverberry (*Elaeagnus commutata*)
- 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*)
- Wild Tomato (*Solanum sp.*)
- Tartarian Honeysuckle (*Lonicera tatarica*)
- Common Lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*)
- Common Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)
- Low Everlasting (Pussy-toes)
(*Antennaria aprica*)
- Wormwood Sage (*Artemisia absinthium*)
- Canada Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)
- Narrow-leaved Hawk's-beard
(*Crepis tectorum*)
- Tufted (Low) Fleabane
(*Erigeron caespitosus*)
- Colorado Rubberplant
(*Hymenoxys richardsonii*)
- Pineapple Weed (*Matricaria discoidea*)
- Woolly Groundsel (*Packera cana*)
- Common Dandelion
(*Taraxacum officinale*)
- Yellow Goat's-beard (*Tragopogon dubious*)

Species	May 28 2017	May 29 2016	May 24 2015	May 25 2014	May 26 2013
Canada Goose	533	594	481	668	615
Wood Duck	1	-	3	3	2
Gadwall	35	12	36	26	42
Eurasian Wigeon	-	2	-	1	-
American Wigeon	23	15	25	8	35
Mallard	181	257	291	284	248
Blue-winged Teal	31	32	52	191	27
Cinnamon Teal	8	9	-	10 <i>high</i>	4
Northern Shoveler	40	35	55	177	37
Northern Pintail	27	16	35	36	16
Green-winged Teal	5	1	5	13 <i>high</i>	-
Canvasback	7	23	6	29	9
Redhead	7	17	1	13	7
Ring-necked Duck	-	-	-	4	-
Greater Scaup	2	2	2	-	2
Lesser Scaup	8	7	7	15	24
Bufflehead	2	1	2	-	2
Common Goldeneye	11	8	11	4	10
Hooded Merganser	-	-	-	2	-
Common Merganser	31	18	16	8	18
Red-breasted Merganser	-	2 <i>high</i>	1	-	-
Ruddy Duck	-	15	-	6	-
Gray Partridge	5	22	43 <i>high</i>	30	14
Ring-necked Pheasant	102	90	131 <i>high</i>	130 <i>high</i>	77
Sharp-tailed Grouse	1	1	4	3	2
Pied-billed Grebe	-	1	1	-	-
Horned Grebe	3	2	2	31 <i>high</i>	-
Eared Grebe	3	12	7	11	-
Western Grebe	1	-	2	-	1
White Pelican	50	29	23	17	58
Double-crested Cormorant	25	16	6	-	8
Great Blue Heron	90	160	40	110	47
Turkey Vulture	12	8	9	13	12
Osprey	4	-	-	2	-
Bald Eagle	4	1	3	3	6
Northern Harrier	8	7	5	2	1
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	2	-	-	-
Cooper's Hawk	6 <i>high</i>	3	4 <i>high</i>	2	-
Hawk Species	12	1	-	-	-
Broad-winged Hawk	3 <i>high</i>	-	1	-	-
Swainson's Hawk	24	21	35	28	20
Red-tailed Hawk	17	21	24 <i>high</i>	15	11
Ferruginous Hawk	1	1	1	1	2
Rough-legged Hawk	-	2 <i>high</i>	-	-	-
Golden Eagle	-	-	2	-	-

Species	May 28 2017	May 29 2016	May 24 2015	May 25 2014	May 26 2013
American Kestrel	6	14	12	8	9
Merlin	4	7	7	7	4
Prairie Falcon	5	2	6	5	7 high
Falcon Species	1	-	-	-	-
Sora	4	3	1	2	1
American Coot	1	5	- low	24	4 low
Sandhill Crane	-	-	-	CW	-
Killdeer	44	50	38	31	16 low
American Avocet	2	1	2	15	2
Solitary Sandpiper	-	-	-	12	-
Willet	7	5	7	7	16
Spotted Sandpiper	19	12	25	19	20
Upland Sandpiper	2	-	3	1	-
Long-billed Curlew	13	7	10	9	3
Marbled Godwit	14	5 low	48	10	36
Semipalmated Sandpiper	-	-	-	1	28 high
“Peeps” Species	-	-	-	2	-
Long-billed Dowitcher	-	-	4 NEW	-	-
Wilson’s Snipe	11	7	22	17	8
Wilson’s Phalarope	33	38	31	49	10
Franklin’s Gull	12	191	50	92	44
Ring-billed Gull	230	288	265	101	174
California Gull	22	30	45	19	44
Herring Gull	-	-	-	-	4
“White-headed Gulls”	40	15	11	1	10
Caspian Tern	1	1	-	1	2
Common Tern	-	5	-	1	-
Black Tern	-	7	1	1	-
Rock Pigeon	312	568	281	289	219
Eurasian-collared Dove	81 high	80 high	35	59 high	23 high
Mourning Dove	165	162	248	275	214
Great Horned Owl	6	9	16	7	5
Short-eared Owl	5	-	-	-	-
Northern Saw-whet Owl	-	-	CW	-	-
Black Swift	2 NEW	-	-	-	-
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	-	-	-	1	-
Belted Kingfisher	5	3	3	4	3
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	-	-	-	1	-
Downy Woodpecker	12	13	18	26	14
Hairy Woodpecker	1	3	3	3	2
Northern Flicker	65	52	51	62	85 high
Pileated Woodpecker	1	-	2	2	1
Western Wood Pewee	3	4	-	7	5
Willow Flycatcher	-	-	-	1	-
Alder Flycatcher	1	2	-	-	-

Species	May 28 2017	May 29 2016	May 24 2015	May 25 2014	May 26 2013
Least Flycatcher	36	29	55	74	40
Empidonax Species	-	-	7	-	-
Dusky Flycatcher	-	CW¹	-	-	-
Eastern Phoebe	-	-	-	-	1
Say's Phoebe	4	-	4	3	1
Western Kingbird	54	37	39	77	58
Eastern Kingbird	12 low	82	47	72	73
Loggerhead Shrike	-	4	1	-	-
Northern Shrike	-	-	-	1	-
Warbling Vireo	9	22	11	26	31
Red-eyed Vireo	2	1	2	7	14 high
Blue Jay	25	33 high	16	21	26 high
Black-billed Magpie	401	377	259	246	243
American Crow	143	158	153	89	87
Common Raven	1	5	1	2	2
Horned Lark	5	2	13	17	13
Tree Swallow	153	174	119	156	113
Violet-green Swallow	61 high	20	5	25	17
N. Roughed-winged Swallow	14	4	39 high	11	20
Bank Swallow	23	41	115	30	25
Cliff Swallow	6	37	77	10	33
Barn Swallow	27	64	29	75	26
Swallow Species	23	-	-	2	-
Black-capped Chickadee	66	109 high	69	88 high	32
Red-breasted Nuthatch	32 high	17	16	9	18
White-breasted Nuthatch	2	2	-	2	-
Brown Creeper	-	-	-	3 high	-
Rock Wren	-	7	5	16	13
House Wren	285	175	231	187	180
Marsh Wren	-	1	-	-	1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	-	-	1	-	-
Mountain Bluebird	-	1	2	2	-
Townsend's Solitaire	-	-	-	1	1
Veery	2	-	-	5	4
Gray-cheeked Thrush	-	-	-	2	2
Swainson's Thrush	10	13	-	51	18
Hermit Thrush	3	-	-	3	-
American Robin	787	826	858	762	555
Gray Catbird	67	67	29	61	19
Brown Thrasher	18	24	30	37	26
European Starling	1,168	1,138	812	1,146	793
Sprague's Pipit	5	2	16	5	4
Cedar Waxwing	7	37	-	26	36
Tennessee Warbler	2	1	4	11	2
Orange-crowned Warbler	1	-	-	6	-

Species	May 28 2017	May 29 2016	May 24 2015	May 25 2014	May 26 2013
Yellow Warbler	387	318	335	439	327
Yellow-rumped Warbler	-	3	2	2	4
Palm Warbler	-	-	-	1 NEW	-
Blackpoll Warbler	1	2	-	4	-
American Redstart	-	-	1	5	-
Ovenbird	-	-	-	1	2
Common Yellowthroat	7 low	26	22	25	8
Wilson's Warbler	-	-	-	1	-
Canada Warbler	-	-	-	1	-
Yellow-breasted Chat	1	3	4	4	1
Warbler Species	2	-	2	-	-
Western Tanager	-	-	-	CW	1
Spotted Towhee	29	24	27	25	12
Chipping Sparrow	76	59	100	325 high	165
Clay-coloured Sparrow	93	97	191 high	122	87
Brewer's Sparrow	-	1	-	-	-
American Tree Sparrow	2	-	6	9	-
Vesper Sparrow	69	99	150 high	87	74
Lark Sparrow	15	21	16	20	24
Lark Bunting	4	5	4	9	4
Savannah Sparrow	32	65	78	85 high	73 high
Grasshopper Sparrow	-	4	5	1	2
Baird's Sparrow	3	-	5	6	1
Le Conte's Sparrow	-	-	1	-	-
Song Sparrow	14	20	16	26 high	16
Lincoln's Sparrow	2	-	-	-	2
White-throated Sparrow	-	1	-	-	9
Harris's Sparrow	-	-	-	-	4
White-crowned Sparrow	-	2	1	16	3
Sparrow Species	18	-	-	-	-
Dark-eyed Junco	2	1	1	2	2
Chestnut-collared Longspur	3	-	2	-	3
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	-	12	2	1	1
Black-headed Grosbeak	-	-	-	-	-
Lazuli Bunting	9	8	5	10	1
Bobolink	-	-	-	1	-
Red-winged Blackbird	355	445	461	479	438
Western Meadowlark	378	473	452	408	184
Yellow-headed Blackbird	94	103	48	69	56
Brewer's Blackbird	260	346	333	305	159
Common Grackle	442	480 high	417	273	214
Brown-headed Cowbird	48	69	120	130	49
Baltimore Oriole	15 low	30	48	58	34
Purple Finch	-	-	-	-	1
House Finch	76	92	93	128	74

Species	May 28 2017	May 29 2016	May 24 2015	May 25 2014	May 26 2013
Red Crossbill	-	-	-	-	20 <i>high</i>
Common Redpoll	-	-	-	1	3
Pine Siskin	-	1	4	-	13
American Goldfinch	57	70	53	42	26
Evening Grosbeak	-	1	-	-	-
House Sparrow	221	531	465	558	432
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS		9,977	9,152	10,114	7,453
TOTAL SPECIES		130	126	144	130

¹CW indicates species seen during count week but not on count day