



29th Annual Christmas Bird Count (2010)

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

Dear Birder:

Many thanks to the 37 participants who surveyed territories during this year's Christmas Bird Count held on Sunday, December 19. A strong effort was made by the Interpretive Program in 2010 to involve a broader array of participants who would watch their bird feeders during the count. As a result, there were 26 new feeder-watching contributors to this year's count.

Count day temperatures were slightly cooler (-15°/-11°C) than last year's (-9°/-6°C) but not uncomfortable and wind was moderate (5-10 km). Snow conditions were moderate as well and no one reported any difficulty accessing survey locations. However, the South Saskatchewan River seemed to have less open water than last year. This year, all territories in our count circle were assigned and surveyed.

A total of 55 species was observed with 16,860 individual birds counted, which was down 25% from the 22,419 individuals reported last year but continued to be 48% above the long-term 29-year average of 11,563. Total species was similar to the past 8 years, which ranged between 50 (2009) and 61 (2002). Two species, Cooper's Hawk and Mourning Dove, were seen exclusively by feeder watchers. One species, Pine Grosbeak, was seen during Count week.

There were record high counts for 8 species, and no record low counts (see table below). Many of these species, Eurasian Collared-dove, Mourning Dove, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and House Finch frequent bird feeders and their high count was likely related to the increased effort by feeder watchers in 2010. It is interesting to note that a number of species that also frequent bird feeders decreased in 2010 including Ringed-neck Pheasant, Rock Dove, Blue Jay, and Common Redpoll.

Regarding the Top Ten Species, Canada Goose placed first at 7,538 individuals, Mallard second at 4,203, and House Sparrow third at 748 (see enclosed list below). Canada Goose and Mallard are generally the top two species but this year Mallard numbers were down about 50% from 2009, which may be related to the lack of open water on the River and surrounding areas. Decreased Mallard numbers was also the biggest contributor to lower overall numbers in 2010.

The Eurasian Collared-dove population (first reported in the City in 2003) doubled again in 2010 from 2009 (112 and 61, respectively) after reaching a plateau during 2007 - 2009. Again, the increase is likely related to more feeder watchers participating this year. Black-billed Magpies continued to increase this year and last year from a record low count in 2008 (470, 377 and 171, respectively) and were similar to the 2007 – 2006 counts; they were only about 8% below historic numbers. Bohemian Waxwings increased dramatically in 2010 and reversed a trend from the previous two years when more Cedar Waxwings were observed. 138 Bohemians were counted this year as compared to 1 and 3 in 2008 - 2009; no Cedar Waxwings were observed this year.

Species generally seen on our CBC that were seen in 2010 but not in 2009 included the following: Northern Pintail (1), Gadwall (1), Redhead (3), Lesser Scaup (2), Ring-necked Duck (1), American Coot (5), Cooper’s Hawk (1), Northern Goshawk (1), Short-eared Owl (1), Belted Kingfisher (1), Golden-crowned Kinglet (13), and Rusty Blackbird (6). Notable species absent from this year’s count were Snowy Owl, Pileated Woodpecker, Cedar Waxwing, White-throated Sparrow, Pine Grosbeak, Purple Finch, and American Goldfinch.

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

Good Birding!

Bob Frew and Marty Drut, Compilers

Species with Record Highs and Lows in 2010.

Species	2010 Total	Previous High	Year of Prev. High
Green-winged Teal	5	3	2009, 2006
Eurasian Collared-dove	112	61	2009
Mourning Dove	6	4	2008
Downy Woodpecker	55	33	2009, 2007
Northern Flicker	107	104	2009
American Crow	28	15	2008, 2007
Red-breasted Nuthatch	148	142	2007
House Finch	660	487	2007
No Record Lows Recorded			

Top 10 Species:

Canada Goose –	7,538
Mallard –	4,203
House Sparrow –	748
House Finch –	660
Snow Bunting –	646
Rock Dove –	641
European Starling –	471
Black-billed Magpie –	470
Black-capped Chickadee –	232
Red-breasted Nuthatch -	152

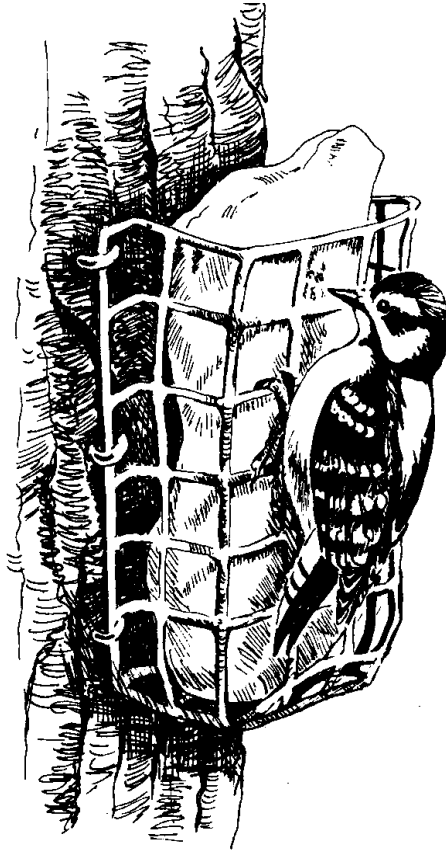


Species generally seen that were not seen in 2009 but were seen in 2010.

Species	Number Counted	Year Last Seen
Northern Pintail	4	2004
Gadwall	1	2007
Redhead	3	2008
Lesser Scaup	2	2006
Ring-necked Duck	1	2005
American Coot	5	2007
Cooper’s Hawk	1	2004
Northern Goshawk	1	2006
Short-eared Owl	1	2008
Belted Kingfisher	1	2007
Golden-crowned Kinglet	13	2006
Rusty Blackbird	6	2006

FIELD PARTICIPANTS:

Judy Anderson
Barry Anderson
Marty Drut
Sue Higgins
Donna Steele
Bob Frew
Corlaine Gardner
Rob Gardner
Jim Etzkorn
Val Felesky
Fay Felesky
Dale Holmes
Annalora Horch
Phil Horch
David Latimer
Cameron Lockerbie
Jim Knelson
Val Martins
Jim Marshall
Lorine Marshall
Michael O'Shea
Mary Ann Howson
Stephan Peck
David Parberry
Julie Tingley
Jo-Anne Reynolds
Mark Schiebelbein
John Slater
Elaine Spitzer
Milt Spitzer
Marie Stein
Marylynne McCluskey
Jen Stroh
Matt Stroh
Ben Velner
Mike Velner
Rick Carrier



FEEDER WATCHERS:

Regulars

George Lulkasiewich
Bernice Morrison
Judy Simmons
Donna Stein

New

Paul Thibault
Carol Moen
Betty Rainville
Bill Piggot
Joan Armour
Robert Benn
Marj Brent
Norm Carlson
Nancy Hoffman
Nelson Hogg
Bob Kawaza
Phil Monteith
Linda Purchase
Maureen Roberts
Melvin Roth
Bonnie Rudeweisman
Stan Runions
Craig Shannon
Jean Shannon
Randy Stotz
Ed Sturm
Bert Tynesen
Loretta Wall
Alicia Waller
Lorne Wiley
Sandra Wilson

SPECIES	Dec 19 *2010*	Dec 20 2009	Dec 21 2008	Dec 16 2007
Canada Goose	7,538	7,048	3,389	10,011
Green-winged Teal	5	3	2	2
American Wigeon	1	1	-	-
Mallard	4,203	9,461	2,300	4,812
Northern Pintail	4	-	-	-
Northern Shoveler	-	-	-	1
Gadwall	1	-	-	1
Canvasback	-	-	2	-
Redhead	3	-	1	1
Greater Scaup	-	1	CW ¹	1
Lesser Scaup	2	-	-	-
Ring-necked Duck	1	-	-	-
Common Goldeneye	102	120	98	153
Bufflehead	8	17	1	4
Common Merganser	4	4	2	30
Bald Eagle	8	21	10	27
Cooper's Hawk	1	-	-	-
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	1	CW ¹	1
Northern Goshawk	1	-	-	-
Red-tailed Hawk	-	CW ¹	-	1
Rough-legged Hawk	3	2	2	1
Golden Eagle	3	1	-	-
Merlin	3	2	3	4
Prairie Falcon	2	3	2	2
Peregrine Falcon	-	-	-	1 *NEW*
Gray Partridge	57	25	28	58
Ring-necked Pheasant	71	120	79	33
Sharp-tailed Grouse	65	49	28	45
Chukar	-	-	CW ¹	
American Coot	5	-	-	1
Great Horned Owl	6	6	4	9
Snowy Owl	-	-	1	-
Long-eared Owl	-	-	-	CW ¹
Short-eared Owl	1	-	2	-
Rock Dove (Pigeon)	641	1,971	570	2,085
Eurasian Collared-dove	112	61	58	54
Mourning Dove	6	2	4	1
Belted Kingfisher	1	-	-	3
Downy Woodpecker	56	33	25	33
Hairy Woodpecker	9	2	9	9
Pileated Woodpecker	-	CW ¹	1	1
Northern Flicker	108	104	47	86
Northern Shrike	2	1	1	4
Horned Lark	1	67	78	-
Blue Jay	38	45	21	55

SPECIES	Dec 19 *2010*	Dec 20 2009	Dec 21 2008	Dec 16 2007
Black-billed Magpie	470	377	171	360
American Crow	29	10	15	15
Common Raven	-	2	1	-
Black-capped Chickadee	232	204	154	363
Red-breasted Nuthatch	152	96	25	142
White-breasted Nuthatch	5	3	4	15
Brown Creeper	2	1	-	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	13	-	-	-
Townsend's Solitaire	3	1	1	16
American Robin	11	14	11	13
Varied Thrush	-	-	-	CW ¹
European Starling	471	739	176	940
Bohemian Waxwing	138	3	1	122
Cedar Waxwing	-	20	27	1
American Tree Sparrow	25	36	4	157
Harris' Sparrow	-	CW ¹	-	2
White-crowned Sparrow	-	1	-	-
White-throated Sparrow	-	2	1	-
Fox Sparrow	-	CW ¹		
Dark-eyed Junco	95	44	44	149
Snow Bunting	646	400	1,550	-
Western Meadowlark	-	CW ¹	-	7
Rusty Blackbird	6	-	-	-
Red-winged Blackbird	-	-	CW ¹	-
Common Grackle	-	CW ¹	-	-
Pine Grosbeak	CW ¹	-	2	-
American Goldfinch	-	2	7	4
Purple Finch	-	1	6	-
Red Crossbill	-	-	2	30
White-winged Crossbill	-	CW ¹	-	-
House Finch	660	456	312	487
Common Redpoll	44	76	131	57
Evening Grosbeak	-	-	-	1
Pine Siskin	35	22	58	3
House Sparrow	748	738	695	1,034

¹CW indicates species seen during count week

Count Statistics					
	Dec 19 *2010*	Dec 20 2009	Dec 21 2008	Dec 16 2007	29 Year Average
TOTAL SPECIES	55	50	51	54	44
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	16,860	22,419	10,166	21,424	11,563
Participants	37	32	40	42	36
Walking hours	60.5	50.5	45.0	80.25	44.0
Walking km	106.0	91.5	84.0	96.5	81.0
Driving hours	33.0	38.25	31.5	25.5	26.0
Driving km	538.3	525.5	484.0	281.5	417.0
Feeder hours	100.0	20.75	16.0	14.5	21.0
Temp °C min/max	-15/-11	-9/-6	-36/-28	-9/4	-13/-4
Snow cover	2-15cm	2-10cm	5-60cm	2-10cm	5-12
Weather - Sky	Mostly Sunny	Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Sunny	N/A

