

Alberta May Species Count – 2024 Results

Alberta Overall:
263 species
+ 8 count week species
160,206 birds

Fort McMurray
119 species + 18 CW

Wakomao Lk - 38 species + 1 CW
Helliwell Lk - 18 species + 1 CW

Cold Lake
170 species + 9 CW

Coyote Lake
113 species + 3 CW

Edmonton
129 species

Central AB
142 species + 1 CW

Calgary - 198 species
Airdrie – 61 species + 4 CW

Bow Valley / Kananaskis
114 species + 4 CW

Brooks / Lake Newell
153 species + 5 CW

Medicine Hat
118 species

Lethbridge
128 species + 14 CW

Beauvais Lake
63 species

Taber
138 species + 2 CW

Waterton
128 species + 7 CW

Writing-on-Stone / Milk R
131 species + 12 CW

Cardston
125 species + 3 CW

Alberta May Species Count 2024 – Bird Count Results and Commentary

Alberta Totals

Count Results

Number of Species: 263 (2% below the 15-yr average of 270 species and below last year's total of 267)

Number of Birds: 160,206 (22% below the 15-yr average of 205,714 birds, and below last year's 174,712)

Count Week Species: Across Alberta, 8 species were seen on the days immediately before or after count day, but not on count day at any location: White-rumped Sandpiper and Arctic Tern (Cold Lake), Sabine's Gull (Cold Lake & Lethbridge), Long-eared Owl and Bohemian Waxwing (Brooks), American Goshawk (Fort McMurray), Red-headed Woodpecker (Cardston), Lark Bunting (Writing-on-Stone)

Effort

Number of Participants: 445 (8% above the 15-yr average of 404 people, and just below last year's 451)

Total Team Hours: 1,258 (19% below the 15-yr average, and down from last year)

Total Km Traveled: 10,310 (17% below the 15-yr average, and down from last year)

Number of Locations: 18 (right at 15-yr average and same number as last year)

Alberta Count Compiler: Lara Fitzpatrick

Comments

Interesting or Unusual Species:

- An **Ash-throated Flycatcher** was reported in the Writing-on-Stone count – this is a new species for the count, and brings the cumulative species count to 341 species since 1976. This is an Alberta rarity and has been reported to the Alberta Bird Records Committee.
- A **Black-chinned Hummingbird** was reported in Cardston – seen only six times in the count back to 1976. This is an Alberta rarity; no details are available about the ABRC reporting status.
- Two **Lewis's Woodpeckers** were reported in the Calgary count – one in the middle of the city, a much-reported bird that stuck around for weeks, and one in the Sheep River Basin south-west of the city (8 reports since 1976)

Other Observations or Highlights:

- This was a low year for overall bird numbers, with 45,000 fewer birds seen vs. the 15-year average. Over 70% of this drop was due to low numbers of gulls (especially Franklin's, down over 12,500 birds or 43%), water birds (many species, but especially Canada Goose), and shorebirds (nearly all species, especially Black-bellied Plover). Swallow counts were also well below average, especially Cliff Swallows (down over 3,700 or 45%).
- Four species saw an all-time high, including widespread species (Common Grackle), and more narrowly distributed species like Blackburnian Warbler, Fox Sparrow and Loggerhead Shrike.
- Expected species that were missed this year are Yellow Rail, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Sabine's Gull, American Goshawk, and Lark Bunting (these last three were reporting during count week). All of these species have been seen 14 or 15 of the last 15 years.
- Four species were observed at every count location in Alberta: Canada Goose, Mallard, Barn Swallow and Red-winged Blackbird. 26 species were observed in only one count location.

Airdrie

Area Covered: City of Airdrie
Count Date: May 18, 2024
Count Organizer / Compiler: Andrew Hart

Count Results

Number of Species: 61

Number of Birds: 1,201

Number of Local Count Week Species: 4

List of Count Week Species: Barrow's Goldeneye, Great Blue Heron, Gray-cheeked Thrush, White-crowned Sparrow

Effort

Number of Participants: 1

Total Team Hours: 11.0

Total Km Traveled: 68.0

Comments

General: This is the first year the Airdrie count has been included in the Alberta May Species Count summary.

Weather & Conditions: Mostly sunny, temperatures around 10 deg C, occasional rain and sometimes quite windy.

Beauvais Lake Provincial Park

Area Covered: Within Beauvais Lake Provincial Park boundaries

Count Date: June 7, 2024

Count Organizer / Compiler: Teresa Dolman

Count Results

Number of Species: 63

Number of Birds: 286

Number of Local Count Week Species: 0

Effort

Number of Participants: 3

Total Team Hours: 7.4

Total Km Traveled: 15.5

Comments

Observations and Highlights: Steller's Jay was seen for only the second time on this count, and both Barred Owl and Turkey Vulture were recorded for only the third time.

Weather & Conditions: Temperature: 11-19°C; Wind SSE 9-26 km/hr.

Bow Valley and Kananaskis

Area Covered: 15km circle centred on North face of Mount McGillivray. Includes Bow Valley Provincial Park, Exshaw, Highway 40 to Kananaskis Village

Count Date: May 26,2024

Count Organizer: Cliff Hansen

Count Compiler: Briana Van Den Bussche

Count Results

Number of Species: 114

Number of Birds: 2,373

Number of Local Count Week Species: 4

List of Count Week Species: Cooper's Hawk, Horned Lark, American Dipper, Baltimore Oriole

Effort

Number of Participants: 27

Total Team Hours: 58.4

Total Km Traveled: 122.5

Comments

Interesting or Unusual Species: Turkey Vulture.

Note: possible Plumbeous Vireo reported during count. This would be a very rare sighting for Alberta so it's not included in summary results pending confirmation of any rare bird reporting that may be done by the observer.

Other Observations or Highlights: 2nd year observing Turkey Vulture. 1 black bear, 10 elk, 8 mule deer, 6 white-tail deer, 2 snowshoe hare, 14 red squirrel, 7 Columbian ground squirrel, 1 golden-mantled ground squirrel, 6 least chipmunk.

Weather & Conditions: 5 to 20 degrees Celsius. Mostly sunny. Light west wind with gusts to 20-30km/hr. Estimated 25% tree leaf-out.

Brooks - Lake Newell

Area Covered: 20 mile radius from centre of circle at Hwy 873 and TWP 180 plus Majorville Medicine Wheel area. Cultivated and irrigated fields, native shortgrass and long-grass prairie, irrigation canals, reservoirs and ephemeral ponds.

Count Date: May 18 & 19, 2024

Count Organizer / Compiler: Debra Hornsby and Donna Wieckowski

Count Results

Number of Species: 153

Number of Birds: 26,839

Number of Local Count Week Species: 5

List of Count Week Species: American Golden-Plover, Long-eared Owl, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Bohemian Waxwing

Effort

Number of Participants: 34

Total Team Hours: 155.5

Total Km Traveled: 1,712.0

Comments

Interesting or Unusual Species: First ever Bohemian Waxwing (CW only) - have photos. Brings count total species including CW to 255! Flock of snow geese lingering on Timko Reservoir. Two Eurasian Wigeon in different zones.

Other Observations or Highlights: 8 below 24 year count day species average - 3 higher than last year. Total individual birds almost 1/2 of average. Birds found this year that have been seen in less than 10 years on the count: Tundra Swan, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Long-eared Owl, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Black & White Warbler. Misses of regular birds seen 20-25 years: Short-billed Dowitcher, Lesser Yellowlegs, Greater Yellowlegs, Thick-billed Longspur, Grasshopper Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Spotted Towhee.

Weather & Conditions: Cool, on and off wind and rain. More water in ephemeral ponds than in prior years.

Calgary

Area Covered: 80 km circle centered on Centre Street Bridge in downtown Calgary, encompassing 20,114 sq km. The area extends to just south of Olds in the North, just north of Nanton in the south, just west of Exshaw and Highway 40 in the west and just past Standard in the east.

The area covers portions of the Rocky Mountains, Foothills, Parkland and Grassland biomes, and is within the western Central Flyway and eastern Pacific (Rocky Mountain) Flyway of bird migration. The area falls just east of the Rocky Mountains, which served as a barrier that separated distinct populations of many species that lived in North America during several periods of glaciation.

Count Date: May 25-26, 2024

Count Organizer: Andrew Hart

Count Compiler: Lara Fitzpatrick

Count Results

Number of Species: 198

Number of Birds: 60,251

Number of Local Count Week Species: 0

Effort

Number of Participants: 89

Total Team Hours: 355.0

Total Km Traveled: 2,257.5

Comments

Interesting or Unusual Species: Unusual species this year included:

- six Wild Turkeys in the Sheep River area southwest of the city (reported only 3 times in Calgary count history back to 1979);
- two Lewis's Woodpeckers, one a recent celebrity bird at Carburn Park in the city and the other in the Sheep River area (5 reports since 1979);
- an American Tree Sparrow in the Sheep River area (5 reports since 1979);
- three Lark Sparrows in two areas east and south-east of the city (10 reports since 1979);
- two Rough-legged Hawks east of Calgary (11 reports since 1979).

Other Observations or Highlights: This year, species and bird counts were well below average. 198 species were observed vs. a 15-year average of 210, and just over 60,200 birds were reported, down 24% vs. the 15-yr average of 79,600.

Challenging conditions on count weekend were likely a factor, but migration timing may also have had an effect. The single largest factor in the low count is Franklin's Gulls (6,800 of the 20,000 drop vs. 15-yr avg), with California gulls next. The gulls along with drops in Cliff Swallows and Eared Grebes make up just over half of the drop vs. average.

New records were set for seven species: Snow Goose, Wild Turkey, Osprey, Northern Flicker, Black-capped Chickadee, Purple Martin and Common Grackle. Ferruginous Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Lewis's Woodpecker and Hairy Woodpecker counts tied with prior records.

The drop in species count is spread out over a number of groups - fewer species of raptors, hummingbirds, gulls/terns and finches were reported than average. We missed some "regulars", but that was mostly offset by a few unexpected species.

We had about the same number of participants as average, but distance (-47%) and time (-15%) were down. Some of this is likely the switch to using eBird instead of templates - we see only the mileage reported in checklists now, where in prior years people may have reported their full driving distance.

Weather & Conditions: Conditions were challenging across the count area over count weekend. It was generally cool, with variable rain (light showers in some areas, downpours in others), wind gusting up to 50-60 kph, and occasional sunny breaks.

Cardston

Area Covered: 50-km radius circle around Cardston
Count Date: May 30-31, 2024
Count Organizer / Compiler: Lloyd Bennett / Teresa Dolman

Count Results

Number of Species: 125
Number of Birds: 2,250
Number of Local Count Week Species: 3
List of Count Week Species: Evening Grosbeak, Cassin's Finch, Red-headed Woodpecker

Effort

Number of Participants: 6
Total Team Hours: 23.0
Total Km Traveled: 334.0

Comments

Interesting or Unusual Species: A Red-headed Woodpecker was seen in Magrath during count week. A report, with photo, was posted on eBird, checklist #S179946859.

Although no new species were recorded, there were a number seen for only the second time ever: Black-chinned Hummingbird, Dusky Flycatcher, Pileated Woodpecker, Red Crossbill and Gray-cheeked Thrush. In addition, Alder Flycatcher was recorded for only the third time.

Weather & Conditions: Temperature both days ranged from 8 to 16°C. Wind both days ranged from 7 to 25 km/hr. No precipitation.

Central Alberta

Area Covered: Central Alberta zone was counted in 15 zones. Habitat is grassy, dry, and slightly rolling hills. Red Deer area, Lacombe, Rimbey, Dry Island area, etc.

Count Date: May 25-26, 2024

Count Organizer / Compiler: John and Shelley-Anne Goulet

Count Results

Number of Species: 142

Number of Birds: 11,279

Number of Local Count Week Species: 1

List of Count Week Species: Surf Scoter

Effort

Number of Participants: 48

Total Team Hours: 119.9

Total Km Traveled: 1,197.6

Comments

Interesting or Unusual Species: Surf Scoter pair seen at Fleming Slough in Penhold.

Weather & Conditions: Temperatures ranged anywhere from -2 to 20 degrees Celsius. The wind direction was variable as was the cloud cover (anywhere from 10 to 100%). Wind speeds were calm for the most part - around 10-15 km/hr. The only exception was in Zone 17, where the winds went to 50 km/hr.

Cold Lake

Area Covered: 20 Mi RADIUS COUNT CIRCLE CENTER 5427.30N 11030.00W.

Area of transition between Parkland Agricultural areas and Boreal forest, with many lakes, sloughs and wetlands of various sizes. The count area included Cold Lake Provincial Park, English Bay, North Bay, HorseShoe Bay and Marina, Jesse and Charlotte Lake, Ernestina Lake, Angling Lake, Ethel, Hilda and Marie Lakes, Crane Lake, Margaurite Lake, Manitokan Lake, Moose Lake PP and Muriel Lake MD Park. This covered areas within WR51-55, WR40-45, WR30-33, WR 20-22, WR10-14, and WR01-04, WR23,24,25 and WR 34,35 were covered this count. Count areas in WR15, WR25-26 and WR 35 received only cursory coverage due to remoteness and limited count participation. Moose Lake and Marie Lake parks were only covered during count week. Jesse and Charlotte Lake wetland/shorebird areas also unfortunately received much of their coverage during count week with limited weekend coverage due participation shortfalls.

Count Date: May 25/26, 2024

Count Organizer / Compiler: Ted Hindmarch

Count Results

Number of Species: 170

Number of Birds: 11,534

Number of Local Count Week Species: 9

List of Count Week Species: Greater Scaup, White-winged Scoter, Long-billed Dowitcher, White-rumped Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Sabine's Gull, Arctic Tern, Veery, Blackpoll Warbler

Effort

Number of Participants: 28

Total Team Hours: 110.0

Total Km Traveled: 882.4

Comments

Interesting or Unusual Species: A probable extra-limital Prairie Falcon was observed perched overlooking the cleared Wolf Lake Community Pasture lands north of La Corey 26 May. See eBird report <https://ebird.org/checklist/S177474294>.

A possible Arctic Tern, or Arctic Tern hybrid, was observed on Moose Lake's Vaseaux Beach dock of 23 May and possibly again 26,27 May. eBird reports <https://ebird.org/checklist/S176571198>, <https://ebird.org/checklist/S177527397>, and <https://ebird.org/checklist/S177385673>

Other Observations or Highlights: This was our 24th annual count with 170 species reported for count weekend, and an additional 9 reported during count week. The overall total of 179 is slightly above average of the 176 for the count's previous 23 years, and the count weekend number of 170 is up from the 166 average. The number seen only on count

week was close to the 9.5 average. This year we had an earlier count period, with cooler, wetter pre-count weather and fewer field participants. Next year again will be an early date with the count in 2025 on May 24/25.

This year we had 7 participants in the field, along with contributions from 13 feeder watchers and 8 visiting eBirders.

Swans: For the 3rd straight year and only our 3rd count record, swans were reported on our count. This year a pair of Tundra/Trumpeter (probably Trumpeter) Swans were observed at Crane (Moore) Lake (S177268207) but were too distant to confirm. Our 1st count record of Trumpeter Swan was in 2022 also at Crane Lake.

Geese: A late migrating pair of Greater White Fronted Geese (S178681073 S178682578) were reported at Charlotte Lake; a first report since 2013 and 10th count week record.

Pine Grosbeaks were reported by a feeder watcher with a flock of 15 on the weekend in River Ridge Estates (S179166843, S182145055) and 1 was observed during the CW BBS survey. eBird reports indicate an extensive southern migration of this species and many May records of late returns to the northern breeding areas.

Other "C List" species (seen on less than 25% of Counts) are as follows: Black-Necked Stilt -5th Record. Continue to nest in Jessie/Charlotte Lake area - multiple eBird reports; Short-Billed Dowitcher 3rd count record - Manatokan/Iron River Wetlands x1 (S177041955) and Big Meadow slough x1 (S177314683). In addition, 2 were reported at Jesse Lake CW with photos (S176562319). A House Finch was reported in CLPP, our 6th count record (S177874139) and Bobolinks were once again on nesting territory for 6th year in Bonnyville/Ft Kent area with 1 on reported count weekend (S177465174) and 4 during count week at 2 locations.

Significant A List misses (seen 75% plus years) include Yellow Rail, American Golden Plover, and White-Crowned Sparrow.

21 of the expected 22 Warbler species were seen on the weekend, with the 22nd reported count week - the most numerous was Yellow Warbler, followed by Tennessee and Ovenbird.

Top billing for overall numbers goes to Franklin's Gull, followed by Eared Grebe, Black Tern and Red-Winged Blackbird.

Weather & Conditions: Day 1: Partly to Mostly Cloudy. Low Temp 3C High Temp 14C (avg for date 7-17C). Wind E to SE 4 km/h incr thru afternoon/eve to 20 km/h.

Day 2: Clear to Mostly Clear in AM, Partly to Mostly Cloudy in PM. Low Temp 1C High Temp 19C (avg for date 7-17C) Wind N to NE 4 to 17 km/h. There was some early morning fog/mist in some areas.

Count weekend was preceded by a week of wet, cool weather which only started to improve on the weekend. There was precipitation and below avg temps through much of May. Count hours of daylight 16hr 37min & 16hr 40min. Water levels were variable with most sloughs and lakes still lower than last year's count providing several good mud flats on some of the shallow water bodies.

Coyote Lake

Area Covered: Coyote Lake, Pigeon Lake (west side), Battle Lake, Twin Lakes, Medicine Lake Provincial Grazing Reserve, Genesee Lake, Keephills Cooling Ponds.

Habitats include cultivated, pasture, deciduous forest, mixed forest, swamp, marsh, lake, creek, river.

Count Date: May 25, 2024

Count Organizer / Compiler: Javan Green

Count Results

Number of Species: 113

Number of Birds: 1,474

Number of Local Count Week Species: 3

List of Count Week Species: Common Merganser, White-crowned Sparrow, Harris's Sparrow

Effort

Number of Participants: 5

Total Team Hours: 18.0

Total Km Traveled: 320.0

Comments

Interesting or Unusual Species: Bobolink, Brown Thrasher and Chestnut-sided Warbler are new observations for the count. Also had a Harris's sparrow during count week.

Weather & Conditions: Day 1: 3°C to 16°C, 5-15 km/h wind, 25-85% cloud; Day 2: 9°C to 15°C, 5-10 km/h wind, overcast with periods of rain

Edmonton

Area Covered: 80 km circle centred at south end of Groat Road Bridge: 53 degrees 32', 113 degrees 32' BUT excluding Wakamao Lake Area in the north.

Includes riparian, aspen parkland, agricultural, and boreal.

Count Date: May 25/26, 2024

Count Organizer / Compiler: Brian Stephens / Edmonton Nature Club

Count Results

Number of Species: 129

Number of Birds: 3,771

Number of Local Count Week Species: 0

Effort

Number of Participants: 95

Total Team Hours: 38.2

Total Km Traveled: 83.0

Comments

None provided

Fort McMurray

Area Covered: North & South of Fort McMurray & residential areas

Count Date: May 25, 2024

Count Organizer / Compiler: Christine Godwin

Count Results

Number of Species: 119

Number of Birds: 3,363

Number of Local Count Week Species: 18

List of Count Week Species: Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, Red-breasted Merganser, Common Nighthawk, Long-billed Dowitcher, Forster's Tern, Double-crested Cormorant, Osprey, American Goshawk, Merlin, Western Wood-Pewee, Warbling Vireo, Brown Creeper, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Cedar Waxwing, American Pipit, Evening Grosbeak, Mourning Warbler

Effort

Number of Participants: 23

Total Team Hours: 48.5

Total Km Traveled: 235.1

Comments

Observations or Highlights: Horned grebe pushing its dead partner.

Weather & Conditions: 12 to 16C, winds from the south between 10 and 25km/hr, mostly sunny on day 1. Winds from the north on day 2, 14 to 19C and overcast

Helliwell Lake

Area Covered: Helliwell Lake, Athabasca. Surveyed from RR 253 at the west end of the lake and Twp 610 along the north side of the lake.

Count Date: May 26, 2024

Count Organizer / Compiler: Jim Lange

Count Results

Number of Species: 18

Number of Birds: 83

Number of Local Count Week Species: 1

List of Count Week Species: Trumpeter Swan

Effort

Number of Participants: 1

Total Team Hours: 1.0

Total Km Traveled: 6.0

Comments

Observations or Highlights: At Helliwell L. the water levels are high, so there is hardly any shorebird habitat with no mud flats. There are very few ducks on the lake currently so not much to count. Unsure of the situation with the nesting Bald Eagles; yesterday only one was standing on the edge of the nest and today that bird was missing (later sighted in a nearby tree).

Weather & Conditions: Mainly sunny with high thin cloud layer. +13C with light winds.

Lethbridge

Area Covered: A 50 Km circle around the City of Lethbridge

Count Date: May 25 & 26, 2024

Count Organizer / Compiler: Teresa Dolman

Count Results

Number of Species: 128

Number of Birds: 6,660

Number of Local Count Week Species: 14

List of Count Week Species: Sabine's Gull, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Waterthrush, Tennessee Warbler, American Redstart, Blackpoll Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Black-headed Grosbeak

Effort

Number of Participants: 13

Total Team Hours: 46.0

Total Km Traveled: 147.0

Comments

Interesting or Unusual Species: Sabine's Gull (count week), Pacific Loon, Eurasian Wigeon

Other Observations or Highlights: Pacific Loon and Eurasian Wigeon were seen for only the second time on this count. Trumpeter Swan and Ovenbird were seen for only the fourth time. Sabine's Gull would have been a new species for the count but was seen during count week.

Weather & Conditions: Temp: 6-18°C; Wind 17-50 km/hr

Medicine Hat

Area Covered: ABMH is a 24 km diameter circle with the city of Medicine Hat in the centre. Circle includes the town of Redcliff and hamlet of Dunmore.

Area includes the South Saskatchewan river and several streams/riparian areas and a significant amount of agricultural land.

Count Date: May 26, 2024

Count Organizer / Compiler: Genevieve Mathieu

Count Results

Number of Species: 118

Number of Birds: 6,230

Number of Local Count Week Species: 0

Effort

Number of Participants: 33

Total Team Hours: 78.4

Total Km Traveled: 466.4

Comments

Weather & Conditions: Temp: 19.1/7.0°C; Max Wind: 34km/h; Past precip: ~110mm throughout May; Visibility: 16.1km.

Taber

Area Covered: 50-km radius around Taber
Count Date: May 24 & 25, 2024
Count Organizer / Compiler: Lloyd Bennett / Teresa Dolman

Count Results

Number of Species: 138
Number of Birds: 8,274
Number of Local Count Week Species: 2
List of Count Week Species: Red-naped Sapsucker, Rock Wren

Effort

Number of Participants: 6
Total Team Hours: 29.0
Total Km Traveled: 477.0

Comments

Interesting or Unusual Species: A first for this count was a single Northern Shrike, a late migrant.

Other Observations or Highlights: Solitary Sandpiper was recorded for only the third time on this count.

Weather & Conditions: Temperature for both days ranged between 6 and 21°C; wind was NW 0-20 km/hr. 4 mm rain on Saturday.

Wakomao Lake

Area Covered: Wakamao Lake, Athabasca. South and north of Hwy 18.

Count Date: May 25, 2024

Count Organizer / Compiler: Jim Lange

Count Results

Number of Species: 38

Number of Birds: 287

Number of Local Count Week Species: 1

List of Count Week Species: Trumpeter Swan

Effort

Number of Participants: 1

Total Team Hours: 6.8

Total Km Traveled: 57.0

Comments

Observations or Highlights: Overall a lot of the wetland areas are now being taken over by cattails with the low water levels. The area has had quite a bit of rain recently but nothing that was going to change the surface water situation. With no temporary wetlands and an early spring migration the overall number of species is low.

Weather & Conditions: Mix of sun & cloud, +6C to +13C, winds SE 25 km/h. Low water levels.

Waterton

Area Covered: Within Waterton Lakes National Park boundaries.

Count Date: June 1 & 2, 2024

Count Organizer / Compiler: Melanie Triganne / Teresa Dolman

Count Results

Number of Species: 128

Number of Birds: 1,658

Number of Local Count Week Species: 7

List of Count Week Species: Sharp-shinned Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, Cassin's Vireo, Bank Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Tennessee Warbler

Effort

Number of Participants: 18

Total Team Hours: 42.7

Total Km Traveled: 140.3

Comments

Observations or Highlights: The total species number, 128, was the third highest over the 40-year period of this count. Two species were added to the overall list: House Finch and Wild Turkey. For the second time only, Black-backed Woodpecker was recorded; and for the third time only, Blue Jay and Turkey Vulture were recorded.

Weather & Conditions: Temperature both days ranged between 10 and 19°C, and wind both days ranged between 14 and 28 km/hr. Light showers on Saturday.

Writing-on-Stone / Milk River

Area Covered: N to S - Foremost to US border: E to W - Milk River to Pakowki Lake

Count Date: May 25 & 26, 2024

Count Organizer / Compiler: Debra Hornsby and Donna Wieckowski

Count Results

Number of Species: 131

Number of Birds: 12,393

Number of Local Count Week Species: 12

List of Count Week Species: Common Nighthawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Prairie Falcon, Red-eyed Vireo, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Gray Catbird, Veery, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Evening Grosbeak, Lark Bunting, Magnolia Warbler

Effort

Number of Participants: 14

Total Team Hours: 109.3

Total Km Traveled: 1,784.0

Comments

Interesting or Unusual Species: Ash-throated Flycatcher found by Donna Wieckowski, photographed by Arthur Wieckowski. Report to Alberta Bird Records Committee sent with photos and confirmed as ATFL May 31.

1st ever American Tree Sparrow on count, 2nd Harris's Sparrow, 1st ever Evening Grosbeak, 1st ever Pine Grosbeak, 3 burrowing owls (2 of them in a new spot).

Other Observations or Highlights: Very happy "The Chat Came Back". Record number of participants this year. Including count week birds we are 8 above average for species but a bit low on individuals - probably owing to the windy and rainy conditions on Sunday. But we increased our total birds seen, including count week, to 241 species!!

There was more water in the area than in many years but it didn't translate to more individual birds. Had all the regular birds - no misses. Besides the new and extremely rare birds mentioned we had 11 other irregular birds seen 6 or less years on the count.

Counters saw: Pronghorn Antelope twin babies being born, a Golden Eagle take a fox kit, a Pronghorn fight off a red fox to defend her young, swift foxes at den.

Weather & Conditions: Saturday: 9-18C, calm, clear to part clouds. Sunday: 9-17C, windy in am to extremely windy in pm, cloudy all day.

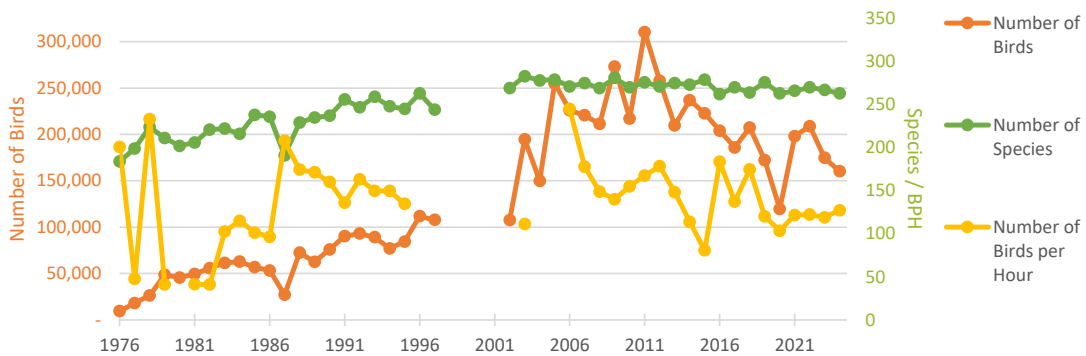
Alberta May Species Count History

The Alberta May Species Count (MSC) has been running since 1976, and has grown steadily over the years. As you might expect, records are not perfect over that period, and data is currently not available for 1980, 1983, 1985, 1996-2002, 2004 and 2005.

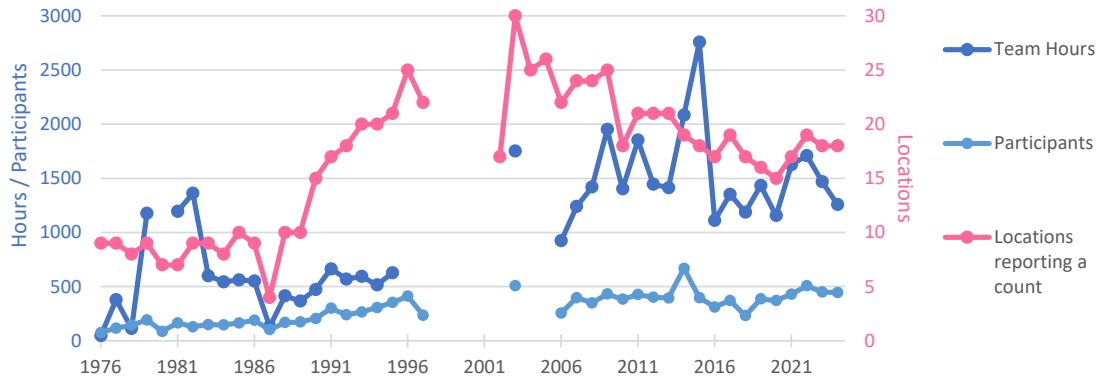
The first Alberta May Species Count identified 184 different species, and based on the data available, another 156 species have been added on count days since then. This brings us to a cumulative total of 341 species, plus another four “count week” species (observed a few days before or after the count but never on count days) since 1976.

The first Alberta MSC included 76 participants who spent 47 hours counting birds in 9 locations, with a total count of 9,441 birds. These days we average about 400 participants at 15 to 20 locations, usually spending nearly 1,600 hours and observing around 215,000 individual birds

May Species Count - Alberta Summary - Results



May Species Count - Alberta Summary - Effort



Alberta May Species Count - Cumulative Species over time

