

2009 MAY SPECIES COUNT for BIRDS

Provincial Summary

Compiled by Judy Boyd

The number of species was up this year: 270 to 280 and the number of individual birds also went up: 269,851 up from 211,229. In 2008, the most numerous species was the Tree Swallow with 13,085. Second was the Red-Winged Blackbird with 12,625. Third was the Franklin's Gull with 11,740. This year, the most numerous species was the Franklin's Gull with 37,211. Second was the Canada Goose with 13,347. Third was the Red-winged Blackbird with 13,266.

Last year 17 species were seen in only one location and 12 species were found in only two locations. This year, 27 species were seen in only one location and 12 species were found in only two locations around the province. Of the single sightings: Greater White-fronted Goose, Snow Bunting, Common Redpoll were each seen at Lac La Biche; Cackling Goose at Cold Lake (with a count week bird seen at Taber-Vauxhall); Wild Turkey at Cypress Hills; Great Egret at Brooks; Gyrfalcon at Cardston; Peregrine Falcon at Brooks; Ruddy Turnstone at Lac La Biche; Dunlin at Brooks (with a count week bird seen at Calgary); Long-billed Dowitcher at Brooks (with a count week bird seen at Calgary); Sabine's Gull at Cold Lake; Northern Pygmy-Owl and Northern Saw-whet Owl each seen at Claresholm; Common Poorwill at Cypress Hills; Lewis's Woodpecker, Red Crossbill each seen at Calgary; Northern Shrike at Medicine Hat; Western Bluebird at Crowsnest Pass; Wood Thrush at Brooks; Bohemian Waxwing at Cardston; Sedge Wren, Nashville Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler were each seen at Cold Lake; and Golden-crowned Sparrow at BowKanBirders.

Of the species found in two locations: Tundra Swans were seen at Calgary and Central Alberta;

Eurasian Wigeon were seen at Medicine Hat and Cardston; Yellow Rail at Calgary and Cold Lake; Hammond's Flycatcher at Banff and BowKanBirders (with count week birds seen at Crowsnest Pass); Pacific-slope Flycatcher at BowKanBirders and Calgary (with count week birds seen at Crowsnest Pass); Steller's Jay at Waterton and BowKanBirder; Mourning Warbler at Lac La Biche and Cold Lake; Canada Warbler at Cold Lake and Fort McMurray; Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow at Calgary and Cold Lake; Lapland Longspur at Fort McMurray and Lac La Biche; Rusty Blackbird at Fort McMurray and Lac La Biche (with count week birds seen at Milk River); and Pine Grosbeak at BowKanBirders and Claresholm.

Last year we had seven species seen in all areas. This year we had only five species seen in all areas: Canada Goose, Mallard, Northern Flicker, American Robin, and Yellow Warbler. Last year four species were found in all but one area and eleven species were observed in all count areas except two. This year three species (Blue-winged Teal, Tree Swallow and Red-Winged Blackbird) were found in all areas except one and eleven species (Bufflehead, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, American Crow, Swainson's Thrush Chipping Sparrow, Clay-coloured Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, and Brown-headed Cowbird) were found in all areas except two.

The Provincial Summary of the May Species Count is provided to all those interested as a free service of the Federation of Alberta Naturalists.

We welcome your comments!

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Banff

Date: May 31, 2009

Compiler: Mike McIvor

Participants: Jill Beleyne, Fumie Craven, Kyle (child) Craven, Tomo Fujimori, Carlos Garcia, Toni Hess, Masami Ito, Brenda Lepitzki, Dwayne Lepitzki, Diane McIvor, Mike McIvor, Maho Okamura, Rhonda Owchar, Peter Poole, Jill-Marie Spence, Rylan (child) Spence, Eva Sylvestre, Paul Sylvestre, Ed Whittingham, Mariko Yamada, Nana Yamada.

Area Covered: Banff and Lake Louise area

Weather:

Temp. 4 to 21°C

Wind speed: 0 to 5 km/hr.

Wind direction: west

Precipitation: 0

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team Mileage 170.5 km; by vehicle 142; on foot 28.5.

Total team hours 32 hr; by vehicle 11 hr; on foot 21 hr.

Number of Species: 85

Number of Birds: 707

Beauvais Lake Provincial Park

Date: May 28, 2009

Compiler: Teresa Dolman

Participants: Denise Cocioloni-Amatto, Douglas Dolman, Teresa Dolman, Marilyn Liddell, Lois Johnston, Bree Stefanson-Korobanik

Area Covered: Within Park boundaries

Weather:

Temp. 7 to 22°C

Wind speed: 7 to 26 km/hr.

Wind direction: west

Precipitation: nil

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage: 20 km; by vehicle 2, on foot 18 km.

Total team hours: 10.5 hr; by vehicle 0.5 hr; on foot 10 hr.

Number of Species: 61

Number of Birds: 376

Other species seen during count week: none

Highlights: There were three species which appeared for the first time in this 13-year old count: (3) Double-crested Cormorants, (2) Brown Creepers and (1) Wilson's Warbler. For the second time only, Turkey Vulture, Sandhill Crane and Townsend's Solitaire were recorded. The Sandhill Crane was sitting on a nest.

BowKan

Date: May 30 and 31, 2009 (June 1 for Kananaskis Country)

Compiler: Cliff Hansen

Participants: Cliff Hansen, Hugh Brook, Kevin Barker, Marion Barker, Andre Gareau, Mary Dumka, Dene Cooper, Jean Cooper, Anita Walker, Hanne Seidel, Rose Reid, Laura Reid, Dan Measer, Jason Leong, Monica Dragosz, Bert Dyck, Marilynn Dyck, Joel Duncan, Marg Jorgenson, Jim Jorgenson, Lee Sproule, and Barry Sproule.

Area Covered: The BowKan Birders area is a circle centred south of Exshaw. The area takes in the Bow Valley from (and including) Bow River Campground, just East of Canmore, to Nakoda Lodge along Highway 1A, Seebe and along the Trans-Canada to the Highway 40 overpass. To the North, all the valleys and mountains from Grotto to Yamnuska are included. To the South, all the valleys and mountains including Wind Ridge, Pigeon, Heart, McGillivray, Lorette and Highway 40 south to the bridge over the Kananaskis river on the road to the Nakiska Lodge are included.

Weather:

Day 1:

Temp. 27 to 9°C

Wind speed: 0 to 5 km/hr.

Wind direction: variable

Precipitation: nil

Comments: very pleasant weather

Day 2:

Temp. 26 to 9°C

Wind speed: 0 to 5 km/hr.

Wind direction: variable

Precipitation: nil

Comments: very pleasant weather

Day 2: (Kananaskis Country)

Temp. 27 to 9°C

Wind speed: 0 to 5 km/hr.

Wind direction: variable

Precipitation: nil

Comments: very pleasant weather

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage: 176.5 km; by vehicle 122, on foot 54.5 km.

Total team hours: 114 hr; by vehicle 4 hr.; on foot 110 hr.

Number of Species: 124

Number of Birds: 3199

Other species seen during count week: Cougar 1 (heard snarling in trees), Coyote 3, Elk 13, Mule Deer 8, White-tailed Deer 4, Bighorn Sheep 1, Muskrat 1, Snowshoe Hare 2, Red Squirrel 26, Columbian Ground Squirrel 50, and Yellow Pine Chipmunk 4.

Comments & Highlights: The “BowKan Birders” is an informal group of local naturalists who share an interest in enjoying and protecting our local wildlife and habitats. Loosely organized, with some sixty members, there is no President, Chairperson, Secretary or Treasurer. However, they do need a Coordinator currently covered by Cliff Hansen of Exshaw. Twice each year, end of May and the Christmas/New Year’s period, they fan out in the BowKan Birders designated area (a 15 km diameter circle centered on the north face of Mount McGillivray) and complete a species count for birds and mammals, and in May, include flowering plants. The main purpose of the information is to build a data bank that can be useful to any individual or organization that may require local environmental information.

We planned to complete our spring species count on the last full weekend of May, this year it fell on 30 and 31 May. It is the same weekend as most organizations in North America do their similar counts. It is a busy time of year and the demands of work, family and other species counts for participant time is fierce. On the scheduled weekend, no one was available to cover the bird

and mammal count in our portion of the Evan-Thomas Provincial Recreation Area and Highway 40 north to the Trans-Canada Highway (Des Allen, as in the past, completed the flowering plant count on schedule). It became necessary to reschedule the bird and mammal portion of the count. Joel Duncan from Calgary kindly re-arranged his schedule to assist us on the Monday, 01 June. A one day late count is much better than “no count” in this environmentally very important area.

Spring arrived late this year, in fact, repeated episodes of cold weather and snow almost to the end of May made it feel like winter would never end (more cold weather and snow was still to come in early June). Bird migration north was delayed and was still in progress during our count. Plant life was also delayed. Trees were sparsely leaved and most blooms were in their early stages. In the end, the innate pressure to migrate and to bloom in spite of the weather won out. During our count, pleasant weather prevailed and we recorded an above average count for bird species, number of birds, and for blooming plants.

Since our beginning in 1993, our average number of birds on May counts is 121 species covering 2848 birds (count day and count week data included). The corresponding numbers for this count are 124 species covering 3199 birds. The high and low corresponding numbers are 136 species (2003) with a low of 83 (1993), and 3765 birds (1999) with a low of 2001 (1993).

Although this bird count was above average, some changes in the distribution by species and group were noticeable. The numbers of most water birds, gulls (in fact down to zero), and shorebirds were noticeably down, for example, the numbers of Canada Geese, a usually high count species, were nearly half of average and few goslings were sighted. To compensate, there were significantly increased counts of swallows (particularly Bank and Cliff Swallows), Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and Pine Siskins.

Some highlights include the identification of a Western Kingbird (a second record since 1993), a Philadelphia Vireo (a first record), three Cape May Warblers (a first record), and two Golden-crowned Sparrows (a second record). The warbler and the vireo probably were still migrating north. Our count area is close to the outer edge of the range of the other birds. It is interesting to note that one Golden-crowned Sparrow wintered in Exshaw. Finally, one Western Flycatcher was reported (a fourth record). My up-to-date references tell me that this species designation has been divided into two separate but similar species listed as Pacific-slope and Cordilleran Flycatchers. Our sighting was probably the former as its range extends into the southern Alberta Rocky Mountains.

The highlight of the mammal count was the identification of one cougar. Although unseen, it did reveal itself to be in close proximity by a loud cat-like growl from behind a veil of trees. A very short time later, 11 elk were seen, crossing the Kananaskis River, and clearly departing the area. All other identifications and sightings were made up of the usual candidates.

Brooks/Lake Newell

Date: May 16 and 17, 2009

Compiler: Bob Parsons

Participants: 37 with a high level of expertise. Eight areas of Alberta and BC represented, plus one birder from Costa Rica.

Areas covered: All parks and townsites, grasslands, lakes, reservoirs, DU wetland basins, what woodlots we could find! One week earlier than usual, May long weekend is traditional.

Weather:

Generally overcast periods, some sun both days. 7-22 degrees, calm winds mostly.

Team Distance/Hours:

Team mileage 1764 km by vehicle; 29 km on foot. Team hours 172 hours by vehicle; 320 hours on foot

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage: 1793 km; by vehicle 1764, on

foot 29 km.

Total team hours: 492 hr; by vehicle 172 hr.; on foot 320 hr.

Number of Species: 161 (+ 6 cw)

Number of Birds: 67205 (+1 cw)

Other species seen during count week:

Highlights: New Species added to checklist: Wood Thrush, Gray-crowned Rosy Finch (3), Hairy Woodpecker, Broad-winged Hawk (2), Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. Species missed: Common Merganser, Lark Sparrow, Turkey Vulture, Burrowing Owl, Bobolink, Gray Catbird, Purple Finch. Surprises: Great Egret, 29 White-faced Ibis, 20 Caspian Tern, 22 Short-eared Owl, 3 Eurasian Wigeon. 22 new records were set for individual species high numbers including 1222 Whimbrel, 49 Great Horned Owls. Low Numbers: Most of the vireos, Brown Thrasher, Stilt Sandpiper, House Wren, Common Tern. Count Sponsors are DU Canada, EnCana, TransCanada Pipelines.

Buffalo Lake

Date: May 31, 2009

Compiler: Wayne Kinsella

Participants: Lee Carothers, Wayne Kinsella, Zoe Kisling, Sharon Mahoney, Barb Smith, Roy Wilson, Wilma Zurfluh.

Area Covered: Buffalo Lake to McKenzie Crossing and from east Stettler to the Red Deer River.

Weather:

Mainly clear with temperatures 15 to 20 °C and NW wind code 4

Team Distance/Hours:

Four parties walked 7 km in 3.5 hrs, drove 140 kms in 5 hrs and feeder watched for 4.5 hrs.

Number of Species: 76

Number of Birds: 1845

Calgary and Area

Date: May 30 and 31, 2009

Compiler: Brian Elder

Participants: Tim Allison, Sandy Ayer, Linda Bailey, John Bargman, Bruce Barnetson, Jim Black,

Phil Cram, Marcia Crawford, Bernie Diebolt, K. Donohue, J. Donohue, Joel Duncan, Jean Dunn, Brian Elder, A. Elliott, Jess Eustace, Joan Falcione, Lenora Flynn, Dick Flynn, Dave Gibson, Horst Grothman, Ian Halladay, Mike Harrison, Andrew Hart, Chris Havard, Ken Havard, Frank Hennessey, M. Huston, C. Kenny, Al Kimberly, Terry Korolyk, Karen Larsen, Bob Lefebvre, Don Magnusson, Simone Marler, Lynn Moore, Mike Mulligan, R. Parks, Jerry Pilny, Terry Poulton, N. Seneveriatne, Destin Skauge, Ena Spalding, Jim St. Laurent, Don Stiles, Bob Storms, Judy Swan, M. Swatschina, Tony Timmons, Hank Vanderpol, D. Vernon, Ray Woods, Robert Worona, G. Yaki, Colin Young, Lois Zwick, Walter Zwick

Area Covered: Calgary area – 80km radius centered on Centre St. bridge

Weather:

Day 1:

Temp. 0 to 22°C

Day 2:

Temp. 0 to 22°C

Precipitation: brief rain in some areas Sunday evening

Comments: very windy Sunday evening; not a factor at other times

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage: 4271 km; by vehicle 4079; on foot 192km.

Total team hours: 351 hr; by vehicle 208 hr; on foot 143 hr.

Note: on foot distance and hours includes cycling

Number of Species: 212 (+ 9 cw)

Number of Birds: 100,047

Other species seen during count week:

Peregrine Falcon, Broad-winged Hawk, Hudsonian Godwit, Dunlin, Pectoral Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, Calliope Hummingbird, Blackpoll Warbler and Bullock's Oriole

Highlights: Lewis's Woodpecker; record number of species and number of birds including over 30,000 Franklin's Gulls

Cardston

Date: May 30 and 31, 2009

Compiler: Shirley Sillito

Participants: Neldon & Priscilla Hatch, Meran & Liam Hinch, Ruth Le Roux, Ruth Olsen, Vickie Romeril, Don Shaw, Wendel Shaw, Weldon & Shirley Sillito, Michele Snyder, Mira Vanhala, Nancy West

Area Covered: Cardston, Woolford PP, Kimball Park, Police Lake PP, Mountain View, Leavitt, Glen Hill Park

Weather:

Day 1:

Temp. 10 to 15°C

Wind speed: 5 to 30 km/hr.

Wind direction: SW

Precipitation: nil

Day 2:

Temp. 10 to 20°C

Wind speed: 0 to 5 km/hr.

Wind direction: SW

Precipitation: nil

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team Mileage 472.5 km; by vehicle 455; on foot 17.5 km.

Total team hours 58.5 hr; by vehicle 48.5 hr; on foot 10 hr.

Number of Species: 126 (+ 2 cw)

Number of Birds: 4757 (+ 2 cw)

Other species seen during count week: Upland Sandpiper, Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Highlights: This count set a new record high of 126 species, breaking the old record by two. Six species were seen for the first time – Turkey Vulture, Northern Goshawk, Gyrfalcon, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Pileated Woodpecker and Winter Wren. Other seldom-seen species of interest were Eurasian Wigeon, Bobolink and Brewer's Sparrow.

Central Alberta

Date: May 30 and 31, 2009

Compiler: Judy Boyd

Participants: Jerry Alderson, Marion Alderson, Jean Bargholz, Bud Bargholz, Brian Biggs, Dianne

Bilous, Garry Bilous, Myron Bjorge, Karin Bjorge, Tony Blake, Tyra Bowerman, Judy Boyd, Larry Boyd, Lois Burkenshaw, Phil Burkenshaw, Vivian Busat, Claudia Cameron, Dave Cook, Mary Coughlin, Eileen Ford, Jordan Ford, Laurel Ford, Stewart Ford, Tom Ford, Bertha Ford, Harry Ford, Ray Fraess, Bernice Hafner, Dorothy Hazlett, Bill Heinsen, Tom Hoskins, Gail Hughes, Carol Kelly, Jessie Kinley, Myron Kinley, Keith Kline, Janice Lawrence, Victor Lawrence, Mark Lawrence, Jim Leslie, Mark Meunier, Ruby Meunier, Heather Montgomery, Bonnie Mullen, Jean Paton, Doug Paton, Shirley Paton, Doug Pedersen, Sue Shewkenek, Doug Slack, Joanne Susut, Joan Susut, Jean Wood, Shirley Zombori

Area Covered: Central Alberta covers 27 circles. Of these, this year 17 were covered and 10 were not. The best coverage was the circle that included the City of Red Deer. Other areas covered were Zone 2 (Sylvan Lake), Zone 3 (Gull Lake/Bentley), Zone 4 (Lacombe), Zone 5 (Joffre, Ellis Bird Farm), Zone 6 (east of Penhold), Zone 7 (Penhold, Innisfail), Zone 8 (Dickson Dam, Medicine River Wildlife Centre), Zone 9 (Leslieville), Zone 10 (north of Leslieville), Zone 15 (Alix), Zone 16 (Delburne/Lousana), Zone 17 (Bigelow Reservoir), Zone 18 (Davey Lake), Zone 20 (James River Bridge, Garrington), Zone 21 (Caroline, Crammond), Zone 26 (Dry Island Buffalo Jump).

Weather:

Day 1:

Temp. 8 to 25°C

Wind speed: 0 to 50 km/hr.

Wind direction: variable

Precipitation: nil

Day 2:

Temp. 2 to 25°C

Wind speed: 0 to 39 km/hr.

Wind direction: variable

Precipitation: nil

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team Mileage 1140.6 km; by vehicle 1036.6 (including quad, boat, 4 wheel cart); on foot 94 km; horseback 10 km.

Total team hours 140 hr + 10 minutes; by vehicle 77.75 hr + 10 minutes (including quad, boat,

kayak); on foot 60.25 hr.; horseback 2 hr. 69.5 hr + 10 minutes feeder watching

Number of Species: 146 (+2 cw)

Number of Birds: 19033 (+2 cw)

Other Species seen during count week:

American Redstart, Rufous Hummingbird

Highlights: Our count of individual birds went up from 16192 last year to 19032. The number of species though went down from 153 species to 145. We also had the highest number of counters (54) since 2001.

We had some record highs this year: 1506 Canada Geese, 374 Gadwall, 848 Mallard, 61 Green-winged Teal, 172 Canvasback, 106 Ring-necked Duck, 160 Bufflehead, 100 Common Goldeneye, 617 Ruddy Duck, 81 Double-crested Cormorant, 8 Osprey, 21 Northern Harrier, 7 Black-necked Stilt, 77 American Avocet, 13 Lesser Yellowlegs, 2259 Franklin's Gull, 836 Ring-billed Gull, 2 Barred Owl, 5 Great Gray Owl, 26 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 38 Downy Woodpecker, 29 Hairy Woodpecker, 36 Northern Flicker, 7 Western Wood-Pewee, 2 Alder Flycatcher, 16 Eastern Phoebe, 41 Eastern Kingbird, 6 Gray Jay, 45 Blue Jay, 399 American Crow, 83 Common Raven, 143 Purple Martin, 94 Barn Swallow, 7 Boreal Chickadee, 35 White-breasted Nuthatch, 20 Marsh Wren, 247 American Robin, 26 Yellow-rumped Warbler, 6 Western Tanager, 59 Vesper Sparrow, 179 Savannah Sparrow, 27 Dark-eyed Junco, 27 Rose-breasted Grosbeak, 2 Bobolink, 1052 Red-winged Blackbird, 122 Brown-headed Cowbird, 37 Purple Finch, 34 House Finch 423, Pine Siskin and 197 American Goldfinch.

First time ever: 23 Forster's Tern, 1 Brown Creeper, 1 American Dipper and 1 Cassin's Finch

Claresholm

Date: May 30 and 31, 2009

Compiler: Grace Norgard

Participants: Jason Attwell, Ruth Attwell, Rob Chisholm & family, Don Clark, Shirley Clark, Gary Cotter, Nola Cotter, Carley Egger, Hayley Egger,

Kerry Hart, Audrey Helmer, Betty Hoare, Mike Hoare, Lawrence Hutchinson, Joan Larson, Leo Larson, Stan Lewis, Debbie Lozeman, Judy Lucas, Ellis Norgard, Grace Norgard, Jeremy Norgard, Jack Peacock

Area Covered: 40-km radius around Claresholm, including Porcupine Hills

Weather:

Day 1:

Temp. 20 to 30°C

Wind speed: 31 to 56 km/hr.

Wind direction: S

Precipitation: nil

Day 2:

no information given

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage 306 km; by vehicle 300; on foot 6 km.

Total team hours: 40 hr; by vehicle 28 hr; on foot 2 hr; watching feeders 10 hr.

Number of Species: 129 (+ 3 cw)

Number of Birds: 5027 (+ 3 cw)

Other species seen during count week: Alder Flycatcher, Tennessee Warbler, White-throated Sparrow

Highlights: Two new species were added to the count list - a Northern Pygmy-Owl and a Barred Owl were both identified by call in the Porcupine Hills west of Claresholm. For only the second time Harris's Sparrow and Pine Grosbeak were recorded, and for only the third time Northern Saw-whet Owl, Bullock's Oriole and Pectoral Sandpiper were tallied.

Cold Lake

Date: May 30 and 31, 2009

Compiler: Ted Hindmarch

Participants: Total 18: Local Participants: Phil Shore, Bill Bretsch, Nancy and Ron Donnelly, Norm Parrish, Carol Humerstone, Wes and Iris English, Bryan Simpson; Chris and Bob Etue of Rapid View Sask; Vivian Elias, John Ollerenshaw, Bruce Morito, Marilyn Peruniak and Geoff Peruniak of Athabasca AB; and input from Tom Hince, Paul Pratt of Ontario, who were scouting

the Cold Lake count area preparing for an Alberta Big Day

Area Covered: 25Mi RADIUS COUNT

CIRCLE CENTER 5327.30N 11030.00W

Cold Lake Provincial Park, Cold Lake Centre Bay, English Bay, North Bay, HorseShoe Bay and Marina, Jesse Lake, Moose Lake, Angling Lake, Ethel and Marie Lake. This covered areas within WR51-55, WR40-45, WR33-34, WR10-11, and WR01; due to team limitations the W and NW portions of the Count Circle (Manatokan, Margaruite, Crane, Tucker Lake areas which includes WR02-04, WR12-15, WR 22-25) did not get covered this year.

Weather:

Day 1:

Temp. 9 to 20°C

Wind speed: 7 to 28 km/hr. Avg 14 km/hr.

Wind direction: began SSE, moved through N to W through course of day.

Precipitation: period of light showers around noon. Comments: Partly to mostly cloudy

Day 2:

Temp. 5 to 19°C

Wind speed: 9 to 28 km/hr. Avg 13 km/hr. Gsts to 37 km/hr in early afternoon/early evening.

Wind direction: W to WNW

Precipitation: n/a until 9 p.m. Showers through late evening.

Comments: scattered/partly to mostly cloudy

Team Distance/Hours:

8 teams.

Total team mileage: 691.3 km; by vehicle 607.8 km; on foot 61.5 km; canoe 22 km.

Total team hours: 81.5 hr; by vehicle 30 hr; on foot 39.25 hr; canoe 10 hr.

Number of Species: 170 (+ 6 cw)

Number of Birds: 5733 (+ 8 cw)

Other species seen during count week: Virginia Rail (1), Barred Owl (1), Long-eared Owl (2), Common Nighthawk (2), Olive-sided Flycatcher (1), Wilson's Warbler (1), Lapland Longspur (flock).

Highlights: The moderately windy conditions made birding from the vehicle less productive than normal with birds. Better results were achieved on

foot. Otherwise the weather was pleasant for the participants. Overall area coverage and distance travelled was down as more time was spent on foot. Canoe travel was also impacted, and restrained to sheltered areas. Cool, wet and late spring delayed migration, so the fact that the last May weekend fell right at the end of the month made an positive impact on count results. Several of the areas more experienced birders were unavailable for the count, so we were fortunate to have a group from Athabasca come in to assist with the Cold Lake Provincial Park (south) area (there 2nd time joining our count).

The group was especially blessed to meet up with Tom Hince and his birding partner Paul Pratt, who were scouting in the Cold Lake count area in preparation for an Alberta Big Day. From 1983 to 1995, Tom was senior park naturalist and resident birding expert at Point Pelee National Park and now runs a B&B and bird guiding business in that area. (<http://www.netcore.ca/~peleetom/webdoc4.html>). They provided their input over the two days which helped fill in several gaps in our list, and added such special reports as Sabine's Gull (12 near Cold Lake Marina) and count week Common Nighthawk and Virginia Rail. As a note, Tom and Paul went on to complete an incredibly successful Big Day: They started in Cold Lake at midnight and finished at Pakowki Lake at 9:30 pm with 207 species for the big day on June 2nd (a new Alberta record by 29 species).

Other sightings of interest was a Cinnamon Teal in a pond just outside of Cold Lake and 3 Whimbrels at Moose Lake. Both only observed on 1 previous count.

Coyote Lake

Date: May 30 and 31, 2009

Compiler: Javan Green

Participants: Javan Green, Penny Green

Area Covered: Warburg area, including Coyote Lake and sections of Strawberry Creek

Weather:

Day 1:

Temp. 5 to 20°C

Day 2:

Temp. 5 to 20°C

Team Distance/Hours:

information not available

Number of Species: 80 (+9 cw)

Number of Birds: 709

Other species seen during count week: Great Blue Heron, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Alder Flycatcher, Barn Swallow, Orange-crowned Warbler, Western Meadowlark

Crooked Creek/Athabasca

Date: May 30 and 31, 2009

Compiler: Deidre Griffiths

Participants: Deidre Griffiths, Jack Sherman, Joan Sherman

Area Covered: ~4 km² (Crooked Lake Study Area 11 km²)

Weather:

Day 1:

Temp. 9 to 17°C

Wind speed: 0 to 30 km/hr.

Wind direction: WNW - NW until late afternoon, dropping to 20-25 km/hr.

Precipitation: trace a.m.

Comments: wind negative factor for both water and land birds; detectability/singing reduced.

Day 2:

Temp. 6 to 15°C

Wind speed: 20 to 35 km/hr.

Wind direction: NW

Precipitation: 2 mm (overnight and a.m.)

Comments: wind again negative factor until decreased through afternoon. 0 km/hr by early evening. Sun/cloud afternoon.

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage 49 km; by vehicle 4 km; on foot 45 km.

Total team hours 39.5 hr; by vehicle 0.5 hr; on foot 39hr.

Number of Species: 81 (+ 10 CW)

Number of Birds: 1311 (+27 CW)

Other species seen during count week: White-winged Scoter (8), Surf Scoter (6), Cinnamon Teal (2), Sharp-shinned Hawk (1), American Coot (2), Barred Owl (1), Common Nighthawk (2), Ruby-throated Hummingbird (1), Philadelphia Vireo (1), Gray-cheeked Thrush (3).

Highlights: Cinnamon Teal (second consecutive year in same site), Surf Scoter (not present every year), "Audubon's" warbler (1 and male, first record - included in Yellow-rumped Warbler number). Other: here, by end of May migration not complete (see Count week list). Additional species (nesters) arrive through first half of June; others increase in number; still others leave continuing migration. However, diversity of owls and hawks low in 2009, as well as some songbirds.

Crowsnest Pass

Date: May 30 and 31, 2009

Compiler: Dawn Hall

Participants: Denise Coccioloni-Amatto, Dawn Hall, Sandra Impens, Herald Kane, Marilyn Liddell, Paul Larson, Karen Larter, Pat Lucas, Keith McClary, Phil Nicholas, Linda Ransome, Peter Sherrington, Jenice Smith +2, Christopher Smith and James Tweedie

Area Covered: Crowsnest Pass

Weather:

Day 1:

Temp. 7° to 25 °C

Wind speed: 0 to 65 km/hr.

Wind direction: North

Precipitation: none

Comments: very windy

Day 2:

Temp. 11° to 24°C

Wind speed: 0 to 54 km/hr.

Wind direction: North

Precipitation: none

Comments: Overcast, sunny and partly cloudy

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage: 160 km; by vehicle 150; on foot 10 km.

Total team hours: 15 hr; by vehicle 7.5 hr; on foot 7.5 hr.

Number of Species: 73 (+ 55 cw)

Number of Birds: 550 (+ 453 cw)

Other species seen during count week:

Mammals: Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrel (1), Moose (1), Beaver (1), Muskrat (1), Coyote (3), Columbian Ground Squirrels (many), Red Squirrels (7), White-tailed Deer (14). Amphibians: Western Toad (1), Boreal Chorus Frogs. Butterflies: Swallow Tails, Mourning Cloak

Highlights: Harlequin Duck, Ferruginous Hawk, Bullock's Oriole, Long-billed Curlew, Bobolink, Lazuli Bunting, Black-headed Grosbeak, Winter Wren, Brown Creeper, European-collared Dove, Rock Wren, Wood Duck, Veery, Indigo Bunting, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Fox Sparrow, MacGillivray's Warbler and a Bald Eagles' nest with one Eaglet.

Cypress Hills Provincial Park

Date: May 30, 2009

Compiler: Jennifer Stroh and Darian Kath

Participants: Bob Frew, Kari Gohdes, Stewart Guy, Darian Kath, Brigitte Lemay, Dave McKenzie, Mike O'Shea, Fanny Provencher, Milt and Elaine Spitzer, Jennifer Stroh, and Ben Velner.

Area Covered: including the Elkwater townsite, roads/trails within the park, and immediate area outside of the park

Weather:

Temp. 9° to 27°C

Wind speed: 11 to 24 km/hr.

Wind direction: WNW

Precipitation: none

Comments: clear and slightly above average

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage: 151.6 km; by vehicle 125.2; on foot 26.4 km.

Total team hours: 24 hr; by vehicle 11 hr; on foot 13 hr.

Number of Species: 96

Number of Birds: 1669

For Far Park

Date: May 31, 2009

Compiler: Jim Lange

Participants: Jim Lange

Area Covered: For Far Park and small boreal forest at Westlock/Athabasca County line. off Sec. #663.

Weather:

Temp. 7 to 12°C

Wind speed: 20 to 40 km/hr.

Wind direction: NW

Precipitation: none

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage 16 km; by vehicle 14 km; on foot 2 km.

Total team hours 8 hr; by vehicle 0.5 hr; on foot 6 hr; standing and sitting at the lake 1.5 hr.

Number of Species: 47

Number of Birds: 127

Highlights: Northern Goshawk flying slowly over tree tops, just like a Red-tail. Never seen one fly so slow!

Fort McMurray

Date: May 30 and 31, 2009

Compiler: Cathy Mountain

Participants: Linda Ball, Valerie Cooper, Jane Elser, Alison Finstad, Cheryl Freeman, Sharlene Graves, Bernice Grey, Robert Grey, Tom Klein, Cathy Mountain, Deborah Pollen, Vern Pollen, Christine Sparling, Steven Stryde, Margo (Dead-Eye) Wilson.

Area Covered: urban, roadside, hiking trails, horse pasture, mixed forest, riverside, ponds/slough, lakes, gravel pit, peat moss pit, muskeg, landfill. 7 backyard bird feeders were also counted.

Weather:

Day 1:

Temp. 10°C to 18°C

Wind speed: 5 to 10 km/hr.

Wind direction: W

Precipitation: none

Comments: One of our members reports that just outside city limits the beavers have flooded about

2/3 of the peat moss area and it has become a birding hot spot. Just north of this area is the horse lease where he was able to confirm a pair of Sandhill Cranes appeared to be making a home there. (Beavers have also made this area into a series of ponds.)

Day 2:

Temp. 5°C to 10°C

Wind speed: 10 to 15 km/hr. with gusts of 28 km/hr.

Wind direction: NW

Precipitation: 2 – 5 mm

Comments: Cooler than normal temperatures.

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage: 470 km; by vehicle 400 km; on foot 67 km; kayak: 3 km.

Total team hours: 90 hr; by vehicle 45 hr; on foot 43 hr; by kayak 2 hr.

Number of Species: 129 (+ 1 cw)

Number of Birds: 6954 (+ 1 cw)

Other species seen on count week: June 1: A Broad-winged Hawk was seen at Shell Jackpine Mine Site

Highlights: A member saw a Baltimore Oriole in a plum tree in her yard May 26.

Lac La Biche

Date: May 23 and 24, 2009

Compiler: Jennifer Okrainec

Participants: John & Joyce Charchun, Bob & Mary Dunn, Jim Gammon, Stan Gosche, Carol Gosche, Tim Gosche, Bernie Guathier, Janos Kovacs, Mel Kuprowsky, Dave & Kathy Lawson, Muriel & Jennifer Mueller, Jennifer Okrainec, Cathy Scott, Brian Stephen, Dan Stoker, Terry Thormin, Elaine Tosczak, Clark Watson, Don & Jean Welke, George & Barbara Ann Wicker, Percy Zalesky.

Area Covered: Lac La Biche Town site, West to Plamondon and Hylo, North to Avenir and the Alpac K road – Hwy 881, East to Lakeland Provincial Park and PRA – Touchwood Lake, South to Kikino Metis Settlement, Frenchmen Lake

Weather:

Day 1:

Temp. 0 to 22°C

Wind speed: 2 to 5 km/hr.

Precipitation: 0

Day 2:

Temp. 5 to 20°C

Wind speed: 0 to 4 km/hr.

Wind direction: South

Precipitation: 0

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage: 1095 km; by vehicle 1075; on foot 20 km

Total team hours: 79 hr; by vehicle 58 hr; on foot 21 hr.

Number of Species: 178

Number of Birds: 14286

Sir Winston Churchill Provincial Park

Date: May 23, 2009

Compiler: Stan Gosche

Participants: Carol Gosche, Stan Gosche, Tim Gosche, Janos Kovacs, Brian Stephen, Dan Stoker, Terry Thormin, Percy Zalesky.

Area Covered: Sir Winston Churchill Park LLB 54° 49' 21.79604" N, 111° 53' 13.13559" W
Coordinate Source: Approximate map coordinates.
Dominant Habitat: Mixed Wood Forest. Visited Habitats: Lake, Mixed Wood Forest, Pond / Slough

Weather:

Temp. 5°C to 22°C

Windspeed: 2 to 5 km/hr. – some smoke drift
Comments: clear, few clouds

Team Distance/Hours:

Total mileage: information not available.

Total team hours: 14 hours; all on foot

Number of Species: 110 (+ 2 cw)

Number of Birds: 3426 (+ 5 cw)

Other species seen on count week: Harris' Sparrow (4), Baltimore Oriole (1).

Highlights: Notable observation was that the early date this year resulted in more migrants and less breeding birds. Eastern warblers were not here in good numbers yet. 1 Upland Sandpiper and Harris

Sparrows were pleasant surprises.

Lethbridge

Date: May 30 and 31, 2009

Compiler: Teresa Dolman

Participants: Linda Cerney, Teresa Dolman, Graeme & Patricia Greenlee, Judy Hazinoff, Del Huget, Jennifer Mather, Ken Orich, Jay Yanke

Area Covered: parks within City limits

Weather:

Day 1:

Temp. 14 to 31°C

Wind speed: 11 to 44 km/hr.

Wind direction: NW

Precipitation: nil

Day 2:

Temp. 12 to 25°C

Wind speed: 4 to 26 km/hr.

Wind direction: N

Precipitation: nil

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage: 41 km; by vehicle 12; on foot 29 km

Total team hours: 20 hr; by vehicle 1.5 hr; on foot 18.5 hr.

Number of Species: 80 (+ 4 cw)

Number of Birds: 1666 (+ 7 cw)

Other species seen during count week: Great Blue Heron (1), Tennessee Warbler (2), Blackpoll Warbler (3), Northern Waterthrush (1)

Highlights: The total of 80 species seen was far lower than the long-term average of 117, but can be accounted for by two facts: low participation and the restriction of observations to sites within city limits. The absence of observations from rural areas, especially wetlands, resulted in species such as Northern Pintail, Lesser Scaup, Marbled Godwit, Wilson's Phalarope, Cliff Swallow and Brewer's Blackbird being missed entirely for the first time in the 33-year history of this count. Even so, one "new" species was added to the list – a Turkey Vulture just made it "under the wire" at about 7 pm on Sunday evening. For only the third time in its history, the count tallied Yellow-breasted Chat.

Medicine Hat

Date: May 24, 2009

Compiler: Marty Drut

Participants: Rick Carrier, Eileen Cowtan, Marty Drut, Val Felesky, Corlaine Gardner, Dale Holmes, Lisa Holmes, Annalora Horch, Phil Horch, Jim Knelson, Cam Lockerbie, Jim Marshall, Valerie Martins, Bernice Morrison, Michael O’Shea, Tina Regehr, Jo-Anne Reynolds, Jennifer Roberts, Dan Schiebelbein, Mark Schiebelbein, Jan Scott, Elaine Spitzer, Milt Spitzer, Ben Velner, Mike Velner

Area Covered: 25 km circle around Medicine Hat

Weather:

No weather data recorded

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage: 312 km; by vehicle 76; on foot 236 km

Total team hours: 86.25 hr; by vehicle 35.75 hr; on foot 50.5 hr.

Number of Species: 127

Number of Birds: 10,297

Other species seen within 3 days: No species seen exclusively during count week.

Highlights: 2009 was another great year as there were 11 species with recorded high counts, including an all time high for Eurasian wigeon (see Table 1 below). This occurred despite slight decreases in total participants, kilometres covered, and hours spent in the field. Many thanks to all those who volunteered their time this year!

New species observed: None.

Table 1. 2009 Spring Bird Count All Time High and Low Observations.

Species	High
Previous High	Year
Gadwall	176
88	2008
Eurasian Wigeon	6
1	1996

Bald Eagle	7
3	Numerous
Red-tailed Hawk	19
17	2008
Eurasian-collared Dove	7
5	Numerous
Downy Woodpecker	24
22	1990
Tree Swallow	305
204	2008
Violet-green Swallow	36
29	2002
Blue Jay	18
9	Numerous
American Robin	894
819	2008
Clay-coloured Sparrow	168
153	1996
Killdeer	26
30	1993

Several species (gadwall, bald eagle, red-tailed hawk, tree swallow, violet-green swallow, American robin, and clay-coloured sparrow) with all time highs observed in 2009 are native species that are relatively common in the Medicine Hat area during spring and summer. Two of our more common year-round residents (downy woodpecker and blue jay) also had highs this year. Of note is that gadwall, red-tailed hawk, tree swallow, and American robin beat previous highs that were just observed in 2008.

Less frequently seen species observed in 2009 included snow goose (1), Eurasian wigeon (6 – ALL TIME HIGH), rough-legged hawk (1), greater yellowlegs (1), willow flycatcher (1),

eastern phoebe (1), and lazuli bunting (1).

The top five for 2009 were: American robin (894), European starling (878), red-winged blackbird (634), Canada goose (596), and house sparrow (482).

Milk River/Writing-on-Stone

Date: May 23 and 24, 2009

Compiler: Bob Parsons

Participants: 9

Area Covered: Pinhorn Grazing Reserve, coulees, badlands, native grasslands but mainly Verdigris Lake, Crow Indian, Vernon Flats DU, Etzicom, west Pakowki Lake. Also riparian areas along Milk River, all in all no other area like it in Alberta. It should be noted that there were good wet patches in many fields so fair shorebird numbers this year.

Weather:

Calm mornings, some winds in afternoon from the west. A few scattered showers. Generally 10-20 degrees.

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage: 555 km; by vehicle 543; on foot 12 km.

Total team hours: 53 hr; by vehicle 41 hr; on foot 12 hr.

Number of Species: 134 (+ 12 cw)

Number of Birds: 13926 (+ 13 cw)

Highlights: Highlights include 24 new broken records plus unusual species such as Snow Goose, 2 American Pipits, 7 Sharp-tailed grouse, Red-naped Sapsucker, White-rumped Sandpiper. Low numbers: Baird's Sparrow, Brewer's Sparrow, House Wren, Golden Eagle, Bobolink. Again, the Chat showed up on the Monday after the weekend!! New Species: Solitary Sandpiper, American Pipit, Eurasian-collared Dove (9), Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Species missing: Burrowing Owl, Clark's Grebe, Grasshopper Sparrow, McCowan's Longspur, Black-necked Stilt, Black-headed Grosbeak. Count sponsored by the Wildbird General Store, EnCana Energy, TransCanada Pipelines. Special thanks to Del Huget who did all the scouting this year.

Taber/Vauxhall

Date: May 30 and 231, 2009

Compiler: Lloyd Bennett

Participants: Bruce Bennett, Jenie Bennett, Lloyd Bennett, Yolanda Bennett, Glen Gardner, Murray Gardner, Ilene Levagood, Ron Levagood

Area Covered: Taber and Vauxhall areas, Purple Springs Dunes

Weather:

Day 1:

Temp. 8 to 30°C

Wind speed: 5 to 30 km/hr.

Wind direction: SW

Precipitation: nil

Day 2:

not available

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage: 819.5 km; by vehicle 812; on foot 7.5 km.

Total team hours: 44.5 hr; by vehicle 27 hr; on foot 6.5 hr; watching feeders 11 hr

Number of Species: 132 (+ 5 cw)

Number of Birds: 6813 (+ 5 cw)

Other Species seen during count week:

Cackling Goose, Common Merganser, Say's Phoebe, Mountain Bluebird, McCowan's Longspur

Highlights: Two "new" species appeared on this count - Yellow-breasted Chat and Dark-eyed Junco. For only the third time a Western Tanager was seen.

Wakomao Lake

Date: May 30, 2009

Compiler: Jim Lange

Participants: Jim Lange, Fred Wiley

Area Covered: Wakomao Lake and Bouchard Lake and all areas within 10 km block, farmland, pine, etc.

Weather:

Temp. 11 to 18°C

Wind speed: 20 to 30 km/hr.

Wind direction: NW-NE

Precipitation: none

Comments: cloudy in AM, mainly sunny in PM.

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage: 84 km; by vehicle 84 km; on foot 0 km.

Total team hours: 9.5 hr; by vehicle 9.5 hr; on foot 0 hr.

Number of Species: 68

Number of Birds: 794

Highlights: High number of avocets

Waterton Lakes National Park

Date: June 6 and 7, 2009

Compiler: Teresa Dolman

Participants: Lloyd & Yolanda Bennett, Anna Lee-Carswell, Mary Coleman, Doug & Teresa Dolman, Randy & Patricia Jensen, Harkirin & Jogendra Khalsa, Kim Pearson

Area Covered: Within Park boundaries

Weather:

Day 1:

Temp. 0 to 3°C

Wind speed: 0 to 17 km/hr.

Wind direction: NE

Precipitation: 23mm (as 22 cm snow)

Comments: About 5 cm of snow at lower elevations; 22 cm at higher elevations

Day 2:

Temp. -2 to 9°C

Wind speed: 2 to 11 km/hr.

Wind direction: E

Precipitation: 2 mm

Comments: A much nicer day, a mix of sun and cloud.

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage: 336km; by vehicle 314; on foot 22 km

Total team hours: 38.5 hr; by vehicle 22hr; on foot 15.5 hr; watching feeders 1 hr.

Number of Species: 126 (+ 1 cw)

Number of Birds: 2274 (+ 1 cw)

Other species seen within 3 days: Baird's Sparrow

Highlights: Two "new" species were added to the count list – a single Caspian Tern far out of its normal Alberta range and 68 Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches which no doubt were pushed to lower

elevations by the snow. The snow on Saturday forced many passerines to forage along road-sides so that record high numbers of several species were counted such as Swainson's Thrush, American Pipit, Vesper Sparrow and White-crowned Sparrow. For only the second time Wood Duck and Redhead were observed. Despite the cold, snowy weather the number of species seen was third-highest in the 25-year history of the count.

Yamniska

Date: May 29 and 30, 2009

Compiler: Mike McIvor

Participants: Leanne Allison, Barb Bertch, Reg Bunyan, Fumie Craven, Kyle (child) Craven, Dave Dalman, Heather Dempsey, Eli (child) Whittington, Jesse Whittington, Jeannette Fish, Wendy Francis, Menno Froese, Tomo Fujimori, Zev (child) Heuer, Masami Ito, Diane McIvor, Mike McIvor, Chuck O'Callaghan, Peter Poole, Bob Smith, Gareth Thomson, Ed Whittingham, Jack Whitworth, Marion Whitworth, Charlotte Young.

Area Covered: Yamnuska

Weather:

Day 1:

Temp. 8 to 23°C

Wind speed: 0 to 10 km/hr.

Wind direction: West

Precipitation: 0

Day 2:

Temp. 5 to 24°C

Wind speed: 10 to 30 km/hr.

Wind direction: West

Precipitation: 0

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage: 71 km; by vehicle 30 km; on foot 41 km.

Total team hours: 27.5 hr; by vehicle 1 hr; on foot 26.5 hr.

Number of Species: 70

Number of Birds: 552

2009 May Bird Count Centers in Alphabetical order, with Codes

Banff	Bnff	Cypress Hills Provincial Park	CypH
Beauvais Lake Provincial Park	Beau	For Far Park	Ffar
BowKan	B-K	Fort McMurray	FMcM
Brooks/Lake Newel	Brks	Lac La Biche	LLB
Buffalo Lake	Buff	Lethbridge	Leth
Calgary and Area	CGY	Medicine Hat	MedH
Cardston	Card	Milk River/Writing-on-Stone	Milk
Central Alberta	C-AB	Sir Winston Churchill Provincial Park	SWC
Claresholm	Clar	Taber/Vauxhall	TabV
Cold Lake	Cold	Wakomao Lake	Wako
Coyote Lake	Coyo	Waterton Lakes National Park	Wlnp
Crooked Creek/Athabasca	Crook	Yamniska	Yam
Crowsnest Pass	Crow		