

Banff National Park

Date: May 27, 28, 2017

Compiler: Amar Athwal

Participants: 25 birders during the Saturday May 27, 2017 Banff Community Bird Count

Area Covered: Area west of town of Banff, Warner Stables, Marsh loop and part of Sundance Trail and Vermilion Road

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 1 to 22°C

Day 2: Wind speed: 5 to 22 km/hr. Wind direction: W

Precipitation: 0

Comments: A warm spring day

Team Distance/Hours: Total team mileage: 15 km; by vehicle 7km; on foot 8 km

Number of Species: 49

Number of Birds: 168

Beauvais Lake Provincial Park

Date: May 30, 2017

Compiler: Teresa Dolman

Participants: Douglas Dolman, Teresa Dolman, Pat Lucas. eBird lists were also used from Carey Bergman.

Area Covered: Lakeshore, campground, beaver ponds, Piney Point Trail, Beaver Creek

Weather:

Day 1: Temp. 12 to 25°C

Wind speed: 8 to 11 km/hr. Wind direction: SE

Precipitation: Trace

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage: 10.5 km; by vehicle 0 km; on foot 10.5 km

Total team hours: 7.7 hr; by vehicle 0 hr; on foot 7.7 hr.

Number of Species: 62 (+4 CW)

Number of Birds: 315

Other species seen during count week: Belted Kingfisher, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Brown Creeper, Swainson's Thrush

Highlights: The 63 species tallied this year slightly exceeds the long-term average of 58 for this count. One new species was added to the overall list – a single Olive-sided Flycatcher was identified by its song. White-throated Sparrow and American Kestrel were seen for only the second time over the 21-year history of this count, and Double-crested Cormorant and Wilson's Warbler for only the third time.

BowKan Birders

Date: May 27, 28, 2017 (+/- 3 days)

Compiler: Cliff Hansen

Participants: Kevin Barker, Nancy Davis, Ethan Denton, Neil Denton, Monica Dragoz, Mary Dumka, Marilynn Dyck, Bert Dyck, Trish Drews, Gian-Duri Giger, Cliff Hansen, Caroline Lambert, Laura Reid, Rose Reid, Hanne Seidel, Bill Wilson, Anita Walker

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

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 2 to 15°C

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

Precipitation: nil

Comments: very nice sun & cloud day

Day 2: Temp. 5 to 15°C

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

Precipitation: nil

Comments: very nice sun & cloud day

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage: 249.2 km; by vehicle 207; on foot 42.2 km

Total team hours: 66.5 hr; by vehicle 5 hr; on foot 61.5 hr.

Number of Species: 113 (+ 4 CW)

Number of Birds: 1654 (+ 6 CW)

Other species seen during count week: Merlin (2), Prairie Falcon (1), Wilson's Phalarope (1), Mourning Dove (2)

Highlights: Four new species (for our May Counts): Sandhill Crane (1), (a 2nd seen before and after count – appears to be nesting), Baird's Sandpiper (1), Pectoral Sandpiper (1), and Nashville Warbler (1) (latter 3 probably itinerant).

Brooks Lake Newell

Date: May 20, 21, 2017

Compiler: Bob Parsons

Participants: 33

Area Covered: Native grasslands, woodlots, ponds, sloughs, farmland, oilfields

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 11 to 23°C

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

Precipitation: 0

Comments: variable winds in some zones

Day 2: Temp. 16 to 22°C

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

Precipitation: 0

Comments: some sun/strong winds at times

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage: 1988 km; by vehicle 1950 km; on foot 38 km

Total team hours: 170 hr; by vehicle 143 hr; on foot 27 hr.

Number of Species: 156 (+ 3 CW)

Number of Birds: 1654

Other species seen during count week: American Redstart, Bay-breasted Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak

Highlights: First Cackling Goose recorded, 1 Trumpeter Swan, 3 Burrowing Owls, 86 Western Grebe, 7 Grasshopper Sparrow, 203 Red Knot, 44 Red-tail Hawks. Low numbers of Eared Grebe, American Coot, McCowan's Longspur. Missing include Prairie Falcon, Pectoral Sandpiper, Spotted Towhee, scoters, chickadee!

Buffalo Lake Naturalists

Date: May 29, 2017

Compiler: Lee Carothers

Participants: Wilma Zurfluh, Marie Payne, Lee Carothers

Area Covered: North West of Stettler AB

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 17 to 20°C

Wind speed: 6 to 12 km/hr. Wind direction: North

Precipitation: None

Team Distance/Hours: Total team mileage: 22 km; by vehicle 20; on foot 2 km

Total team hours: 5 hr; by vehicle 2 hr; on foot 3 hr.

Number of Species: 48 (+ 1CW)

Number of Birds: 1130

Other species seen during count week: House Sparrow

Calgary and area

Date: May 27, 28, 2017

Compiler: Melanie Seneviratne, Andrew Hart, Terry Poulton

Participants: 75+

Area Covered: 20114 sq km: a 80 km-radius circle centered on the Centre Street Bridge in Calgary.

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 3 to 26°C

Wind speed: 0 to 15 km/hr. Wind direction: variable

Precipitation: none

Comments: mainly sunny with light winds and some clouds

Day 2: Temp. 3 to 25°C

Wind speed: 0 to 15 km/hr. Wind direction: variable

Precipitation: none

Comments: Mainly sunny, variably cloudy

Team Distance/Hours: Total team mileage: 4732 km; by vehicle 4417; on foot 314.7 km

Total team hours: 413 hr; by vehicle 234 hr; on foot 179 hr.

Number of Species: 208 (+ 2 CW)

Number of Birds: 68796 (+ 2 CW)

Other species seen only during count week:

1 Winter Wren, N part of Water Valley South area, by Doug Collister.

1 Black-throated Green Warbler, at Confederation Park, by Bill Wilson.

Highlights (by Melanie Seneviratne): This is a comparison to last year's results with some highlights on noticeable differences or rare species that were recorded over the weekend. Note that some of these species are known in these areas, but were not reported last year for the count.

Many people have reported less birds this year - in other counts as well. Some speculate the birds came through late, however some think they came through early and due to the temperamental weather experienced in the area, they kept going North. I tend to agree with the latter as on the same weekend as the Calgary count, I participated in the Milk River species count and was lucky enough to see both long billed curlew and killdeer young.

There was over 17,000 LESS birds reported compared to last year, that's over 20% less.

Special Sightings:

Harlequin Duck - Pearce Estates Park
Prairie Falcon & Black headed Grosbeak - South of Calgary
Upland Sandpiper (4) - East of Calgary (on Inverlake Road)
White-rumped Sandpiper - Strathmore area

NOTE: The colony of Cliff Swallows at the High River Bridge was missing this year
Decrease in the following species (numbers may not be high, but at minimum 50% less compared to last year): Cinnamon Teal, Canvasback, Barrow's Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Horned Grebe, Eared Grebe, White faced Ibis (183 less - 75%!!!), American Coot, Solitary Sandpiper, Willet, Long-billed Curlew, Marbled Godwit, Long-billed Dowitcher (0 seen), Black Tern, Ruby-throated Hummingbird (1 seen), American Three-toed Woodpecker, Black-backed Woodpecker, Sprague's Pipit, Alder & Willow Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird (187 less - 76%!!)
Clark's Nutcracker, Cedar Waxwing (considerably decreasing over last 3 years - 446 to 40 to 8), Common Grackle, Pine Siskin (considerably decreasing over last 3 years - 1552 to 245 to 95), American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

Note, there were quite a few species that reported 25-49% decreases from last year.
Increase in the following species (numbers may not be high, but at minimum 50% more compared to last year): Wood Duck, Yellow Rail, Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Baird's Sandpiper (29 more than 2 reported last year). Pectoral Sandpiper (38 more than 2 reported last year), Bonaparte's Gull, Common Tern, Pileated Woodpecker, Western Wood-Pewee, Gray Jay, Horned Lark, Rock Wren, Varied Thrush, Northern Waterthrush

Central Alberta (Red Deer and area)

Date: May 27, 28, 2017

Compiler: Judy Boyd

Participants: 39 – Jana Biber, Karin Bjorge, Myron Bjorge, Helene Boulanger, Jim Boyce, Judy Boyd, Larry Boyd, Alexandra Braun, Colleen Caddy, Jerry Caddy, John Caddy, Anto Davis, Bev Ewanchuk, Bertha Ford, Eileen Ford, Jordan Ford, Laurel Ford, Stewart Ford, Jane Grenier-Frank, Laura Fritz, Ben Giese, Bill Heinsen, Scott Hoyland, Carol Kelly, Keith Kline, Joyce Lemke, Shelley Macauley, Laura Oomen, Myrna Pearman, Doug Pedersen, Bonnie Potter, Jim Potter, Brooke Rafferty, Marg Ramsay, Brooklyn Rose, Kim Siebold, Joanne Susat, Rick Tallas, Rick Varjassy

Area Covered: Zone 1 (Red Deer), Zone 2 (Sylvan Lake), Zone 3 (Gull Lake), Zone 4 (Lacombe), Zone 6 (Pine Lake), Zone 7 (Penhold), Zone 8 (Dickson, MRWC), Zone 11 (Rimbey/Bluffton), Zone 12 (Crestomere), Zone 16 (Lousana), Zone 17 (Bigelow Reservoir), Zone 25 (Three Hills), Zone 26 (Dry Island Buffalo Jump), and Zone 27 (Rocky Mountain House).

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 8 to 25°C

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

Cloud cover: 0-50%

Day 2: Temp. 14 to 24°C

Wind speed: 0 to 35 km/hr. Wind direction: variable

Cloud cover: 0-50%

Team Distance/Hours:

Total Team Mileage: 1318.9 km; by vehicle 1256.7 km; on foot 56.2 km; by bicycle 6 km.

Total Team Hours: 121 hr; by vehicle 67 hr.; on foot 27.5 hr, by bicycle 2 hr, by canoe 1 hr; feederwatch 23.5 hr.

Number of Species: 143 + 1 CW

Number of Birds: 10,381 + 5 CW

Highlights: Highest recorded numbers since 2000: 2 Belted Kingfisher (tied with 2008), 15 Eurasian Collared-Dove, 372 Bank Swallows. This was the first time since 2000 that a Cackling Goose and Great Crested Flycatchers were counted. This was only the second time Broad-winged Hawk and Snow Goose were counted (both times were last counted in 2013).

Count Week birds were 5 Long-eared Owls seen on May 31.

Number of participants was down from last year's 47 to 39. The number of bird species went up from last year's 140 to 143. (The highest recorded number of species since 2000 was in 2008: 153.) The count of individual birds was down from last year's 13126 to 10381.

Mammals: Beaver, Coyote, Elk, Mule Deer, Muskrat, Red Fox, Red Squirrel, Richardson's Ground Squirrel, Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrel, White-tailed Deer,

Amphibians: Boreal Chorus Frog, and Wood Frog

Insects: Alfalfa Butterfly, Boreal Bluet, 2 queen bumblebees, bumblebee, Cabbage Butterfly, Canadian Tiger Swallowtail, Cherry-faced Meadowhawk, dragonflies, damselflies, Field Cricket, fritillary, Green Comma, Hudsonian Whiteface, Red-winged Clickhoppers, Whirligig Beetle, Wood Ant

Cold Lake Area Bird Count

Date: May 27, 28, 2017

Compiler: Ted Hindmarch

Participants: 11 individuals (7 parties Day 1, 5 parties Day 2): Ron and Nancy Donnelly (Cold Lake), Nancy Dufour, Chris Etue (Rapid View, Sask), Alicia Ferri (Kelowna, BC) Lex Hedley, Del Huget (Edmonton), Richard Klauke (Vilna), Geoff Peruniak (Athabasca), Phil Shore, Ted Hindmarch (Gibbons) **Plus** Feeder watch x 2 Tom Cooper, Mado Shore.

Area Covered: 20 Mile 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, Crane Lake, Manitokan Lake, Margaurite 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 23°C (Mean Temp 15 °C)

Wind speed: 4 to 35 km/hr. Avg 7 km/h. Below 7km/hr through until noon then increased in afternoon hours with highest winds in evening.

Wind direction: fairly constant at E/NE in morning switching to NNW throughout afternoon/evening hours.

Precipitation: Light Rain 5-7 PM

Comments: Over 18 hours of visible light. Temps near seasonal average (8 to 21C) (Mostly Cloudy to Partly Cloudy. Winds increased to above 20km/hr after 5PM. Light rain showers between 5-7PM.

Day 2: Temp. 8 to 18°C (Mean Temp 13°C)

Wind speed: Very breezy through day. Wind 15 km/h to 28 km/h from N/NNW.
Avg 17 km/h.

Precipitation:N/A

Comments: Temps slightly below seasonal average (9 to 21C). Clear through 7AM then partly cloudy until clearing again from 6-10PM. Cool north wind.

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage: 1012 km; by vehicle 937.4; on foot 22.6 km; by boat 5 km

Total team hours: 89.75 hr; by vehicle 69.25 hr; on foot 22.6 hr; by boat 2hr;
Feederwatch 2hr

Number of Species: 144 (+ 9 CW)

Number of Birds: 19,997 (+ 11 CW)

Other species seen during count week: 9 (1 x Northern Harrier, Peregrine Falcon, Virginia Rail, Caspian Tern, Great Horned Owl, Winter Wren, Black-Throated Green Warbler, and Palm Warbler; and 3 x Sabine's Gull)

Highlights: The total species reported this year (144 + 9CW) was once again below previous year averages (163), even with count week species added. These results can be partly attributed to some abnormal spring weather over the migration route delaying many migrants, as well as poor birding weather on the Sunday. The Cold Lake area was also once again enjoying a fairly wet spring with very high-water levels in the wetlands. The high individual count this year can be attributed mainly to large numbers of Franklin Gulls arriving on nesting colonies (ie Jesse and Charlotte Lakes and others) and migrant flocks still moving through the area. Higher water levels may also have contributed to the absence of Yellow Rail where they have previously been encountered – however, they may also not yet have arrived. These same high-water levels and the late snows may have negatively impacted some of the early water-nesting birds such as the grebes and Franklin Gulls, as rising water may have flooded nests as it was noted that their reed bed nesting habitat has been leveled by the weight of snow. High water and lack of mud flats/shoreline also negatively impacted the area as a migration stopover for shorebirds, with many of these species not observed this year. For example, the small numbers of American Avocets located on a lake NW of La Corey was well below that normally found there and may have been indicative of higher water levels or a later arrival date. Late spring weather events may also have impacted migration of many of the insect eating birds – swallows, flycatchers, etc. were present in only small numbers and some species were not noted back yet. Several other arctic or northern migrants also may already have passed through. Many of the species were also not encountered during count week efforts which was indicative that there were probably fewer migrants and resident birds yet around.

Weather conditions on scouting days preceding the count and in the early part of Day 1 were excellent, but high cool north winds on Day 2 resulted in poor birding conditions later in the weekend. A planned boat outing on Cold Lake on Saturday evening was cancelled due to a squall front moving through.

From on regular “A” list, Canada Goose topped out the Waterfowl numbers, with Mallard not far behind followed by Lesser Scaup and Blue-Winged Teal. 20 Warbler species were tallied (CW included) with Tennessee Warbler and Ovenbird topping the numbers as could be expected. Many of the warbler species were only encountered back in small numbers. Other Songbird numbers were led by Red-Winged Blackbird, followed by Cliff Swallow.

Highlights from our C list (birds observed on less than 25% of counts) were a single House Finch found in Bonnyville, along with a CW Virginia Rail and Caspian Tern. Sabine’s Gull (3 observed on count week) have been moved up to our B list (25-75% of counts) as they have been showing up more regularly during our count weekend. Also from the B list was a single Snow Goose (on a small lake north of Bonnyville), a Hooded Merganser, Sedge Wrens, Mountain Bluebird, and Nashville Warbler, along with a CW Peregrine Falcon.

Coyote Lake

Date: May 27, 28, 2017

Compiler: Javan Green

Participants: Ashley Hillman, Javan Green, Penny Green, Courtney Kelly

Area Covered: Coyote Lake, Twin Lakes, Pigeon Lake, Strawberry Creek

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 9 to 24°C

Wind speed: 0 to 20 km/hr. Wind direction: N/A

Precipitation: N/A

Day 2: Temp. 9 to 20°C

Precipitation: N/A

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage: 168.5 km; by vehicle 160; on foot 8.5 km

Total team hours: 8 hr; by vehicle 2 hr; on foot 6 hr.

Number of Species: 83 (+ 2 CW)

Number of Birds: 577 (+ 3 CW)

Other species seen during count week: Cedar Waxwing (2), Purple Martin (1)

Highlights: Cinnamon Teal, Sandhill Crane

Crooked Lake, Athabasca County

Date: May 27, 2017

Compiler: Joan Sherman

Participants: One participant this year: Joan Sherman

Area Covered: Trails on 32-acre wooded site bordering Crooked Lake

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 14 to 24°C

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

Precipitation: nil

Team Distance/Hours: Total team mileage on foot: 5 km

Total team hours on foot: 4 hr

Number of Species: 46

Number of Birds: 196

Crowsnest Pass

Date: May 24, 25, 2017

Compiler: Merylyn Liddell

Participants: Mike Bentley, Jesse Chamberlain, Denise Coccioloni-Amatto, Alistair Des Moulins, Gail Des Moulins, Doug Dolman, Teresa Dolman, Monica Field, Lisa Gaunt, Carol Hungar, Merylyn Liddell, Shirley Linderman, Pat Lucas, David McIntyre, Karen Montalbetti, Doug Nicholson, Karen Nicholson, Monica Primrose, Diane Stinson, Nel van Kamer

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, Lundbreck, Cowley, Todd Creek day use area, Day 2: Hwy 22 and connectors to the Gap, including Chapel Rock Rd., Wildcat Ranch Rd., Willow Valley Rd.

Weather:

Day 1: Temp. 8° to 18°C

Wind speed: strong, gusting to 74 kph;

Wind direction: NNE

Precipitation: brief scatters of rain (and snow at higher altitudes)

Day 2: Temp. 7° to 11°C, then falling to 4° before end of count

Wind speed: moderate to 32 kph;

Wind direction: NNE

Precipitation: insignificant

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage: 226.5 km; by vehicle 205/2; on foot 21.3 km.

Total team hours: 42.1 hr; by vehicle 26.8 hr; on foot 15.3 hr.

Number of Species: 135 (+ 5 CW)

Number of Birds: 2,957

Other species seen during count week: Cooper's Hawk, Western Wood-Pewee, Say's Phoebe, Brown Creeper, Lark Sparrow.

Mammals White-tailed Deer (23), Mule Deer (19), Columbian Ground Squirrel (50), Richardson's Ground Squirrel (25), chipmunk (4), Red Squirrel (43), Muskrat (1), Coyote (3), Bighorn Sheep (3), Elk (3), bear (1 -species not determined)

Highlights: At one stop a group of birders was watching an aerial battle between a Common Raven and a Ferruginous Hawk when a Swainson's Hawk jumped into the fray. A Bald Eagle just coming into adult plumage joined the fight, followed by a subadult Golden Eagle—an incredible display of doggedness and aerial manoeuvres, over in about five minutes. At their next stop, the same group spotted another raven sitting in a field beside a Bald Eagle. The eagle appeared to be perched on a carcass, which the raven had an eye on. The raven harassed the eagle until the larger bird eventually left (perhaps because it had already had its fill and wasn't prepared to scrap over scraps).

Other highlights: - a lingering look at very vocal northern waterthrush - 3 pairs of harlequins riding the rapids at The Gap

Fort McMurray

Date: May 27, 28, 2017

Compiler: Christine Godwin

Participants: 28 people

Area Covered: Areas north, south and in town of Fort McMurray

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 4 to 25°C

Wind speed: 5 to 25 km/hr. Wind direction: WSW

Precipitation: none

Comments: mostly sunny day, warmed up quickly with winds in the afternoon

Day 2: Temp. 5 to 18°C

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

Precipitation: none

Comments: very similar to day 1, mostly sunny

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage: 353.9 km; by vehicle 288.07; on foot 65.83 km

Total team hours: 56.8 hr; by vehicle 13.25 hr; on foot 43.55 hr.

Number of Species: 131 (+ 3 CW)

Number of Birds: 4423

Other species seen during count week: Tundra Swan, American Bittern, Ross's Goose

Highlights: Lark Sparrow, fledgling ravens, Black Bear with cub, lots of caterpillars invading around Beacon Hill in the aspen burn, tall aspen regrowth in the hard burned areas of Beacon Hill

Lac La Biche

Date: May 27, 28, 2016

Compiler: Jennifer Okrainec

Participants: 18 total, Bernie & Millie Gauthier, Clara McArthur, Joe Neiderlietner

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. 4 to 22°C

Wind speed: 0 to 10km/hr.

Precipitation: 0

Comments: sunny and clear

Day 2: Temp. 4 to 23°C

Wind speed: 10 to 25 km/hr. Wind direction: W

Precipitation: none

Comments: sunny and clear

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage: 356 km; by vehicle 350 km; on foot 6 km

Total team hours: 39 hr; by vehicle 32hr; on foot 7 hr.

Number of Species: 122

Number of Birds: 2573

Lethbridge

Date: May 27, 28, 2017

Compiler: Teresa Dolman

Participants: Randall Barley, Veronica Barley, Victoria Barley, Dana Blouin, Francois Blouin, Kenya Blouin, Luca Blouin, Douglas Dolman, Teresa Dolman, Graeme Greenlee, Pat Greenlee, Jennifer Mather, Mira Vanhala. eBird lists were also used from Chris Charlesworth, Chris Davidson, Monica Nugent, David Scott, Rynel Wickend, Stu Wickend and Matt Yawney.

Area Covered:

Weather:

Day 1: Temp. 10 to 25°C

Wind speed: 15 to 26 km/hr. Wind direction: WNW

Precipitation: 0 mm

Day 2: Temp. 10 to 22°C

Wind speed: 5 to 18 km/hr. Wind direction: NW

Precipitation: 0 mm

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage: 88 km; by vehicle 62 km; on foot 26 km

Total team hours: 29.1 hr; by vehicle 8.7 hr; on foot 20.4 hr.

Number of Species: 120 (+ 9 CW)

Number of Birds: 4856

Other species seen during count week: Common Loon, Bald Eagle, Prairie Falcon, Solitary Sandpiper, Dunlin, Veery, Townsend's Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Lark Bunting

Highlights: The 120 species tallied this year slightly exceeds the long-term average of 116. No new species were added to the overall list, but Greater Yellowlegs was seen for only the second time and Wood Duck for only the fourth time in this count's 41-year history.

Medicine Hat

Date: May 28, 2017

Compiler: Marty Drut

Participants: 39 – Barry Anderson, Judy Anderson, Marie AuCoin, Darlene Black, Jim Black, Wendy Blackwell, Eileen Cowtan, Marty Drut, Mackenzie Fai, Bob Frew, Corlaine Gardner, Rob Gardner, Lauren Hider, Sue Higgins, Dale Holmes, Jim Knelson, Cam Lockerbie, Gary Martin, Genevieve Mathieu, Dave McKenzie, Cash Moore, Maia Petersen, Colton Prin, Jo-Anne Reynolds, Donna Robinson, Dan Schiebelbein, Mark Schiebelbein, John Slater, Elaine Spitzer, Milt Spitzer, Donna Steele, Charmaine Trottier, Angela Turner, Ian Turner, Ben Velner, Michael Velner, Ian Wallis, Rob Wapple, Ivan Zigmunic

Area Covered: Medicine Hat and surrounding

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 7 to 22°C

Wind speed: 4 to 32 km/hr. Wind direction: S-SE

Precipitation: None

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage: 653 km; by vehicle 530 km; on foot 123 km

Total team hours: 101.5 hr; by vehicle 35.25 hr; on foot 64.25 hr.

Number of Species: 128

Number of Birds: 8625

Other species seen during count week: None

Highlights:

The 33rd Spring Count (May 28) was blessed with good weather – temperatures were seasonal (high 22° C, low 7° C) and winds were moderate (4-32 km/hr). With these excellent conditions, 128 species were observed, which was down 2 species from 2016 but fairly typical for our count in the past 4 years. However, individual birds counted (8,529) were the lowest since the 2013 total of 7,426 (see Data Summary Table, page 2). Of note, all the Icterids were down from 2016 including an all-time low for Baltimore Oriole (15) (see Species Table, page 5). Other species down in 2017 were Canada Goose, Mallard, Great Blue Heron, Ringed-billed Gull, Rock Pigeon, Black-capped Chickadee, Vesper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, and House (English) Sparrow.

Despite some species with lower numbers, 3 species had high counts and 2 species tied a previous single year high count (see Species Table). All-time highs were observed for Cooper’s Hawk, Eurasian Collared-Dove, and Red-breasted Nuthatch. Species matching previous single year high counts were Broad-winged Hawk and Violet-green Swallow. Conversely, there were 3 species with low counts in 2017. One was the aforementioned Baltimore Oriole and the other 2 (Eastern Kingbird and Common Yellowthroat) matched previous single year low counts. One new species was observed in 2017: Black Swift (2). No species were seen exclusively during count week but not on count day.

Species missing from this year’s count that are usually seen included Common Tern, Black Tern, Golden Eagle, Solitary Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Common Nighthawk, Eastern Phoebe, Loggerhead Shrike, Brown Creeper, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Mountain Bluebird, Townsend’s Solitaire, Yellow-rumped Warbler, American Redstart, Wilson’s Warbler, Grasshopper Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Pine Siskin.

Less frequently seen species noted in 2017 were Wood Duck (1), Western Grebe (1), Osprey (4), Broad-winged Hawk (3), Upland Sandpiper (2), Short-eared Owl (5), Pileated Woodpecker (1), Say’s Phoebe (4), Veery (2), Hermit Thrush (3), Orange-crowned Warbler (1), American Tree Sparrow (2), Baird’s Sparrow (3), Lincoln’s Sparrow (2), and Chestnut-collared Longspur (3).

The top 10 for 2016 were European Starling (1,168), American Robin (787), Canada Goose (533), Common Grackle (442), Black-billed Magpie (401), Yellow Warbler (387), Western Meadowlark (378), Red-winged Blackbird (355), Rock Pigeon (312), and House Wren (285). Despite lower numbers in 2017, Canada Goose, Rock Pigeon, and 3 in the blackbird family (Common Grackle, Western Meadowlark, and Red-winged Blackbird) made the top 10.

Count effort was excellent in 2017. Participants (38) and observation hours (101.5) were down slightly from 2016 but similar in both areas to previous years (see Data Summary Table). Many thanks to all those who volunteered their time this year!

Table 1. 2017 Spring Bird Count All Time High and Low Observations.

2017 Spring Bird Count – Highs and Lows			
Species	High	Previous High	Year

Cooper's Hawk	6	4	2015
Broad-winged Hawk	3	3	1991
Eurasian-collared Dove	81	80	2016
Violet-green Swallow	61	61	2010
Red-breasted Nuthatch	32	22	2010, 2009, 1996
Species	Low	Previous Low	Year
Eastern Kingbird	12	12	1997
Common Yellowthroat	7	7	2012
Baltimore Oriole	15	19	2004

DATA SUMMARY 2013 - 2017					
	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Total Individuals	8,529	9,977	9,152	10,114	7,426
Total Bird Species	128	130	126	144	130
Total Flower Species	68	75	66	60	51
Participants	38	41	38	37	32
Total Km Walked	123	166.8	123.5	139	100.5
Total Km Driven	530	509.5	434	272	199
Hours of Observation	101.5	105	99	101.5	71.25
on foot:	64.25	64	52	70	59.25
by car:	35.25	38	37	29.5	22
feeder:	2	3	10	2	0

Milk River 2015

Date: May 27, 28, 2017

Compiler: Bob Parsons

Participants: 11

Area Covered: coulees, native grassland, ponds, sloughs, woodlots, agricultural lands, camping sites, railroads

Weather: Day 1: Temp. 15 to 25°C

 Wind speed: 5 to 10 km/hr.

 Precipitation: 0

 Comments: mostly sunny

Day 2: Temp. 16 to 24°C

 Wind speed: 5 to 15 km/hr.

 Precipitation: 0

 Comments: some gusty winds

Team Distance/Hours:

 Total team mileage: 1291.5 km; by vehicle 1283 km; on foot 8.5 km

 Total team hours: 116 hr; by vehicle 108 hr; on foot 8 hr.

Number of Species: 128

Number of Birds: 13847

Other species seen during count week: none

Highlights: 1 Glossy Ibis, 2 Semipalmated Plover, 10 Golden Eagle, 9 Spotted Towhee, 1304 Sanderling, 61 Northern Harrier (a record), 3 Yellow-breasted Chat

Taber

Date: May 27, 28, 2017

Compiler: Lloyd Bennett

Participants: James Bennett, Lloyd Bennett, Mary Bennett, Yolanda Bennett, Ben Tams

Area Covered: Taber and Vauxhall areas, Purple Springs Dunes

Weather:

Day 1: Temp. 12 to 27°C

Wind speed: 9 to 25 km/hr. Wind direction: NW

Precipitation: 0 mm

Day 2: Temp. 11 to 23°C

Wind speed: 6 to 18 km/hr. Wind direction: Variable

Precipitation: 0 mm

Team Distance/Hours: Total team mileage: 447 km; by vehicle 441 km; on foot 6 km

Total team hours: 21.5 hr; by vehicle 14 hr; on foot 7.5 hr.

Number of Species: 116 (+ 2 CW)

Number of Birds: 7683

Other species seen during count week: Whimbrel, Sanderling

Highlights: The 116 species tallied this year is slightly below the long-term average of 126. One new species was added to the overall list, that being a single Thayer's Gull.

Several Osprey were seen for only the third time in this count's 28-year history. One

"missed" species was Swainson's Thrush; it has been seen every year but not this year.

Wakomao Lake

Date: May 28, 2017

Compiler: Jim Lange

Participants: Jim Lange

Area Covered: no info available

Weather:

Temp. 15-19°C

Wind speed: 15-20km/h

Wind direction: NNW

Comments: sunny

Team Distance/Hours:

Total Team Mileage: 95 km.

Total Team Hours: 8.5 hr.

Number of Species: 52

Number of Birds: 616

Highlights: Lots of flooded fields in the Vimy area (just south of the count area), areas north of Barrhead & north of Westlock. In the Count area, the fields were surprisingly dry without the much-anticipated temporary wetlands. Some sections of the County roads were in worse shape than ever!

For whatever reason the bird species diversity just was not present. Waterfowl numbers were down (possibly they had lots of water in other locations), songbirds were

just about non-existent. Red-tailed Hawk numbers were down from other years & the Swainson's Hawks have not been in the area for 2 years now. The list of species not observed was higher than the list of ones seen or heard! Oh well, there is always next year.

Waterton Lakes National Park

Date: June 3, 4, 2017

Compiler: Teresa Dolman

Participants: James Bennett, Lloyd Bennett, Cheryl Braund, Douglas Dolman, Teresa Dolman, Graeme Greenlee, Pat Greenlee, Jenaya Launstein, Pat Lucas, Dianne Pachal, Cheryl Stuber, Melissa Vipond-Switzer. As well, eBird lists were used from Jody Allair, Yousif Attia, D & K Cowan, Gerry Fox, James Fox and Duncan Rand.

Area Covered: All roads and some trails within the Park.

Weather:

Day 1: Temp. 10 to 24°C

Wind speed: 20 to 23 km/hr. Wind direction: SW

Precipitation: 0 mm

Day 2: Temp. 11 to 22°C

Wind speed: 18 to 26 km/hr. Wind direction: SW

Precipitation: 1 mm

Team Distance/Hours:

Total team mileage: 280.25 km; by vehicle 254 km; on foot 26.25 km

Total team hours: 49.2 hr; by vehicle 25 hr; on foot 24.2 hr.

Number of Species: 123 (+ 4 CW)

Number of Birds: 1091

Other species seen during count week: Harlequin Duck, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, White-throated Sparrow, Common Grackle

Highlights: Nineteen participants drove all the roads (except for the top part of the Akamina Parkway which was closed for construction purposes) and hiked some of the trails within the Park. 2017 marks the 33rd year of the spring bird count and over that period the average number of species is 106. This year 123 species were reported, along with another four during count week.

The count added one new species to its overall list – a single Turkey Vulture was seen soaring in the sky at the upper end of the Akamina Parkway. Although at first reflection this may seem highly unusual (and, indeed, the species is listed as “Accidental” on the Park bird checklist), vultures are actually not uncommon in the mountains of southeast British Columbia, and they have lately been increasing their numbers in southern Alberta. We will likely see more of this species here in the future.

Other bird highlights include one Willet and three Red Crossbills that were each seen for only the third time in 33 years. Two birds uncommon for the Park, White-throated Sparrow (“Very Rare”) and Common Grackle (“Accidental”), were reported during count week.