

Banff National Park

Date: May 30, 31, 2015

Compiler: Brenda Lepitzki

Participants: University of Manitoba group: Nicola Koper, Michael Bell, Michael Campbell, Jennie Horvat, Kurtis Ulrich, Jordana Milne, Larissa Gospodyn, Laura Kummerfield, Yurika Baba, Holly Radcliffe. Banff Community Birdwalk: Jill Beleyne, Amar Athwal, 19 other participants. Shirley Truscott, Gary Truscott.

Area Covered: **Day 1** Community Bird Walk group: Recreation grounds (stables), Marsh Loop trail partly along Bow River, Sundance Canyon road to Rainy Bay, Cave and Basin marsh. Shirley & Gary Truscott: Rundle Trail from Banff Golf Course trail head to Harlequin Rock. University of Manitoba group: Johnson Lake loop trail, road to Johnson Lake from TransCanada Highway. **Day 2** (2 participants, U. Manitoba's Nicola Koper and Michael Bell): Shoreline trail of Lake Louise

Weather:

Day 1: Temp. 9 to 12°C

Wind speed: 0 to 5 km/hr. Wind direction: from west

Precipitation: none

Comments: overcast, low cloud

Day 2: Temp. 16 to 20°C

Wind speed: 5 to 10 km/hr. Wind direction: NW

Precipitation: none

Comments: done in afternoon – definitely reduced numbers of birds seen

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 29.8 km; by vehicle 11.3 km; on foot 18.5 km. Total team hours: 11 hr 05 min (11.08 hr); by vehicle 50 min (0.83 hr); on foot 10 hr 15 min (10.25 hr).

Number of Species: 62 (+ 19 CW)

Number of Birds: 436

Other species seen during count week:

Birds: Sharp-shinned Hawk juvenile, Merlin, Calliope Hummingbird, Rufous Hummingbird, Pileated Woodpecker, Willow Flycatcher, Say's Phoebe, Eastern Kingbird, Steller's Jay, Bank Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Mountain Chickadee, Gray Catbird, Cedar Waxwing, Tennessee Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Le Conte's Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow.

Mammals: 6 golden-mantled ground squirrels, 3 red squirrels

Highlights (count days and count week):

Banff: U. Manitoba: Sand-hill crane, Boreal chickadees, Three-toed woodpecker. (*The Sand-hill crane was a rare sighting, according to Jason Rogers our identification expert: "I'm guessing fewer than ten records for Banff and Jasper combined, and those are all fall ones. However, Canmore had a spring record in 2010. That was in late April though."* B. Lepitzki). "Pacific Wren, sharp-shinned hawk juvenile flew down right in front of us!" Nicola Koper.

Lake Louise: U. Manitoba: Pacific Wren (*entered on list as Winter wren, B. Lepitki*), Wilson's warblers, Hermit thrush, Golden-crowned kinglet. "We went in the afternoon so that definitely decreased the number of species and individuals we detected." Nicola Koper

Beauvais Lake Provincial Park

Date: June 1, 2015

Compiler: Teresa Dolman

Participants: Douglas Dolman, Teresa Dolman, Fraser Smith

Area Covered: Areas within the Park

Weather:

Day 1: Temp. 12 to 16° C

Wind speed: 10 to 30 km/hr. Wind direction: ENE

Precipitation: nil

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 16 km; by vehicle 5 km; on foot 11 km .

Total Team Hours: 6 hr; by vehicle 1 hr; on foot 5 hr.

Number of Species: 57

Number of Birds: 268

Other species seen during count week: none

Highlights: Every year since 2010 a pair of Trumpeter Swans has nested in the Park.

This year they hatched four cygnets. No new species were added to the overall list, but Cliff Swallows were seen for only the third time and Western Wood-Pewee for only the fourth time.

BowKan Birders

Date: May 30 & 31, 2015

Compiler: Cliff Hansen

Participants: Kevin Barker, Hugh Brooke, Dean Cooper, Jean Cooper, Nancy Davis, Mary Dumka, Marilynn Dyck, Bert Dyk, Ron Dutcher, Ethan Denton, Neil Denton, Monica Dragoz, Cliff Hansen, Margo Hansen, Trudy Kamphuis, Feona Koether, Laura Reid, Rose Reid, Joan Saunders, Hanne Seidel, Anita Walker, Suzanne Walsh, Bill Wilson, Eva Zidek

Area Covered: 15 km diameter circle centered on the north face of Mount McGillivray), just south of Exshaw.

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 8 to 20° C

Wind speed: 5 to 10 km/hr. Wind direction: SW var

Precipitation: nil

Comments: Pleasant day

Day 2: Temp. not recorded

Wind speed: 5 to 10 km/hr. Wind direction: S-SW

Precipitation: nil

Comments: Pleasant day

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 161 km; by vehicle 94; on foot 67 km.

Total Team Hours: 79.8 hr; by vehicle 5 hr; on foot 74.8 hr.

Number of Species: 121

Number of Birds: 2749

Other species seen during count week: One Merlin seen during count-week. Also, an uncorroborated report of a Dickcissel – counted as a bird but not as an added species (see attached newsletter).

Highlights: The most notable decreases were found in numbers of Bufflehead, Barrow's

Goldeneye, American Coot, Common Raven, Bank Swallow, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Song Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco. On the opposite side, the most notable increases were found in the numbers of Western Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Eastern Kingbird, Warbling Vireo, Cliff Swallow, Swainson's Thrush, Tennessee Warbler, Red-winged Blackbird, and Pine Siskin. After only counting two Pine Siskins in the 2014 count, it was gratifying to see them back in larger numbers. The large count of Western Grebes was possible because a migrating flock of 28 had paused to rest on Lac des Arcs. Other highlights included a first count of a Chestnut-sided Warbler, and second counts of Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Marsh Wren and Western Kingbird. Overall, the count was balanced with noticeably below average numbers in about 15 species but offset by 15 species with above average numbers.

Of special note and for the first time on our spring counts, a Dickcissel, an unusual bird in Alberta, was reported. The report is based on several bird calls heard by one experienced and knowledgeable observer, but the report was not corroborated. It is unusual for a Dickcissel to be in Alberta (it is an eastern bird), but it is not impossible. I photographed a Dickcissel that spent a number of weeks in Exshaw in early June of 2005. I searched the internet for recent sightings and found that there was an uncorroborated report of a Dickcissel sighting from an area northeast of Lethbridge in June, following our spring count. It is possible it could have been in our area during our count and then moved eastward back toward its normal area of habitat. Unfortunately, both reports are uncorroborated, so I cannot include it as a "species" on our count. I do include it as an individual bird contributing to the total in the same way as any other unidentified species and mention it as an unconfirmed possibility.

Brooks Lake Newell

Date: May 16-17,2015

Compiler: Bob Parsons

Participants: 30

Area Covered: 20 mile radius of Lake Newell

Weather:

Day 1: Temp. 8 to 18°C

Comments: variable winds, even strong at times. Some scattered showers, overcast at times

Day 2: Temp. 6 to 13°C

Precipitation: x

Comments: mostly sunny, light to moderate winds

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 1688.5 km; by vehicle 1657 km; on foot 31.5 km. Total Team Hours: 1392.5 hr; by vehicle 1365 hr; on foot 27.5 hr.

Number of Species: 165

Number of Birds: 43676

Highlights: 6 Harris Sparrow, 2 Burrowing owl, 1 Osprey, 1 Hudsonian Godwit, 1 Ruddy Turnstone 4 White-rumped Sandpiper, 1 Snow Goose (same spot 3 years in a row), 1 Ross Goose, 1046 Northern Shoveler, 31 White-faced Ibis

Buffalo Lake

Date: May 24, 2014

Compiler: Lee Carothers

Participants: Lee Carothers, Wilma Zurfluh, Katy Bullick

Area Covered: North of Stettler, farmyard, and 1 feeder watch

Weather:

Day 1: Temp. 11 to 15°C

Wind speed: 15 to 25 km/hr. Wind direction: W

Precipitation: none

Comments: very windy

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 37 km; by vehicle 35 km, on foot 2 km.

Total Team Hours: 5 hr; by vehicle 3 hr; on foot 2 hr.

Number of Species: 58

Number of Birds: 892

Highlights: Lots of Black-necked Stilts.

Calgary and area

Calgary

Date: May 30-31, 2015

Compilers: Terry Poulton, Andrew Hart, Melanie Seneviratne (Nature Calgary team)

Participants: 90+: Tim Allison, Lorrie Anderson, John Anderson, Sid Andrews, Daniel Arndt, Linda Bailey, John Bargman, Bruce Barnetson, Sydney Bell-Pountney, Mike Bentley, George Best, Kingsley Blades, Al Borgardt, Trevor Churchill, Peter Comfort, Phil Cram, Amy Darling, Bernie Diebolt, Maria Dunlavey, Jean Dunn, John Duthie, Brian Elder, Anne Elliott, Joy Ely, Dick Flynn, Lenora Flynn, Jim Foley, Dave Gibson, Janet Gill, Jean-Philippe Gravel, Horst Grothman, Joerg Gueldenpfenig, Ian Halladay, Michael Harrison, Andrew Hart, Chris Havard, Ken Havard, Howard Heffler, Lyn Heffler, Frank Hennessey, Barry Hertz, Peter Hoyer, Marcie Jensen, Kumiko Kamiike, Al Kimberly, Terry Korolyk, Bob Lefebvre, Don Magnusson, Gary Malcolm, Angela Marco, Andrea McDonald, Diane Michalak, Pat Mitchell, Lynn Moore, Rich Moore, Mike Mulligan, Ron Ostrander, Rose Painter, Lucie Parker, Cindy Parliament, Dan Parliament, Nicole Pellerin, Simone Pellerin-Wood, Jerry Pilny, Terry Poulton, Mark Rubensohn, Nimali Seneviratne, Darlene Shymkiw, Jan Simonson, Andrew Slater, Phil Smith, Ena Spalding, Pat Spiller, Jim St. Laurent, Don Stiles, Phil Stiles, Julie Thomas, Monica Thomas, John Thompson, Tony Timmons, Tina Turner, Phil Ullman, Ruth Ullman, David Vernon, Joan Walker, Wayne Walker, Ray Wershler, Bill Wilson, Marjorie Wing, Ray Woods, Robert Worona, Gus Yaki, Don Yont, Colin Young, and others not identified.

Area Covered: 20114 sq. km.

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 7 to 28°C

Wind speed: 0 to 20 km/hr. Wind direction: variable

Precipitation: none, or some rain locally

Comments: Generally good conditions; leaves fully out; river levels low to normal; many ponds dry or low but Langdon Reservoir high; Reporting mechanism makes it hard to compile meaningful comments over such a large and variable area.

Day 2: Temp. 7 to 28°C

Wind speed: 0 to 20 km/hr. Wind direction: variable

Precipitation: none, or some rain locally

Comments: Generally good conditions; leaves fully out; river levels low to normal; many ponds dry or low but Langdon Reservoir high; Reporting mechanism makes it hard to compile meaningful comments over such a large and variable area.

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 5086 km; by vehicle 4569 km; on foot 517 km. Total Team Hours: 487 hr; by vehicle 289 hr; on foot 198 hr.

Number of Species: 211 (+5 count week).

Number of Birds: 88924 (+5 count week)

Other species seen during count week: Turkey Vulture (Cochrane); Barred Owl (Brown-Lowery May 27) reported by Colin Young, Brian Elder, Ray Wershler and Ray Woods, and in Water Valley area by Doug Collister); 1 Northern Goshawk in S Glenmore Park June 3 (reported on AlbertaBird by Rose Painter, David Vernon, Gus Yaki); a Snowy Egret from Frank Lake reported by Yousif Attia on AlbertaBird second-hand, as being well-described, at Frank Lake May; and possibly another, but unconfirmed May 29 (AlbertaBird by Martin Sharp). The Big Day count May 27 by Brian Elder et al produced, besides the Barred Owl at Brown-Lowery, a Northern Saw-whet Owl as well. Terry Korolyk agrees that a bird he reported on AlbertaBird that sounded like a Carolina Wren at a slough near Dewinton May 30 is unlikely.

Highlights:

The total number of birds was high, exceeded only in 2009, 2011 and 2012, the first two of which were heavily influenced by very high numbers of Franklin Gulls due to favorable prairie pond water levels SE of Calgary at least in 2011, and the 2009 count was influenced by similar late date (May 30-31). As in 2012, the high numbers in 2015 were distributed widely between many species.

The 2015 Calgary count was held May 30-31, by tradition the last full weekend of May, and later than most years. A number of observers noted the greater foliage and abundance of forest dwelling birds, especially compared with recent years. This late date extends farther than most years into the local breeding season, with more local breeders on their territory, some with young that may be counted (there is no long-term rigid protocol for this count), and with better detectability in species that exhibit conspicuous territorial behaviour. The good weather and driveable roads undoubtedly contributed to the high numbers of certain species, as also do the continuing high numbers of observers and their increasing experience and ability to cover the count circle thoroughly. The City of Calgary portion of the count was extended southward along the Bow River this year to the Pine Creek water treatment plant, but two of the other southern parks were not covered, including Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, which was still closed after the 2013 floods, but normally contributes significantly to the count.

The May 30-31 dates also mean that many of the more northerly-nesting birds (eg. Black-bellied Plover) had already largely moved northward out of the area.

Record or near record numbers were observed for the following, mostly common, species (CAPITALS indicate exceptionally strong records, "near" indicates near-record numbers): Canada Goose, GADWALL, MALLARD, BLUE-WINGED TEAL, CINAMMON TEAL, GREEN-WINGED TEAL, CANVASBACK, Redhead (near), LESSER SCAUP, RING-NECKED PHEASANT, GREAT BLUE HERON, Osprey, Ferruginous Hawk (7 reported), Killdeer, Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet (near),

GREATER YELLOWLEGS (21), SPOTTED SANDPIPER, Common Tern (near), Mourning Dove, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker (near), American Three-Toed Woodpecker, OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER (17), Western Wood-Pewee (near), ALDER FLYCATCHER, Willow Flycatcher (6), Least Flycatcher, Hermit Thrush (37), American Robin, GRAY CATBIRD, Brown Thrasher (13), CEDAR WAXWING, TENNESSEE WARBLER, YELLOW WARBLER, CAPE MAY WARBLER (36), TOWNSEND'S WARBLER (44), BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER (2 seen in Millarville area by Terry Korolyk), Ovenbird, COMMON YELLOWTHROAT, Clay-coloured Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, BREWER'S BLACKBIRD, COMMON GRACKLE, BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD, House Finch, PINE SISKIN, AMERICAN GOLDFINCH.

Noteworthy reports of rarely seen birds include: 3 EURASIAN WIGEONS from Southeast Calgary reported by Mike Mulligan and Sid Andrews, 1 VIRGINIA RAIL (reported by Colin Young and Linda Bailey south Sheep River Basin; also 3 Virginia Rails were reported pre-count on May 28 from west of Olds by Brian Elder and Ray Woods), 1 YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER reported in Water Valley area by Ray Woods, Brian Elder, and Ray Wershler, 2 BLACKBURNIAN WARBLERS reported by Terry Korolyk from Millarville area (only seen once before on the count, in 2008), PHILADELPHIA VIREOS (5 by several observers in several areas; not seen on the count since 1999), 1 BLACK-and-WHITE WARBLER reported by Tim Allison in Bow Valley Park.

Missing in 2015 from the regularly reported (in very small numbers) species were American Bittern, Northern Goshawk, Lesser Yellowlegs, Pectoral Sandpiper, Fox Sparrow.

Ring-billed Gulls were more numerous (at 149) than in recent years, but still well below their last high in 2009.

Central Alberta (Red Deer and area)

Date: May 30-31, 2015

Compiler: Judy Boyd

Participants: 48 - Dee Bagshaw, Stanley (Bud) Bargholz, Jean Bargholz, Bill Barritt, Brian Biggs, Karin Bjorge, Myron Bjorge, Sarah Bodner, Judy Boyd, Larry Boyd, Lois Burkinshaw, Phil Burkinshaw, Jerry Caddy, John Caddy, Sandra Cameron, Dennis Cressman, Amy Dale, Elizabeth Dale, Anto Davis, Eileen Ford, Stewart Ford, Bill Heinsen, Philip Hennock, Jodie Hill, Scott Hoyland, Gordon Johnston, Keith Kline, Joyce Lemke, Claudia Lipski, Linda Marshall, Janet Martin, Carol McGillvary, Jackie Miller, Ken Miller, Keara Nelson, Clint Nissen, Tanya O'Donaghue, Alana Pay, Myrna Pearman, Doug Pedersen, Vanessa Poettner, Will Quamme, Deenie Spelt, Joanne Susat, Rick Varjassy, Althea Williams, Gail, Sandra.

Area Covered: Zone 1 (Red Deer), Zone 2 (Sylvan Lake), Zone 3 (Gull Lake), Zone 4 (Lacombe), Zone 5 (EBF), Zone 6 (Pine Lake), Zone 7 (Penhold), Zone 8 (Dickson, MRWC), Zone 12 (Crestomere), Zone 16 (Lousana), Zone 17 (Bigelow Reservoir), Zone 19 (Bowden), Zone 25 (Three Hills), Zone 26 (Dry Island Buffalo Jump), and Zone 27 (Rocky Mountain House).

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 6 to 21°C

Wind speed: 10 to 40 km/hr. Wind direction: SE, E, SSE

Cloud cover: 1-100%
Day 2: Temp. 11 to 25°C
Wind speed: 0 to 20 km/hr. Wind direction: NE, N, SE, SW, E
Cloud cover: 0-100%

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 1031 km; by vehicle 1061.5 km; on foot 40.5 km; by canoe 6 km, bicycle 23 km. Total Team Hours: 116 hr; by vehicle 46.25 hr.; on foot 35.25 hr, by canoe 3 hr, by bicycle 3 hr; feederwatch 27.5 hr.

Number of Species: 146

Number of Birds: 12620

Highlights: Highest recorded numbers since 2000: 1104 Mallard, 42 Cinnamon Teal, 94 Green-winged Teal, 12 Bald Eagle, 75 Sora, 17 Black-necked Stilt, 6 Solitary Sandpipers (6 also seen in 2011), 15 Marbled Godwit, 2 Common Nighthawk, 2 Rufous Hummingbird, 2 Loggerhead Shrike, 34 Marsh Wren.

Number of participants was up from last year's 47 to 48. The number of bird species went down from last year's 147 to 146. (The highest recorded number of species since 2000 was in 2008: 153.) The count of individual birds was down from last year's 14155 to 12620.

Cold Lake Area Bird Count

Date: May 30-31, 2015

Compiler: Ted Hindmarch

Participants: 12 individual (8 parties Day 1, 4 parties Day 2): Ron & Nancy Donnelly, Phil Shore, Lex Hedley, Nancy Dufour (Cold Lake); Norm Parrish (Bonnyville); Ted Hindmarch (Gibbons); Chris Etue (Rapid View, Sask); Richard Klauke (Vilna); Del Huget (Edmonton); Geoff Peruniak (Athabasca), Vince Cotteril (Edmonton); **Plus** Feeder watch x 2 Mado Shore, Marsha Hayward.

Area Covered: 20Mi RADIUS COUNT CIRCLE CENTER 5427.30N 11030.00W Cold Lake Provincial Park English Bay, North Bay, HorseShoe Bay and Marina, Jesse and Charlotte Lake, Bear Trap Lake, NE Moose Lake, Angling Lake, Ethel and Marie Lake, Manitokan Lake. This covered areas within WR51-55, WR40-45, WR33-34, WR10-11, and WR01, WR02-04, WR12-15, WR 22-25 Note: this year Margaurite Lake was not accessible due to wildfire closure; NW Muriel Lake was not surveyed due to lack of time/survey teams

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 4 to 19°C (Mean Temp 12°C)

Wind speed: 6 to 22 – Avg 11 km/hr. Wind direction: SE to S

Precipitation: N/A

Comments: 18 hr 30 min of visible light. Temps slightly below seasonal average (9 to 21C) (Scattered Clouds to Partly Cloudy. Winds above 20km/hr between 10AM – 1PM

Day 2: Temp. 9 to 20°C (Mean Temp 14°C)

Wind speed: 7 to 30 km/hr. Avg 14 km/hr. Wind direction: Easterly swinging to South and then back to North between noon and late evening

Precipitation: light showers mid morning, mid day, and during evening

Comments: Temps near seasonal average (9 to 21C). Overcast/Mostly Cloudy through day. Winds gusting to 30-40 km/hr during rain fronts.

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 1205.35 km; by vehicle 1031; on foot 44.8 km; by boat 30 km. Total Team Hours: 99.55hr; by vehicle 58 hr; on foot 27.55hr; by boat 2hr; Feederwatch 12hr.

Number of Species: 163 (+ 3 CW)

Number of Birds: 8504

Other species seen during count week: 3 – Cooper's Hawk(1), American Golden-Plover(75), and a single Dowitcher (1) (probably Long-Billed)

Highlights: The total species reported this year was below previous year's average, especially after count week species were added. Many migrant shorebird species were not encountered, and several other arctic or northern migrants had already passed through. The Cold Lake area was enjoying a fairly wet spring with good water levels in the wetlands. Weather conditions on Day 1 of the count were very good with the exception of some breezy conditions during the hotter periods of the day. Weather on Day 2 however had deteriorated with several rain squalls moving through the count area at various times of the day. A large wildfire (Burnt Lake fire) was burning to the NE of Cold Lake and resulted in some closed access in the NE portion of the circle. SE winds, fortunately, kept the smoke blowing away from the count area. On the evening of Day 1, lake and weather conditions allowed 8 participants to enjoy our first "pelagic tour" on the main lake on a pontoon boat owned by a friend of the group. We had attempted this over the past 3 years, but always were thwarted by conditions.

Highlights from our C list (birds observed on less than 25% of counts) were a large migratory staging of over 500 Sabine's Gulls on Cold Lake. Our "pelagic" outing allowed us some great viewing opportunities of these gulls as they fed out on the lake. Virginia Rail(2), Long-Eared Owl(1), American Tree Sparrow (2 separate sightings), and Lark Sparrow (2) - a species that appears to moving its breeding territory further north were other C list observations.

Our B list (observed on only 25-75% of counts) included Swainson's Hawk(2), a single Dowitcher species, Barred(1) and Great-Grey Owls(1), Black-Backed Woodpecker(2), Sedge Wren (2), Gray Catbird (1), Nashville Warbler (5), and Nelson's Sharp-Tailed Sparrow(5).

No previously un-reported May count species were observed on this year's count.

Crowsnest Pass Bird Count

Date: May 27-28, 2015

Compiler: Merylyn Liddell

Participants: Mike Bentley, Denise Coccioloni-Amatto, Judy Cooke, Dianne Cooper, Doug Dolman, Teresa Dolman, Shirley Enzsol, Adriana Greidanus, Dawn Hall, Kevin Knight, Merylyn Liddell, Pat Lucas, Karen Nicholson, Doug Nicholson, Ken Orich, Sheila Sowerby, Diane Stinson, Nel van Kamer, Weldon Vickers, Chris Weickert.

Area Covered: from Summit Lake at BC/Alberta border east to junction of Highways 3 & 22, north on 22, then west and north on side roads to the Gap Specific Locations covered - Day 1: Summit Lake, Crowsnest Lake, wetlands east of Visitor Centre, Allison Road, Chinook Lake, Willow Drive and wetlands to the west, roadways north of Hwy 3, areas within Crowsnest Pass municipal boundaries from East Hillcrest Bridge to the wetlands between Coleman and Blairmore, Connelly Rd., Lundbreck, Cowley, Todd Creek day use area. Day 2: Hwy 22 and connectors to the Gap

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 9 to 14°C

Wind speed: No wind
Precipitation: None
Comments: A pleasant day

Day 2: Temp. 4 to 12°C

Wind speed: nil to 30km/hr. Wind direction: NNE
Precipitation: negligible

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 308.25 km; by vehicle 326 ; on foot 22.25 km.
Total Team Hours: 50 hr; by vehicle 36.5 hr; on foot 13.5 hr.

Number of Species: 138 (+6 CW)

Number of Birds: 5,804 (+6 CW)

Other species seen during count week: Birds: Spruce Grouse, Gray Partridge, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Black-backed Woodpecker, Varied Thrush, Nashville Warbler

Mammals: Mule Deer (20), White-tailed Deer (4), Long-tailed Weasel (1), Richardson Ground Squirrel (13), Columbian Ground Squirrel (12), Muskrat (4), Coyote (4), Bighorn Sheep (1), Mountain Goat (1), Beaver (1), Red Squirrel (3), Chipmunk (1), Pika (heard)

Butterflies: cabbage white, blue gossamer, swallowtail

Other: Boreal Toad (1), Striped Chorus Frogs

Highlights: Long-billed Curlews in pursuit of ravens, two pairs of Harlequin Ducks, Vaux Swifts (a first for our count) and pleasant weather.

Fort McMurray/Wood Buffalo Wild Bird Club

Date: May 30-31, 2015

Compiler: Simone Marler

Participants: (22) Rebecca Baldwin, Chris Beierling, Carol Breen, Jean D'Souza, Jane Elser, Christopher Hansen, Todd Heakes, Priscilla Lai, Shauna Mackinnon, Simone Marler, Patricia Marlowe, Laurel McDonald, Seumas McGrath, Chris Murray, Alan Reeve, Danna Schock, Joann Skilnick, Christine Sparling, Emily Stairs, Stephen Stryde, Amelia Thornhill, Luis Villamil

Area Covered: Fort McMurray environs: S on Hwy 63 to Maqua Lake and east on Hwy 881 to Anzac; E to Saprae Creek; N to Loughheed Bridge; W on Tower Road; NW on AOSTRA Rd via Hwy 63.

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 3 to 20°C

Wind speed: Beaufort 3/Breeze Wind direction: NW

Precipitation: None

Day 2: Temp. 6 to 14°C

Wind speed: Windy; gusts to 28km/hr. Wind direction: check

Precipitation: Overcast, windy, rain (3.3mm)

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 472 km; by vehicle 430.5, 8km on golf cart; on foot 33.5 km. Total Team hours: 128.5 hr; by vehicle 64.25 hr; 34.5 hr by vehicle; on foot 29.75 hr.

Number of Species: 126 (+ 1 CW)

Number of Birds: 6135 (+ 1 CW)

Additional Species seen during count week: American Bittern

Highlights: Notable species included American Avocet (not fully mature) hanging out with Short-billed Dowitchers at the Anzac sewage lagoon, and lekking Sharp-tailed Grouse at the reclaimed Bison Lookout area. 15 Warbler species were recorded. There

was a good showing of raptors, including a Rough-legged Hawk. A Boreal Owl was good to see on the list this year. Common Nighthawks were reported by several count teams.

No shows compared to past lists include Cape May Warbler, American Pelican and Mergansers. There was one suspected Chestnut-sided Warbler heard but given the conditions, this could not be confirmed.

Kateneno Natural Area, Athabasca

Date: May 31, 2015

Compiler: James Lange

Participants: Lu Carbyn, James Lange

Area Covered: Kateneno Natural Area, Athabasca

Weather:

Temp. 12°C

Wind speed: light

Comments: mix of sun and clouds

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 5.5 km; Total Team Hours: 5 hr.

Number of Species: 17

Number of Birds: 37

Highlights: At Kateneno Natural Area we were hoping for a slight breeze (forecast was W 20 gusting to 40km/h) to keep the mosquitoes under control. Instead we got partial cloud, high humidity and almost calm conditions. Our total species includes a new species for the property, Olive-sided Flycatcher. We also saw 2 elk on the property. Although I have known of their presence in the Black Bear Provincial Grazing Reserve just to the south and sightings by other people, this was a treat for me!

Lac La Biche

Date: May 30-31, 2015

Compiler: Jennifer Okrainec

Participants: Linda Coumont, Will Coumont, Bob Dunn, Mary Dunn, Bernie Gauthier, Millie Gauthier, Dave Lawson, Kathy Lawson, Clara McArthur, Jennifer Mueller, Muriel Mueller, Cooper Okrainec, Jacob Okrainec, Jennifer Okrainec, Mary Tesolin, Don Welke, Jean Welke, Barbara Ann Wicker, George Wicker

Area Covered: Lac La Biche town and Lake area, Sir Winston Churchill Park, Missawawi Lake, Beaver Lake, touchwood & Shaw lake (Lakeland PP), Plamondon, Elinor lake area, Owl River area

Weather:

Day 1: Temp. 11to 19°C

Wind speed: 10to 30 km/hr. Wind direction: SE

Precipitation: 0, sunny and clear

Day 2: Temp. 10to 15°C

Wind speed: 12 to 15 km/hr. Wind direction: S

Precipitation: Raining and overcast

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 570 km; by vehicle 558 km; on foot 12 km. Total Team Hours: 92 hr; by vehicle 89 hr; on foot 3 hr.

Number of Species: 136

Number of Birds: 4511

Highlights: A Ring-necked Pheasant was identified by an experienced birder. Thrushes not singing very much, unusual.

Lethbridge

Date: May 30-31, 2015

Compiler: Teresa Dolman

Participants: Linda Cerney, Douglas Dolman, Teresa Dolman, Graeme Greenlee, Pat Greenlee, Stephanie Hancock, Jennifer Mather, Annette Orich, Ken Orich, Nola Orich, Reg Orich

Area Covered: Lethbridge and 50 Km radius

Weather:

Day 1: Temp. 9 to 17 °C

Wind speed: 4 to 21 km/hr. Wind direction: SE

Precipitation: 4.3 mm

Day 2: Temp. 12 to 26 °C

Wind speed: 17 to 46 km/hr. Wind direction: W

Precipitation: Trace

Team Distance/Hours: Total team mileage: 281 km; by vehicle 256 km; on foot 25 km

Total team hours: 27 hr; by vehicle 10.25 hr; on foot 16.75 hr.

Number of Species: 114 (+ 3 CW)

Number of Birds: 5341 (+ 3 CW)

Other species seen during count week: Bald Eagle, Say's Phoebe, Tennessee Warbler

Highlights: Turkey Vultures were seen for only the third time in the count's history.

After an absence of 18 years Lark Buntings were found this year, and after an absence of 14 years a Golden Eagle was recorded.

Medicine Hat

Date: May 24, 2015

Compiler: Marty Drut

Participants: (38) Barry Anderson, Dee Armstrong, Hugh Armstrong, Monica Bartha, Thelma Berg, Lisa Bey, Rick Carrier, Janet Connolly, Eileen Cowtan, Marty Drut, Liam Gale, Corlaine Gardner, Rob Gardner, Sue Higgins, Lauren Hider, Annalora Horch, Phil Horch, Lisa James, Jim Knelson, Corine Korf, Cam Lockerbie, Gary Martin, Dave McKenzie, Michael O'Shea, Jo-Anne Reynolds, Debbie Schank, Madison Schank, Dan Schiebelbein, Mark Schiebelbein, Lorrie Sielski, John Slater, Elaine Spitzer, Milt Spitzer, Donna Steele, Angela Turner, Ian Turner, Ben Velner, Rob Wapple

Area Covered: Medicine Hat and surrounding

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 22 to 8°C

Wind speed: 5 to 15 km/hr.

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 557.5 km; by vehicle 434; on foot 123.5 km. Total Team Hours: 99 hr; by vehicle 37 hr; on foot 52 hr. Feeder: 10 hr

Number of Species: 126 (+ 1 CW)

Number of Birds: 9,152 (+ 1 CW)

Other species seen during count week: Northern Saw-whet Owl

Highlights:

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.

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).

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

Milk River 2015

Date: May 23-24, 2015

Compiler: Bob Parsons

Participants: 16

Area Covered: Coutts north to Warner, then east to Etzicom, south to Pinhorn, then follow border back to Coutts.

Weather:

Day 1: Temp. 11 to 23°C

Precipitation: x

Comments: Clear am, cloudy noon onwards, light winds

Day 2: Temp. 12 to 21°C

Precipitation: x

Comments: Some sun, few clouds, light winds

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 1684 km; by vehicle 1657 km; on foot 27.5 km. Total Team Hours: 111 hr; by vehicle 95 hr; on foot 16 hr.

Number of Species: 137 (+ 5 CW)

Number of Birds: 22,520 (+5 CW)

Other species seen during count week: Common Merganser, Bobolink, Wilson's Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, House Finch

Highlights: 1 Burrowing Owl, 100 White-faced Ibis, 4 Caspian Terns, 1 Osprey, 1 Sandhill Crane, 154 Sanderling, 1 Bullocks Oriole, 1 Black headed grosbeak, 1 Black-capped Chickadee!

Taber-Vauxhall

Date: May 30-31, 2015

Compiler: Lloyd Bennett

Participants: Lloyd Bennett, Mary Bennett, Yolanda Bennett

Area Covered: Taber and Vauxhall areas

Weather:

Day 1: Temp: 8 to 18 °C

Wind speed: 5 to 19 km/hr. Wind direction: SE

Precipitation: nil

Day 2: Temp: 22-26 °C

Wind speed: 14-30 km/hr. Wind direction: SW

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 373 km; by vehicle 370 km; on foot 3 km

Total Team Hours: 17 hr; by vehicle 14 hr; on foot 3 hr.

Number of Species: 121 (+ 1 CW)

Number of Birds: 6864 (+ 1 CW)

Other species seen during count week: (1) Prairie Falcon

Highlights: A new species was added this year to the overall list; a single Pine Grosbeak was sighted in the town of Taber. Pine Grosbeaks are far more likely to be seen during the winter than in the spring or summer. For the second time only, a Clark's Grebe was recorded. Attesting to the increasing population of White-faced Ibis in Alberta, 17 birds were seen this year, compared to only 1 and 2 for the previous two years.

Wakomao Lake

Date: May 30, 2015

Compiler: Jim Lange

Participants: Jim Lange , Fred Wiley

Area Covered: agriculture farmland, lake, marsh, ponds, mixed boreal forest with mainly Black Spruce, White Spruce & Jackpine areas. Access is very good with a network of Range & Township roads dissecting the area slightly larger than a 10 km square.

Weather:

Temp. 11°C

Wind speed: 25km/h gusting to 40km/h

Wind direction: SE

Comments: Partly cloudy. Low water levels & strong winds resulted in low species count especially with shorebirds.

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 93 km. Total Team Hours: 10 hr.

Number of Species: 56

Number of Birds: 772

Highlights: This year we were operating with a handicap from Mother Nature before we even got close to Count Day and then she added 40+ km/h SE winds just to up the challenge. It started in winter with below average snow fall, then 2 weeks of really warm weather in January to melt what snow was there. Spring arrived in the area 3 weeks early, coupled with a lack of any rain since then. Add non-stop winds which sucked the water out of the small temporary wetlands. Lake levels were well below where they should have been at this time of year.

Shorebirds were very limited due to no habitat for them and the early spring meant a lot had gone through already. We did find one Turkey Vulture but not during our usual lunch stop on top of a high hill which overlooks the area. The Common Loons were where they should have been but Eared Grebes were totally absent on Wakomao L. (some years they are very abundant), Horned Grebes were absent, Cliff Swallows (usually under a bridge on the Redwater River were totally missed. No Sandhill Cranes or Great Blue Herons which nest beside the highway. The list of "have not's " exceeded the "have". The winds made songbird ID impossible unless it was very loud & close.

Waterton Lakes National Park

Date: June 6- 7, 2015

Compiler: Teresa Dolman

Participants: Bary Beck, Joy Beck, Lloyd Bennett, Yolanda Bennett, Ian Cruikshank, Douglas Dolman, Teresa Dolman, Donna Dubbelboer, John Dubbelboer, Fransi Hammell, Steve Knight, Pat Lucas, Joan McDonald, Malcolm McDonald, David Musto, Dianne Pachal, Jerry Pilny, Jeane Powell, Tara Powell, Gerald Romanchuk, Greg Wagner

Area Covered: Areas within the Park

Weather:

Day 1: Temp: 9 to 24 °C

Wind speed: 4 to 17 km/hr. Wind direction: Variable

Precipitation: nil

Day 2: Temp: 11 to 27 °C

Wind speed: 4 to 19 km/hr. Wind Direction: Variable

Precipitation: nil

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 328 km; by vehicle 275 km, on foot 53 km.

Total Team Hours: 51.5 hr; by vehicle 12 hr; on foot 39.5 hr.

Number of Species: 135

Number of Birds: 2282

Other species seen during count week: none

Highlights: This was a record-setting year! A total of 135 species of birds were recorded, exceeding the previous high of 133 set in 2008 (the Waterton May Species Count has been done every year since 1984, except for one missed year in 2006). The weather cooperated with warm temperatures, low winds and no rain. Twenty-one birders took part in the event, driving about 300 kilometers and walking about another 50 kilometers. No new bird species were added to the overall count list but Mourning Warblers were seen for only the second time in the count history and Solitary Sandpipers for only the third time. The biggest “missed species” was Golden Eagle. Gulls showed up in record numbers, perhaps attracted by hordes of tent caterpillars that were defoliating trees and shrubs. There were some species seen that are listed by the Waterton Park Bird Checklist as being *Very Rare* or *Accidental*. *Very Rare* species were American White Pelican, Swainson’s Hawk, Hammond’s Flycatcher, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Bank Swallow, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and House Sparrow. An *Accidental* species was Mourning Warbler.