

**MEDICINE HAT  
INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM**  
Managed by Grasslands Naturalists



## **28<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Bird Count (2009)**

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

Dear Birder:

Many thanks to the 32 participants of this year's Christmas Bird Count held on Sunday, December 20. In 2009, count day temperatures were more temperate ( $-9^{\circ}$ / $-6^{\circ}$ C) as compared to last year's record cold ( $-36^{\circ}$ / $-28^{\circ}$ C), which made for easier survey conditions and more bird activity. Snow conditions were moderate as well and no one reported any difficulty accessing survey locations. This year, all territories in our count circle were assigned and surveyed.

A total of 50 species was observed with 22,419 individual birds counted, which was up 121% from the 10,166 individuals reported last year and similar to totals from 2005 - 2007. There were record high counts for 6 species, and no record low counts (see enclosed list below). Mallard placed first at 9,461 individuals, Canada Goose second at 7,048, and Rock Dove third at 1,971. The Eurasian Collared-dove population (first reported in the City in 2003) appears to have reached a plateau as they increased slightly for the second consecutive year where previously they had doubled or tripled annually. Black-billed magpies increased dramatically (120%) from their record low count in 2008 (377 and 171, respectively) and were similar to the 2007 – 2006 counts; however, they continue to be approximately 25% below historic numbers. Species generally seen on our CBC that were seen in 2009 but not in 2008 included American Wigeon (1), Greater Scaup (1), Sharp-shinned Hawk (1), and Golden Eagle (1). More Cedar Waxwings (20) than Bohemian Waxwings (3) were reported again in 2009, which is unusual. Some additional highlights this year include Rough-legged Hawk (2), Mourning Dove (2), Northern Shrike (1), Brown Creeper (1), and White-crowned Sparrow (1).

Perhaps the biggest news in 2009 was the birds seen count week, which included a Fox Sparrow (1) and Common Grackles (2). Both species had been observed for several weeks before count day during Project FeederWatch surveys at the Police Point Park Nature Centre but unfortunately were not observed count day. Fox Sparrow has never been observed during a Medicine Hat CBC.

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

List of Species with Record Highs and Lows in 2009.

Species	2009 Total	Previous High	Year of Prev. High
Mallard	9,461	5,926	2006
Bufflehead	17	11	2003
Ring-necked Pheasant	120	118	2003
Eurasian Collared-dove	61	58	2008
Northern Flicker	104	99	2002
Common Raven	2	1	2008, 2006
No Record Lows Recorded			

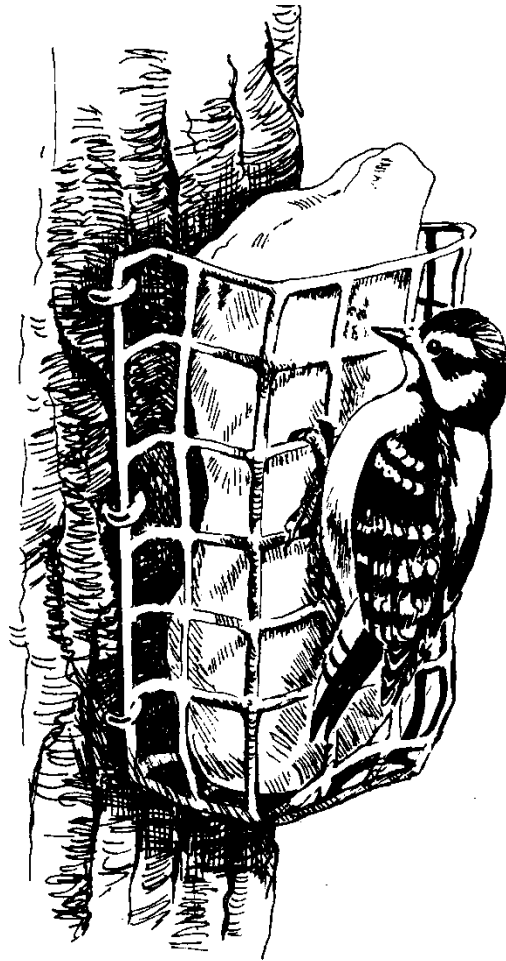
**Top 10 Species:**

- Mallard – 9,461
- Canada Goose - 7,048
- Rock Dove – 1,971
- Starling - 739
- House Sparrow – 738
- House Finch – 456
- Snow Bunting – 400
- Black-billed Magpie - 377
- Black-capped Chickadee - 204
- Tied:
- Common Goldeneye - 120
- Ring-necked Pheasant - 120



**FIELD PARTICIPANTS:**

Judy Anderson  
Barry Anderson  
Marty Drut  
Sue Higgins  
Donna Steele  
Bob Frew  
Corlaine Gardner  
Rob Gardner  
Jim Hirsch  
Arnie Vorreiter  
Dale Holmes  
Annalora Horch  
Phil Horch  
David Latimer  
Sarah Latimer  
Joel Latimer  
Cameron Lockerbie  
Jim Knelson  
Val Martins  
Jim Marshall  
Michael O'Shea  
David Parberry  
Julie Tingley  
Jo-Anne Reynolds  
Mark Schiebelbein  
Darren McKenna  
John Slater  
Milt Spitzer  
Marie Stein  
Ben Velner  
Mike Velner  
Rick Carrier



**FEEDER WATCHERS:**

George Lulkasiewich  
Bernice Morrison  
Judy Simmons  
Donna Stein

SPECIES	Dec 20 *2009*	Dec 21 2008	Dec 16 2007	Dec 17 2006
White-fronted Goose	-	-	-	CW <sup>1</sup>
Snow Goose	-	-	-	-
Canada Goose	7,048	3,389	10,011	13,358
Tundra Swan	-	-	-	CW <sup>1</sup>
Green-winged Teal	3	2	2	3
Blue-winged Teal	-	-	-	-
American Wigeon	1	-	-	5
Mallard	9,461	2,300	4,812	5,926
Northern Shoveler	-	-	1	-
Gadwall	-	-	1	-
Canvasback	-	2	-	2
Redhead	-	1	1	-
Greater Scaup	1	CW <sup>1</sup>	1	1
Lesser Scaup	-	-	-	2
White-winged Scoter	-	-	-	1 *NEW*
Common Goldeneye	120	98	153	111
Bufflehead	17	1	4	10
Common Merganser	4	2	30	7
Bald Eagle	21	10	27	10
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	CW <sup>1</sup>	1	4
Northern Goshawk	-	-	-	1
Red-tailed Hawk	CW <sup>1</sup>	-	1	1
Rough-legged Hawk	2	2	1	1
Golden Eagle	1	-	-	3
American Kestrel	-	-	-	2
Merlin	2	3	4	4
Prairie Falcon	3	2	2	4
Peregrine Falcon	-	-	1 *NEW*	
Gray Partridge	25	28	58	2
Ring-necked Pheasant	120	79	33	4
Sharp-tailed Grouse	49	28	45	2
Chukar	-	CW <sup>1</sup>		
American Coot	-	-	1	2
Great Horned Owl	6	4	9	9
Snowy Owl	-	1	-	3
Long-eared Owl	-	-	CW <sup>1</sup>	-
Short-eared Owl	-	2	-	-
Rock Dove (Pigeon)	1,971	570	2,085	743
Eurasian Collared-dove	61	58	54	29
Mourning Dove	2	4	1	1
Belted Kingfisher	-	-	3	1

SPECIES	Dec 20 *2009*	Dec 21 2008	Dec 16 2007	Dec 17 2006
Downy Woodpecker	33	25	33	25
Hairy Woodpecker	2	9	9	1
Pileated Woodpecker	CW <sup>1</sup>	1	1	1 *NEW*
Northern Flicker	104	47	86	43
Northern Shrike	1	1	4	CW <sup>1</sup>
Horned Lark	67	78	-	18
Blue Jay	45	21	55	48
Black-billed Magpie	377	171	360	399
American Crow	10	15	15	5
Common Raven	2	1	-	1
Black-capped Chickadee	204	154	363	180
Red-breasted Nuthatch	96	25	142	35
White-breasted Nuthatch	3	4	15	5
Brown Creeper	1	-	1	4
Golden-crowned Kinglet	-	-	-	3
Townsend's Solitaire	1	1	16	CW <sup>1</sup>
American Robin	14	11	13	-
Varied Thrush	-	-	CW <sup>1</sup>	CW <sup>1</sup>
European Starling	739	176	940	248
Bohemian Waxwing	3	1	122	207
Cedar Waxwing	20	27	1	-
American Tree Sparrow	36	4	157	89
Harris' Sparrow	CW <sup>1</sup>	-	2	-
White-crowned Sparrow	1	-	-	-
White-throated Sparrow	2	1	-	-
Fox Sparrow	CW <sup>1</sup>			
Dark-eyed Junco	44	44	149	57
Snow Bunting	400	1,550	-	6
Western Meadowlark	CW <sup>1</sup>	-	7	6
Rusty Blackbird	-	-	-	1
Red-winged Blackbird	-	CW <sup>1</sup>	-	-
Common Grackle	CW <sup>1</sup>	-	-	-
Pine Grosbeak	-	2	-	61
American Goldfinch	2	7	4	-
Purple Finch	1	6	-	1
Red Crossbill	-	2	30	12
White-winged Crossbill	CW <sup>1</sup>	-	-	-
House Finch	456	312	487	300
Common Redpoll	76	131	57	158
Evening Grosbeak	-	-	1	-
Pine Siskin	22	58	3	-
House Sparrow	738	695	1,034	587

<sup>1</sup>CW indicates species seen during count week

<b>Count Statistics</b>					
	Dec 20 *2009*	Dec 21 2008	Dec 16 2007	Dec 17 2006	27 Year Average
TOTAL SPECIES	50	51	54	55	43
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	22,419	10,166	21,424	22,766	11,376
Participants	32	40	42	30	36
Walking hours	50.5	45.0	80.25	40.0	43.0
Walking km	91.5	84.0	96.5	72.5	81.0
Driving hours	38.25	31.5	25.5	28.0	26.0
Driving km	525.5	484.0	281.5	442.0	413.0
Feeder hours	20.75	16.0	14.5	14.0	18.0
Temp °C min/max	-9/-6	-36/-28	-9/4	-8/3	-12/-4
Snow cover	2-10cm	5-60cm	2-10cm	0-10cm	5-12
Weather - Sky	Cloudy	Mostly sunny	Sunny	Mostly sunny	N/A

