

Alberta May Bird Species Count 2011
By Judy Boyd

The number of species went up this year: from 270 last year to 279 this year; the number of individual birds also went up: 310,396, up from 217,141. In 2010, the most numerous species was the Franklin's Gull with 17,360. Second was the Canada Goose with 12,748 and third was the Red-winged Blackbird with 10,878. This year, the most numerous species was again the Franklin's Gull with a whopping 138,350. Second was the Red-winged Blackbird with 8,956 and third was the Cliff Swallow with 7,725.

Last year, 33 species were seen in only one location and 16 species were found in only two locations around the province. This year 21 species were seen in only one location and 18 species were found in only two locations around the province. Of the single sightings: Bohemian Waxwings and Pacific-slope Flycatcher were each seen at BowKanBirders; Burrowing Owl was seen at Brooks; Surf Scoter, Hudsonian Godwit, Pectoral Sandpiper, Northern Pygmy Owl, and Great Gray Owl were each seen at Calgary; Clark's Grebe was seen at Cardston; Greater White-fronted Goose, Pacific Loon, American golden Plover, Arctic Tern, Sedge Wren, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Nelson's Sparrow, and Snow Bunting were each seen at Cold Lake; Glaucous Gull was seen at Fort McMurray; Yellow Rail was seen at Medicine Hat; Cassin's Finch was seen at Waterton.

Of the species found in two locations: Peregrine Falcon was seen at Central Alberta and Calgary; Pine Grosbeak was seen at Cardston and Lac La Biche; McCown's Longspur and Nashville Warbler were each seen at Brooks and Milk River; Yellow-breasted Chat was seen at Medicine Hat and Taber-Vauxhall; Mourning Warbler was seen at Claresholm and Cold Lake; Chestnut-sided Warbler was seen at Cold Lake and Lac La Biche; Cassin's Vireo was seen at Calgary and Waterton; Willow Flycatcher was seen at BowKanBirders and Calgary; Black-backed Woodpecker and American Three-toed Woodpecker were each seen at Calgary and Fort McMurray; Barred Owl was seen at Banff and Calgary; White-rumped Sandpiper and Rough-legged Hawk were each seen at Brooks and Cold Lake; Virginia Rail was seen at Calgary and Medicine Hat; Wild Turkey was seen at Crowsnest Pass and Calgary; Dusky Grouse was seen at Crowsnest Pass and Waterton; Snow Goose was seen at Cold Lake and Taber-Vauxhall.

Last year we had fifteen species seen in all areas. This year we had three species in all areas: Canada Goose, Tree Swallow and American Robin. Last year ten species were found in all areas except one and four species were found in all areas except two. This year four species were found in all but one area: Mallard, Yellow Warbler, Red-winged Blackbird, and Brown-headed Cowbird. This year thirteen species were found in all but two areas: Blue-winged Teal, Wilson's Snipe, Northern Flicker, American Crow, Cliff Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Chipping Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, and Pine Siskin.

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Banff

Date: May 29, 30, 2011

Compiler: Brenda Lepitzki

Participants: Jacques Belayme, Jill Belayme, Toni Hess, Jason Rogers, Mike McIvor, Peter Poole, and 30 others

Area Covered: Recreation grounds to Cave & Basin to Marsh Loop, Vermilion Lakes to Lake Minnewanka and Johnson Lake

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 0 to 19°C

Wind speed: Negligible

Precipitation: 0

Day 2: Temp. 0 to 21°C

Wind speed: Negligible

Precipitation: 0

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 143.5 km; by vehicle 125 km; on foot 18.5 km. Total Team Hours: 22 hr; by vehicle 9 hr; on foot 13 hr.

Number of Species: 80

Number of Birds: 620

Beauvais Lake Provincial Park

Date: May 30, 2011

Compiler: Teresa Dolman

Participants: Douglas Dolman, Teresa Dolman

Area Covered: trails and roads within the park

Weather: Temp. 7 to 13°C

Wind speed: 7 to 20 km/hr. Wind direction: SE

Precipitation: nil

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 7 km; by vehicle 1 km; on foot 6 km. Total Team Hours: 4.5 hr; by vehicle 0.5 hr; on foot 4 hr.

Number of Species: 53

Number of Birds: 237

Other species seen during count week: none

Highlights: Another snowy, late spring in the southern foothills and mountains meant that even by the end of May some bird species had still not taken up residence in the Park. Fifty-three species were seen, which is below the long-term average of 58. No new species were added to the list, but for only the second time Trumpeter Swan, Double-crested Cormorant, Sharp-shinned Hawk and White-throated Sparrow were recorded.

BowKanBirders (Bow Valley)

Date: May 28, 29, 2011

Compiler: Cliff Hansen

Participants: Kevin Barker, Dean Cooper, Jean Cooper, Mary Dumka, Bert Dyck (with grand-daughter), Marilyn Dyck, Jason Foster, Jim Jorgenson, Marg Jorgenson, Cliff Hansen, Max Koether, Lucy Pesata, Laura Reid, Rose Reid, Hanne Seidel, Barry Sproule, Lee Sproule, Anita Walker, Bill Wilson, Eva Zidek

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. 0 to 5°C

Wind speed: light Wind direction: variable

Precipitation: occasional very light drizzle

Comments: cool

Day 2: Temp. -2 to 5°C

Wind speed: Moderate Wind direction: variable

Precipitation: nil

Comments: cold

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 123 km; by vehicle 88; on foot 35 km.

Total Team Hours: 68 hr; by vehicle 2 hr; on foot 66 hr.

Number of Species: 108 (+3 cw)

Number of Birds: 2511 (+9 cw)

Other species seen during count week: Wood Duck (1), Purple Finch (2) & House Sparrow (6)

Comments & Highlights: Baltimore Oriole

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 fifty members, there is no President, Chairperson, Secretary or Treasurer. However, they do need a Coordinator currently covered by the author. Twice each year, the end of May and the Christmas/New Year 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 of birds, mammals, and in May, include flowering plants. The main purpose of the information is to build a historical record of regional flora and fauna. The data is forwarded to the Federation of Alberta Naturalists and is available to others on request.

Again this year, spring arrived late with repeated episodes of rain, sleet and snow through May. It delayed bird migration north and blooming plant development. The one advantage of this situation was that there were few leaves on trees and bushes. It offered better viewing conditions for birds that otherwise would be hidden. It allowed our resolute observers to produce an interesting count result, even though, it was a below average count.

From 1993 to 2011 inclusive, the May count averages are 120 bird species and 2841 birds (includes count week birds). The corresponding numbers for this count are 110 species and 2520 birds. It is interesting to note that similar spring weather conditions in 2010 also resulted in 110 species. Historically, the corresponding numbers range from a high of 136 species (2003) to a low of 83 (1993) and a high of 3817 birds (1996) to a low of 2001 (1993).

My comments on the spring bird count for 2010, with few exceptions, also apply to this count. I'll attempt to avoid repeating myself as I outline the highlights of this

count. Most species were down in numbers. Red-necked Grebes, Merlins, Cedar waxwings, Wilson's Snipe, Dusky Flycatchers, Eastern Kingbirds and House Wrens, have been counted in 75% or more of past counts but not this year. Most of the few increases were not statistically significant with the exception of Yellow-rumped Warblers (314 birds / 105 average) and Chipping Sparrows (260 birds / 122 average). They were encountered in large flocks apparently still migrating. A highlight was the sighting of one Baltimore Oriole (4th sighting since 1993) near Gap lake. No new species were added to the "seen only once list." The "seen every count" list remains at 40 species but somewhat reduced in numbers. All-in-all, taking into account the late spring, it was a successful bird count.

Three species sighted during the count week (plus or minus three days of the official count weekend on sub-areas already or to be covered by an official count) are included in our bird count. A male Wood Duck was seen on the Exshaw sewage lagoon prior to the count weekend but not on an official count day or after. After the weekend, two more species, a pair of Purple Finch and six House Sparrows, all near the Exshaw School, were sighted.

The mammal count was limited to Deer, Elk, Mountain Sheep several Squirrel species, Hares and two Voles. The sighting of two Wood Frogs was our most exciting find, even though they certainly were not mammals.

The average number of blooming plants identified on our May counts is now 58 species, which range from a low of 20 (2002) to a high of 97 (2005). The variation seems to correspond to how late in May the last full weekend falls and to the lateness of warm sunny weather. This year, the count was near the end of May but the late spring was more influential. All but one species were in early bloom stages. The hardy Prairie Crocus had bloomed on schedule in spite of the weather. Our count of 36 species was below average.

A history by year of our spring bird, flowering plant and mammal counts are available on request. All you need do is ask. I can send them by email in MS Excel (other formats are possible), or printed copies by "snail-mail," or you may visit the BowKan Birders table at the Canmore Festival of the Eagles next October.

Margo and I had the pleasure of hosting the after count "potluck." It was well attended by enthusiastic participants and, again the food was given a Five Star rating. Also, it gave us a chance to trade adventure stories and to bring ourselves up-to-date with the latest news from our friends.

The Christmas count is still six months away but now is the time to plan. It is tentatively scheduled for 07 January, 2012, the first Saturday in the New Year.

Again, we had a creditable count and an enjoyable time together. The data gathered is significant and adds to the recorded knowledge of our area. Although the weather again was trying our patience, we still enjoyed the experience of being outdoors to see first-hand how nature copes.

Brooks/Lake Newell

Date: May 21, 22, 2011

Compiler: Bob Parsons

Participants: 33

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Areas covered: Brooks townsite, Lake Newell, Tilleybrook, Kitsim Reservoir, Rolling Hills, various Ducks Unlimited lakes and ponds, various woodlots, prairie grassland

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 11 to 20°C

Wind speed: 10 to 15 km/hr. Wind direction: Northeast

Precipitation: scattered showers

Comments: cloudy, some sunny breaks

Day 2: Temp. 12 to 22°C

Wind speed: light winds Wind direction: Northeast

Precipitation: scattered showers

Comments: sunny breaks, cloudy

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 1133 km; by vehicle; on foot 51 km. Total

Team Hours: 121 hr; by vehicle 89 hr; on foot 32 hr.

Number of Species: 158 (+ 3 cw)

Number of Birds: 56040 (+ 4 cw)

Other species seen during count week: Cooper's Hawk (1), White-faced Ibis (2), Northern Saw-whet Owl (1)

Highlights: Three new species recorded in 2011 – Black-headed Grosbeak, Northern Saw-whet Owl, and Magnolia Warbler. 11 Brooks species records broken, eg. Baird Sparrow: 170. Brooks low numbers include Whimbrel, Lark Bunting and McCowan's Longspur. Missing this year: Turkey Vulture, Hooded Merganser, both Phoebes, both Kinglets, and 4 Peeps species.

Conditions: Generally, very wet conditions in the field. Ponds and sloughs overflowing; reservoirs all topped up; no gravel bars or sand spits. A late spring could be the reason for some low numbers. Strong southeast winds before the weekend might have resulted in some migratory species over flying the area.

Buffalo Lake

Date: May 28, 2011

Compiler: Lee Carothers

Participants: Lee Carothers, Diane Murphy, Wilma Zurfluh

Areas covered: north of Stettler: 1 farmyard, 1 feeder in town.

Weather: Temp. 10 to 15°C

Wind speed: 20 to 40 km/hr. Wind direction: N-NW

Precipitation: none

Comments: very gusty winds

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 27 km; by vehicle 25 km; on foot 2 km.

Total Team Hours: 4 hr; by vehicle 2 hr; on foot 2 hr.

Number of Species: 62

Number of Birds: 671

Calgary and area

Date: May 28, 29, 2011

Compiler: Terry Poulton

Participants: 71 2-day or 1-day participants: Tim Allison, Sandy Ayer, Linda Bailey, John Bargman, Bruce Barnetson, Laura Bentley, Mike Bentley, Martin Cheung, Carole Cooper, Rachel Cooper, Marcia Crawford, Grant Danielson, Amy Darling, Bernie Diebolt, Jim Donohue, Katie Donohue, Joel Duncan, Jean Dunn, John Duthie, Stephan Egilsson, Anne Elliott, Dick Flynn, Lenora Flynn, Lyn Gratz, Dave Gibson, Carole Hachey, Ian Halladay, Mike Harrison, Andrew Hart, Chris Havard, Ken Havard, Howard Heffler, Frank Hennessey, Kumiko Kamiiki, Terry Korolyk, Bob Lefebvre, Don Magnusson, Gary Malcolm, Tivan Malcolm, Zerind Malcolm, Gennyne McCune, Pat Mitchell, Joyce Motyka, Mike Mulligan, Ralph Parks, Ralph Pearce, Terry Poulton, David Pugh, Mark Rubensohn, Dave Russum, Pauline Scoffield, Nimali Seneveratne, Matthew Sim, Jan Simonson, Destin Skauge, Ron Smith, Ena Spalding, Dorothy Spring, Jim St. Laurent, Don Stiles, Bob Storms, Monica Thomas, Tony Timmons, Hank Vanderpol, David Vernon, Joan Walker, Wayne Walker, Robert Worona, Gus Yaki, Colin Young. Count day and week contributions from Inglewood bird-banding program were provided courtesy of Michelle Dagg. Many miscellaneous contributions came from Doug Collister, John Riddell, Peter Roxburgh, Ray Wershler, Bill Wilson, Brian Wolitski; and AlbertaBird and e-bird reports by Yousif Attia and Ilya Povalyaev.

Area Covered: Calgary - 80 km radius circle centred on Centre Street bridge (as always - selected areas within the 20114 sq km area, but incomplete coverage within the city).

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 7 to 19°C

Wind speed: 15 to 20 km/hr. Wind direction: W, NW, N

Precipitation: max. 5 mm.

Comments: Variably sunny to overcast, local rain showers or drizzle. Generally cool and wet. Some roads and trails flooded or muddy, and some impassable.

High water in many ponds and rivers. Many fields flooded.

Day 2: Temp. -4 to 18°C

Wind speed: 0 to 20 km/hr. Wind direction: W, NW

Precipitation: 0

Comments: Mostly sunny, variably cloudy. Snow on roads at high elevations, some ice on ponds. Many roads dry but deeply rutted and rough after wet weather.

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 4150 km; by vehicle 3900; on foot 250 km. Total Team Hours: 635 hr; by vehicle 550 hr; on foot 185 hr.

Number of Species: 224 (+7 cw)

Number of Birds: 153691 (+8 cw)

Other species seen during count week: Short-eared Owl, Boreal Owl, Nashville Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Palm Warbler, Lark Bunting (and 1 possible during Count Days), Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow

Other Highlights, Comments:

The number of both species (226, + 8CW) and individuals recorded is considerably higher than the previous record (210 in 2009), and well above long-term averages. The number of counters was also unusually high, although several of the 41 teams comprised many individuals observing together. Despite the abundant water in ponds and on the fields, the numbers of waterfowl were not particularly high, and most shorebird species (except Spotted Sandpiper) were near 10-year lows, as a result of shorelines being flooded. Ring-billed Gulls (60), Marsh Wrens (12), and Western Meadowlarks (82) were also very low. Some observers noted a long winter, that spring

arrived late, and that migration of some species may have been late. Some of the high numbers below suggest retention of mountain species at low elevations.

6 species were recorded, that were not seen in the previous 10 years' counts: 39 Sabine's Gulls at 2 Localities S and SW of Calgary, and 1 at a third (CW); 1 Broad-winged Hawk at Inglewood; 1 Black-backed Woodpecker in the Cochrane area; 3 Yellow-bellied Flycatchers in the South Sheep River and Bowness areas; 1 Bay-Breasted Warbler in Bow Valley-Exshaw area; 1 Brewer's Sparrow at Inglewood.

10-year record or matching-high numbers were recorded for Eurasian Wigeon (6), Barrow's Goldeneye (75), Red-breasted Merganser (3), Turkey Vulture (2), Northern Harrier (66), Sharp-Shinned and Cooper's hawks (both 11), Swainson's Hawk (277), Red-tailed Hawk (303), Ferruginous Hawk (6), Merlin (21), Spotted Sandpiper (343), Franklin's Gull (103524, 3 times the 2009 previous high of 30,621), California Gull (5362), Caspian Tern (2), Forster's Tern (88), Eurasian-Collared Dove (28), Mourning Dove (91), Northern Flicker (170), Say's Phoebe (23), Gray Jay (76), Common Raven (394, some seen carrying nesting material within Calgary), Mountain Chickadee (52), Orange-Crowned Warbler (45), Magnolia Warbler (4), Cape May Warblers (14, with 11 of them at Brown Lowery Park), American Redstart (17), Chipping Sparrow (1272), Evening Grosbeak (52).

Cardston

Date: May 28, 29, 2011

Compiler: Shirley Sillito

Participants: Bob Gurr, Jackie Gurr, Neldon Hatch, Priscilla Hatch, Kiera Hinch, Maeran Hinch, Ruth Le Roux, Ruth Olsen, Vickie Romeril, Shirley Sillito, Howard Snyder, Michele Snyder, Mira Vanhala, Saska Vanhala, Nancy West

Area Covered: Cardston, Police Lake PP, Leavitt, Mountain View

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 4 to 12°C

Wind speed: 15 to 32 km/hr. Wind direction: NW

Precipitation: 6.5 mm

Day 2: Temp. 5 to 12°C

Wind speed: 9 to 20 km/hr. Wind direction: N

Precipitation: nil

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 413.5 km; by vehicle 406 on foot 7.5 km.

Total Team Hours: 48 hr; by vehicle 37 hr; on foot 6 hr; watching feeders 5 hr.

Number of Species: 119 (+4 cw)

Number of Birds: 3711 (+ 9 cw)

Other species seen during count week: Trumpeter Swan (2), Caspian Tern (2), Forster's Tern (4), Red-naped Sapsucker (1)

Highlights: This was an excellent count, from the standpoint of total species observed and "new" species added. 119 species were recorded, which is significantly above the long-term average of 97. Five new species were added to the list: Clark's Grebe, Whimbrel, Western Tanager, Pine Grosbeak and Red Crossbill. Caspian Tern would have been another new species but was seen during count week rather than on count days. For only the second time, Long-billed Dowitcher, Tennessee Warbler and Grasshopper Sparrow were recorded.

Central Alberta (Red Deer and area)

Date: May 28, 29, 201

Compiler: Judy Boyd

Participants: Angie Aplin, Lorrence Aplin, Bud Bargholz, Jean Bargholz, Verna Bellerive, Mae Bellerive, Brian Biggs, Garry Bilous, Dianne Bilous, Karin Bjorge, Myron Bjorge, Tony Blake, Judy Boyd, Larry Boyd, Fred Brittain, Celine Brittain, Dorothy Broadbent, Claudia Cameron, Ed Cameron, Sandra Cameron, Amy Dale, Elizabeth Dale, Robin Dale, Marg Dewald, Eileen Ford, Jordan Ford, Laurel Ford, Stewart Ford, Matthew Gustafson, Gordon Gurr, Joseph Gurr, Olivia Gurr, Bernice Hafner, Arlene Hansen, Dorothy Hazlett, Bill Heinsen, Liz Heinsen, Scott Hoyland, Amanda Hughes, Christine Hunter, Nicholas Hunter, Roy Jamieson, Gordon Johnson, Pat Johnson, Jessie Kinley, Shannon Kirscht, Trey Kirscht, Keith Kline, Victor Lawrence, Janice Lawrence, Mo Leaney, Ronald J. Leslie, Derek Mackenzie, David MacKenzie, Mary MacKenzie, Vi McDonald, Colleen McPhee, Bud Michaels, Hazel Michaels, Ms. Michaels, Heather Montgomery, Susan Morris, Ashley Patterson, Myrna Pearman, Doug Pedersen, Marg Ramsey, Hope Rich, Tyson Rich, Elsie Robinson, Barb Rooney, Lawrence Rooney, Trinity Sedun, Yvonne Sedun, Eric Sinton, Helga Sinton, Joanne Susut, Rick Varjassy, Frank Weber, Lucas Wessner, Diane Witton, Susan Younggren, Abby, Destiny, Faith, Kylie, Lilly, Wes

Area Covered: Zone 1 (Red Deer), Zone 2 (Sylvan Lake), Zone 3 (Gull Lake), Zone 4 (Lacombe), Zone 5 (Ellis Bird Farm), Zone 6 (Pine Lake), Zone 7 (Penhold), Zone 8 (Dickson, Medicine River Wildlife Centre), Zone 10 (Eckville), Zone 15 (Alix), Zone 16 (Lousana), Zone 18 (Davey Lake), Zone 19 (Bowden), Zone 26 (Dry Island Buffalo Jump), Zone 27 (Rocky Mountain House)

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 9 to 18°C

Wind speed: 5 to 30 km/hr. Wind direction: mostly NW

Comments: smoky

Day 2: Temp. -2 to 20°C

Wind speed: 0 to 40 km/hr. Wind direction: variable

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 1408.1 km; by vehicle 1346.9 km; on foot 61.2 km. Total Team Hours: 136 hr; by vehicle 62 hr; on foot 74 hr. feederwatch 96 hr.

Number of Species: 152 (+1 cw)

Number of Birds: 10953 (+1 cw)

Other species seen during count week: Great Gray Owl

Highlights: Highest recorded numbers since 2000: number of participants! Northern Pintail, Double-crested Cormorant, Osprey, Northern Harrier, Northern Goshawk, Merlin, Prairie Falcon, Sandhill Crane, Semipalmated Plover, Solitary Sandpiper, Rock Pigeon, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Mourning Dove, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Purple Martin, Blackpoll Warbler, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Brown-headed Cowbird, and Baltimore Oriole

First time recorded since 2000: Long-billed Curlew, Violet-green Swallow, Palm Warbler, and Northern Waterthrush

Mammals: White-tailed Deer, Mule Deer, Richardson's Ground Squirrel, Red Fox, Coyote, Red Squirrel, Beaver, Muskrat, Skunk, and Snowshoe Hare.

Amphibians: Boreal Chorus Frog, and Wood Frog.

Insects: Water Striders, ladybug, spider, honey bees, Hudsonian Dragonfly, Red-winged Clickhopper, Red Ants, mosquito, bumblebee, Sulphur Butterfly, Checkered white moth, Spring Azure, Black Ants, Cabbage Butterfly, Carpenter Ant, black damselfly, White Admiral, and Wolf Spider.

Other: water snails, fresh water shrimp

Claresholm

Date: May 28, 29, 2011

Compiler: Grace Norgard

Participants: Jason Attwell, Ruth Attwell, Rob Chisholm & family, Gary Cotter, Nola Cotter, Keri Hart, Audrey Helmer, Betty Hoar, Mike Hoare, Lawrence Hutchinson, Stanley Lewis, Joan Larson, Leo Larson, Debbie Lozeman, Judy Lucas, Arnold Norgard, Ellis Norgard, Grace Norgard, Jeremy Norgard, Lorraine Norgard, Jack Peacock

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

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 5 to 15°C

Wind speed: 7 to 20 km/hr. Wind direction: NW

Precipitation: 2.5 mm

Day 2: Temp. 4 to 13°C

Wind speed: 9 to 19 km/hr. Wind direction: N

Precipitation: nil

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 397 km; by vehicle 395 on foot 2 km.

Total Team Hours: 86 hr; by vehicle 25 hr; on foot 1 hr; watching feeders 60 hr.

Number of Species: 122 (+6 cw)

Number of Birds: 5492 (+6 cw)

Other species seen during count week: Alder Flycatcher (1), Willow Flycatcher (1) Hermit Thrush (1), Blackpoll Warbler (1), American Redstart (1), White-thoated Sparrow (1)

Highlights: 122 species were recorded, which is significantly above the long-term average of 114 species. Two new species were added to the count list; a single Mourning Warbler seen in the town of Claresholm and a single Bay-breasted Warbler seen at a farm to the west of town. Rock Wren was observed for only the third time and Hooded Merganser for only the fourth time.

Cold Lake Area Bird Count

Date: May 28 and 29, 2011

Compiler: Ted Hindmarch

Participants: Bill Bretsch (Cold Lake), Jim Davies (Calgary), Ron & Nancy Donnelly (Cold Lake), Bob and Chris Etue (Rapid View, Sask), Tom Hince (Pt Pelee), Ted Hindmarch (Gibbons), Al Holte (Cold Lake), Del Huget (Edmonton), Richard Klauke (Vilna), Bruce Morita (Athabasca), Norm Parrish (Bonnyville), Geoff Peruniak

(Athabasca), Paul Pratt (Pt Pelee), Phil Shore, (Cold Lake), Feeder watch: Ron Donnelly, Carol Hummerstone, Mado Shore

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, Manitokan Lake, Margaurite Lake. Tucker Lake. This covered areas within WR51-55, WR40-45, WR33-34, WR10-11, and WR01, WR02-04, WR12-15, WR 22-25

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 7 to 13°C

Wind speed 17 to 31 km/hr. Wind direction: NE/ENE

Precipitation: N/A

Comments: Temperatures below seasonal average. Wind gusts up to 44 km/hr during noon period.

Day 2: Temp. -1 to 17°C

Wind speed: 0 to 22 km/hr. Average 4 km/hr. Wind direction: Calm to S

Precipitation: N/A

Comments: Temperatures below seasonal average with record low set. Fairly hard frost (-6C) reported in some areas early morning hours. Calm, excellent birding conditions.

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 1133.3 km; by vehicle 1073 km; on foot; 56.3 km; by canoe 4 km. Total Team Hours: 126.5 hr; by vehicle 76.15 hr; on foot 42.35 hr; by canoe 8 hr. Feeder Watch: Plus 8 hr - 3 participants

Number of Species: 169 (+19 cw)

Number of Birds: 11568

Other species seen during count week: 19: Ross's Goose, Swainson's Hawk, Virginia Rail, Pectoral Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Great Gray Owl, American Three-toed Woodpecker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Nashville Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Palm Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Connecticut Warbler, White-winged Crossbill, Evening Grosbeak,

Highlights: Although temperatures were below seasonal averages, they were better than observed over our past two May counts, so participants enjoyed the weekend. We commenced the weekend with a Friday evening BBQ at a rustic cabin location overlooking the Beaver River valley and it was a wonderful evening. Overall the count results were excellent with 188 species tallied when CW birds were included.

Two new Count additions with Tom Hince and Paul Pratt reporting an Arctic Tern at Kinasoo Beach Saturday AM, and Richard Klauke/Norm Parrish locating House Finches in Bonnyville. Both species have been previously reported in the checklist/count area but not on the count. A late migration also resulted in C list species Pacific Loon (4), Sabines Gull (45), Caspian Tern (6), as well as a couple of Snow, Ross's and White-Fronted geese still being in the area. Other C list species included a single Cinnamon Teal, 2 Hooded Merganser, a Virginia Rail, and a Grey-Cheeked Thrush. A possible Lark Sparrow was reported in the Hall Lagoon area of CLPP, but could not be fully confirmed; however, a count week sighting along Primrose Hwy north of the count circle verifies this species is continuing to increase its northern range extension. (Note: In 2011, a pair of Lark Sparrow nested in the Bellis Lake area NE of Edmonton for the 2nd year).

Shorebird sightings were few and far apart, with most observations for the Jesse Lake and sandy wetlands in the La Corey, Iron River area.

The raptors highlight was a record number of Broad-Winged Hawk sightings.

High winds on the Saturday made for difficult passerine birding on the first day of the count, with many of the passerine and wood warbler sightings occurring on the Sunday and into the CW days following the weekend, some of this a result of increased arrivals in the area day 2 and beyond.

The Crowsnest Pass Birding Festival

Date: May 28, 29, 2011

Compiler: Marilyn Liddell

Participants: Denise Coccioloni-Amatto, Shirley Enzol, Dawn Hall, Marilyn Liddell, Pat Lucas, Christopher Smith, Raymond Toal, (with additional reports from Jonty Caroe, Bill Kinnear, John Kinnear, David McIntyre, Monica Primrose, Drew and Karen Rendall, James Tweedie, Nel van Kamer)

Area Covered: from Summit Lake at BC/Alberta border west to junction of Highway 3 & North Burmis Road, then north to the Gap

Specific Locations covered Day 1: Willow Drive and wetlands to the west, Allison Road, Tent Mountain Road, Summit Lake, area within Crowsnest Pass municipal boundaries from East Hillcrest Bridge to the wetlands between Coleman and Blairmore

Day 2: North Burmis Road to the Gap, Lundbreck area and Todd Creek

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 2 to 5°C

Wind speed: 13 to 20 km/hr. Wind direction: NE

Precipitation: rain, sleet, drizzle in a.m.; clear in p.m.

Day 2: Temp. 5 to 15°C

Wind speed: 4 to 20 km/hr. Wind direction: N

Precipitation: None

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 355.5 km; by vehicle 345 km; on foot 10.5 km. Total Team Hours: 20 hr; by vehicle 5 hr; on foot 15 hr.

Number of Species: 113 (+3 cw)

Number of Birds: 1739 (+ 10 cw)

Other species seen during count week: Harlequin Duck (2), Lazuli Bunting (2), Cassin's Finch (6)

Highlights: After the miserable weather during last year's count and the wet start to this year's, the sunshine on the 29th was a definite highlight. With the late arrival of spring, we had not been seeing the expected numbers of birds prior to the count, so we were pleased with the numbers of species we did observe on the weekend, though numbers of individuals were low for many species. We were also pleased to count an American Redstart, not a common sighting in our area.

Mammals: Beaver (1), Big-horned Sheep (7), Black Bear (1), Columbian Ground Squirrel (1000 +), Coyote (4 + 8 pups), Elk (64), Least Chipmunk (2), Moose (5 + 3 calves), Mule Deer (37), Red Fox (1), Red Squirrel (9), Richardson Ground Squirrel (3),

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Snowshoe Hare (2), Striped Skunk (3), Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrel (1), Vole (2),
White-tailed Deer (11)

Fort McMurray/Wood Buffalo Wild Bird Club

Date: May 28, 29, 2011

Compiler: Cathy Mountain

Participants: Jane Elser, Robert Grey, Tom Klein, Cathy Mountain, Christine Sparling,
Steven Stryde

Area Covered: urban, roadside, hiking trails, horse pasture, mixed forest, riverside,
ponds/slough, lakes, gravel pit, peat moss pit, muskeg, landfill. 1 yard/feeder counted

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 6 to 15 °C

Wind speed: 13 to 15 km/hr. Wind direction: NE in am & N 20 to 25 km/hr. pm

Precipitation: none

Comments: air smoky after lunch when wind shifted

Day 2: Temp. 4 to 14 °C

Wind speed: calm in am, 6 km/hr. in pm. Wind direction: NE pm

Precipitation: none

Comments: smoky in am

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 278 km; by vehicle 234 km; on foot 44
km. Total Team Hours: 50.75 hr; by vehicle 26 hr; on foot 24.75 hr.

Number of Species: 102 (+1 cw)

Number of Birds: 2565 (+3 cw)

Other species seen during count week: Horned Larks (3)

Lac La Biche

Date: May 28, 29, 2011

Compiler: Jennifer Okraïneec

Participants: Heather Dempsey, Bob & Mary Dunn, Bernie Gauthier, Ted Johnson,
David Lily, Tom & Annette Maccagno, Clara McArthur, Jennifer & Muriel Mueller,
Jacob Okraïneec (5 years old), Jennifer Okraïneec, Dr. M. Onischuk, Mary Teslin, Don &
Jean Welke

Area Covered: Lac La Biche, Lakeland Provincial Park, Sir Winston Churchill Park,
Mission Area, Hylo, Missawawi Lake, Avenir, Elinor Lake, Plamondon Area, Beaver
Lake, Owl River Area, Square Lake

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 5 to 15 °C

Wind speed: 10 to 17 km/hr. Wind direction: N to NE

Precipitation: 0

Comments: Wind made it hard to hear some birds

Day 2: Temp. 5 °C

Precipitation: 0

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 750 km; by vehicle 740 km; on foot 10 km.
Total Team Hours: 75 hr; by vehicle 65 hr; on foot 10 hr.

Number of Species: 140 (+6 cw)

Number of Birds: 9357 (+6 cw)

Other species seen during count week: Cooper's Hawk, Great Horned Owl, Common Nighthawk, Boreal Chickadee, Cedar Waxwing, Common Redpoll.

Lethbridge

Date: May 28, 29, 2011

Compiler: Teresa Dolman

Participants: Linda Cerney, Douglas Dolman, Teresa Dolman, Wayne Dwornik, Graeme Greenlee, Patricia Greenlee, Ryan Heavy Head, Ken Moore, Jay Yanke

Area Covered: Lethbridge river valley and parks, Stirling Lake, Park Lake PP

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 5 to 12°C

Wind speed: 20 to 30 km/hr. Wind direction: NW

Precipitation: 3.1 mm

Day 2: Temp. 7 to 15°C

Wind speed: 5 to 15 km/hr. Wind direction: N

Precipitation: nil

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 79 km; by vehicle 40 km; on foot 39 km.

Total Team Hours: 35.5 hr; by vehicle 1 hr; on foot 29.5 hr; watching feeders 5 hr.

Number of Species: 105 (+3 cw)

Number of Birds: 4371 (+3 cw)

Other species seen during count week: Wilson's Snipe, Eurasian Collared-Dove, White-throated Sparrow

Highlights: The count was below average as far as number of species, but still one "new" species was added to the over-all list: a single Magnolia Warbler. For only the second time, Turkey Vulture was recorded, and for only the third time, Hermit Thrush.

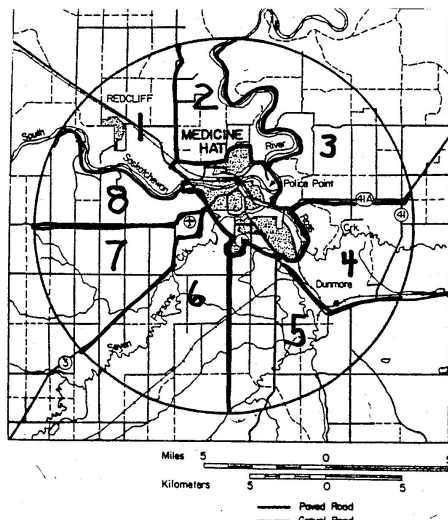
Medicine Hat

Date: May 28, 2011

Compiler: Marty Drut

Participants: Barry Anderson, Judy Anderson, Eileen Cowtan, Marty Drut, Fay Felesky, Val Felesky, Sue Higgins, Dale Holmes, Corlaine Gardner. Rob Gardner, Annalora Horch, Phil Horch, Jim Knelson, Cam Lockerbie, Valerie Martins, Darren McKenna, Michael O'Shea, David Parbery, Dan Schiebelbein, Mark Schiebelbein, John Slater, Margaret Smith, Donna Steele, Julie Tingley

Feeder Watchers: Lisa & Dale Holmes, George Lulkasiewich, Judy Simmonds, Paul Thibault



Area Covered:

Weather: Temp. 6 to 19°C

Wind speed: 10 to 15 km/hr. Wind direction: SE - SW

Precipitation: None

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 286 km; by vehicle 215 km; on foot 71 km.. Total Team Hours: 62.75 hr; by vehicle 23.5 hr; on foot 39.25 hr.

Number of Species: 126

Number of Birds: 7801

Highlights: 2011 was another great year as one new species was seen on the count – yellow rail. However, there were only 7 species with recorded high counts down from 17 in 2010 and 7 species experienced all time lows in 2011 (see Table 1 below). The number of participants decreased slightly from 2010 with a corresponding decrease in distances driven and covered on foot (see Data Summary Table below). Many thanks to all those who volunteered their time this year!

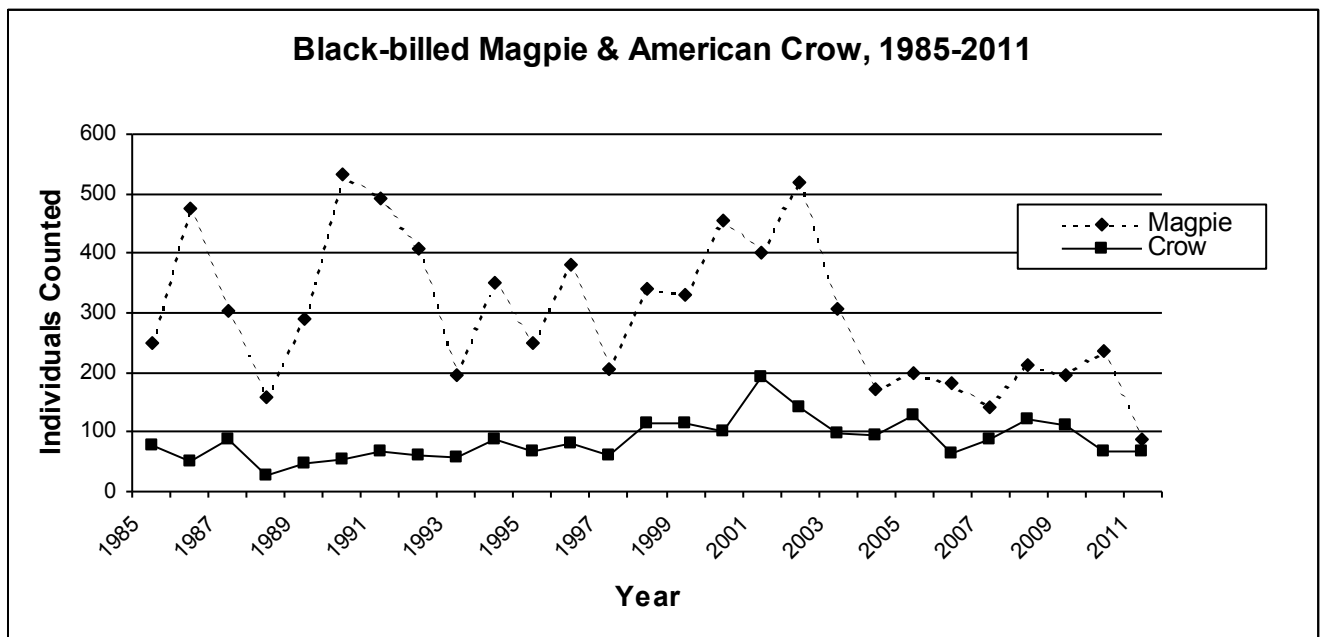
New Species Observed in 2011: Yellow Rail - 1

Table 1. 2011 Spring Bird Count All Time High and Low Observations.

2011 Spring Bird Count – Highs and Lows			
Species	High	Previous High	Year
Cinnamon Teal	10	9	2010
Eurasian-collared Dove	13	11	2010
Downy Woodpecker	30	24	2009
Least Flycatcher	139	123	2002
Black-capped Chickadee	72	71	2010
Black-headed Grosbeak	1	1	Last observed in 1987
Purple Finch	5	2	2002 & 1999
Species	Low	Previous Low	Year
Double-crested Cormorant	0	2	2 or more observed in all previous count years
Common Merganser	4	9	2009 and 1995
Killdeer	26	26	2009
Willet	4	4	2006
Spotted Sandpiper	5	7	1987
Black-billed Magpie	89	171	2004

All of the species with observed highs in 2011 were native species except Eurasian-collared Dove. Three species, Cinnamon Teal, Eurasian-collared Dove, and Black-capped Chickadee experienced highs for the second year in a row and 1 species, Downy Woodpecker, had its previous high in 2009. A Black-headed Grosbeak was only observed during one other count, 1987, the second year the count was conducted.

Interestingly, 5 of the species with low counts in 2011 were water or shorebirds. This is somewhat surprising considering the amount of water present in our area this spring – the low counts may indicate water birds such as Double-crested Cormorant were distributed over a wider area in lower densities and shorebirds were unable to find suitable habitat because of high water. As for Black-billed Magpies, their numbers seem to have dropped off since 2003 whereas American Crow numbers have seemingly remained stable (see graph below).



Less frequently seen species observed in 2011 included Pied-billed Grebe (1), Sharp-shinned Hawk (2), Ferruginous Hawk (1), Virginia Rail (1), Solitary Sandpiper (4), Caspian Tern (1), Short-eared Owl (1), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (1), Ovenbird (3), American Tree Sparrow (1), and White-throated Sparrow (1).

The top five for 2011 were: European Starling (1,048), American Robin (732), Canada Goose (543), Yellow Warbler (417), and Red-winged Blackbird (378). Two gull species, Franklin's and Ring-billed, that were in the top five last year, dropped considerably in 2011 and contributed to the decline in total individuals observed this year; Franklin's Gull went from 1,006 to 9 and Ring-billed Gull went from 862 to 88 (note - there was a large colony of Franklin's Gulls observed at Pakowki Lake this spring).

No species was seen exclusively during count week.

Milk River/Writing-on-Stone

Date: May 28, 29, 2011

Compiler: Bob Parsons

Participants: 12 participants

Area Covered: coulees, woodlots, natural area, ponds, sloughs, reservoirs

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 6 to 11°C

Wind speed: 10 to 20 km/hr. Wind direction: NW

Precipitation: scattered showers

Comments: mostly cloudy, some sun, many impassable roads

Day 2: Temp. 7 to 17 °C

Wind speed: 10 to 20 km/hr. Wind direction: NW

Precipitation: scattered showers

Comments: mostly cloudy

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 993.5 km; by vehicle car; on foot 5 km.

Total Team Hours: 59 hr; by vehicle 54 hr; on foot 5 hr.

Number of Species: 147 (+ 2 cw)

Number of Birds: 29274 (+ 2 cw)

Other species seen during count week: Northern Parula and Hermit Thrush

Highlights: Flooded fields on both sides of the road. Many dirt roads were impassable, some badly rutted, some flooded out. Gravel roads were generally passable, the lakes and reservoirs were very high. Creeks were up to the bridges. This all resulted in loss of habitat for many species, ie Marsh Wren, American Bittern, White-faced Ibis.

Missing species include: Clark's Grebe, Turkey Vulture, Peeps, and Burrowing Owl.

Milk River firsts include: Northern Parula, Belted Kingfisher, Blue-headed Vireo, Nashville Warbler and Tundra Swan

Low bird observations include Western Grebe, American White Pelican, Marsh Wren, and McCowan's Longspur. We had 16 species of the highest number ever: Loggerhead Shrike, Lazuli Bunting, Black Tern, Ferruginous Hawk, Northern Pintail, Red-necked Grebe, Mallard, Sharp-shinned Hawk, American Coot, Franklin's Gull, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Western Kingbird, Chipping Sparrow, Bullock's Oriole, Pine Siskin and American Goldfinch.

Taber-Vauxhall

Date: May 28, 29, 2011

Compiler: Lloyd Bennett

Participants: Lloyd Bennett, Yolanda Bennett, Glen Gardner, Murray Gardner, Ron Levagood, Ben Tams, Carol Tams, Gideon Tams, Jacki Tams, Jude Tams, Nolan Tams

Area Covered: Taber and Vauxhall areas, Purple Springs Dunes

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 7 to 17°C

Wind speed: 9 to 30 km/hr. Wind direction: NW

Precipitation: 3 mm

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Day 2: Temp. 3 to 15°C

Wind speed: 7 to 19 km/hr. Wind direction: N

Precipitation: 0.2 mm

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 525 km; by vehicle 514 km; on foot 11 km.

Total Team Hours: 41 hr; by vehicle 21 hr; on foot 8 hr; watching feeders 12 hr.

Number of Species: 133 (+3 cw)

Number of Birds: 7330 (+3 cw)

Other species seen during count week: Golden Eagle, Veery, Wilson's Warbler

Highlights: The total of 133 species recorded was significantly above the long-term average of 126 species. No new species were added to the list, but for only the second time Red-breasted Merganser, Osprey and Yellow-breasted Chat were observed.

Wakomao Lake

Date: May 28, 2011

Compiler: Jim Lange

Participants: Jim Lange

Area Covered: The area is divided by the highway as well as two township roads running along the north end of the lake and the second one along jackpine, mixedwood and pasture land. Regular range roads run along the other portions making good access for a thorough survey.

Weather: Temp. 7°C

Wind speed: 25 km/hr. Wind direction: NNE

Precipitation: steady light rain by noon, snow by 7:00 p.m.

Comments: overcast with smoke haze then clearing in the afternoon

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 85 km (driven). Total Team Hours: 9 hr

Number of Species: 61

Number of Birds: 794

Highlights: The (2) Lark Sparrows were together and landed on the road right in front of the vehicle. One just sat while the other was feeding a short distance away. The road is a sandy dead end road just off Hwy 18 on the east side of Wakomao L. The habitat is open Jackpine and Aspen. This is the first sighting of this species for me however they were immediately recognized & the ID was confirmed with a Field Guide, The lack of American Avocets was a surprise as was the lack of songbirds. Marsh Wrens were also absent from the north end of Wakomao L. This was a very different spring with a noticeable lack of waterfowl despite abundant water in the lake.

Mammals observed: Black Bear (1), Whitetail Deer (3), Red Fox (1)

Waterton Lakes National Park

Date: June 4, 5, 2011

Compiler: Teresa Dolman

Participants: Jodi Allair, Yousif Attia, Lloyd Bennett, Yolanda Bennett, Linda Cerney, Douglas Dolman, Teresa Dolman, Barb Johnston, Stu MacKenzie, Ian Maton, Jenny Maton, Kim Pearson, Cyndi Smith, Jay Yanke

Area Covered: Within Park boundaries

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Weather: Day 1: Temp. 5 to 18°C

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

Precipitation: nil

Day 2: Temp. 3 to 23°C

Wind speed: 0 to 25 km/hr. Wind direction: SW

Precipitation: nil

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 113.5 km; by vehicle 90 on foot 23.5 km.

Total Team Hours: 30.5 hr; by vehicle 7.5 hr; on foot 22.5 hr; watching feeders 0.5 hr.

Number of Species: 113

Number of Birds: 1534

Other species seen during count week: none

Highlights: The average number of species for this count is 103, so the 113 species recorded this year is a very good result. There were two species, both warblers, which had never been recorded previously for this count, and both were seen by a very experienced group of birders from Calgary who were in Waterton as part of a “Big Day” Alberta count. The first was a Cape May Warbler, which is not on the Park bird checklist, and the other was a Connecticut Warbler which is on the checklist, but the status is listed as an “accidental”.

Dusky Grouse, Rock Wren and Red Crossbill were recorded for only the second time on this count, and Wood Duck for only the third time.

Winfield

Date: May 29, 2011

Compiler: Charles Bird

Participants: Ann Bird, Charles Bird, Anna Sawatzky, and Ethan Sawatzky.

Area Covered: 8 km NW of Winfield, AB. The Count area has mixed woods, a small meadow, and is bordered by East Poplar Creek.

Weather: Temp. 8 to 17°C

Comments: There had been 2 degrees C of frost the night before.

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Hours: 3 hr.

Number of Species: 15

Number of Birds: 28

Highlights/comments: Species other than birds seen: Red-disked Alpine (several), Wood Frog (1), Varying Hare (1), Mule Deer (6), Red Squirrel (1)

Yamnuska

Date: May 28, 2011

Compiler: Mike McIvor

Participants: Fred Coates, Diane McIvor, Mike McIvor, Peter Poole, Gareth Thomson

Area Covered: parts of Yamnuska portion of Bow Valley Wildland Park

Weather: Precipitation: rain most of the day

Comments: wet and cold. Fresh almost to the valley bottom, avalanches on mountain.

Team Distance/Hours: Total Team Mileage: 42 km; by vehicle 25 km; on foot 17 km.

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Total Team Hours: 11.5 hr; by vehicle .5 hr; on foot 11 hr.

Number of Species: 53

Number of Birds: 181