

2004 Christmas Bird Count

SUMMARY

Grand Forks – East Grand Forks CBC

December 19, 2004

Canada Goose 1
Gadwall 2
Mallard 1
Green-winged Teal 1
Lesser Scaup 2
Gray Partridge 22
Ring-necked Pheasant 6
Sharp-tailed Grouse 1
Greater Prairie-Chicken 5
Bald Eagle (Imm.) 1
Northern Harrier 3
Sharp-shinned Hawk 2
Red-tailed Hawk CW
Rough-legged Hawk 5
American Kestrel 1
Merlin 3
Rock Pigeon 377
Eastern Screech-Owl 1
Great Horned Owl 4
Snowy Owl 1
Northern Hawk Owl 1
Great Gray Owl CW
Short-eared Owl 2
Red-bellied Woodpecker 1
Downy Woodpecker 42
Hairy Woodpecker 14
Northern Flicker 1
Pileated Woodpecker 5
Northern Shrike 4
Blue Jay 7
Black-billed Magpie 9
American Crow 155
Horned Lark 5
Black-capped Chickadee 170
Red-breasted Nuthatch 7
White-breasted Nuthatch 46
American Robin 10
Brown Thrasher 1
European Starling 1082
Bohemian Waxwing 2

Cedar Waxwing 55
American Tree Sparrow 1
Chipping Sparrow 1
Song Sparrow 1
White-throated Sparrow 2
Harris's Sparrow 1
Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco 1
Dark-eyed (Slate-col) Junco 52
Lapland Longspur 5
Snow Bunting 165
Northern Cardinal 3
Red-winged Blackbird CW
Purple Finch 4
House Finch 190
Red Crossbill 3
Common Redpoll 301
Hoary Redpoll 12
Pine Siskin 30
American Goldfinch 26
House Sparrow 1253

Total of 55 species plus one race (Oregon Junco) on Count Day. Four additional species during Count Week, giving a total of 59 species for Count Week. Total of 4108 individuals.

Observers: 22 observers in field in 11 parties, plus 10 observers at feeders only.
Time and Distance: 15 hours at feeders; 3.25 hours and 41 miles owling. Total party-hours = 65 and total party miles = 695 (10.5 hours and 14 miles on foot; 54.5 hours and 681 miles by car).

Participants in Field:

Patti Alleva, Lewis Bachmeier, Betsy Batstone-Cunningham, Charles Christianson, Richard D. Crawford, Kathy Dixon, Tim Driscoll, Ann Flower, Eve Freeberg, Ursula Flem, Mary Jane Hennemann, Alicia Kelley, Frank Kelley, Robert Kruger, Cec Lambeth, Dave Lambeth, Robert W. Lewis, Gladwin Lynne, Jeff Roswick, Pat Wilber, Russ Wilber, Deb Zaks, Bill Zaks

Feeder Watchers: Martin Brown, Glinda Crawford, Melanie Crawford, Ed Halas, Gordon Iseminger, Francis Jacobs, Cec Lambeth, Lyle Mauland, Ed Nelson, Paul Ray, Garl Rieke, Keith Trzynka.

Weather: Low and high temperatures were -13 and 17 deg Fahrenheit. Winds began at 5 mph and increased to 32 mph in the afternoon. Light snow in afternoon. Skies were overcast.

Conditions: Snow depth = 1-2 inches. Excellent crop of crabapples, fair crop of

Mountain Ash berries, and fair cone crop. Open water only where flowing, included portions of Red River, the sugar beet lagoons, a small area at the Grand Forks lagoons and springs in Kellys Slough.

Comments:

This was the 44th consecutive year for this count in the present location. The count day total of 55 species tops the previous high of 48, and the 59 species for Count Week exceeds the previous high of 58. Green-winged Teal, Northern Hawk Owl, and Great Gray Owl were new species for the count. The Great Gray was found and photographed on the last day of Count Week (Dec 22), and is believed to be the first of this species to be documented in North Dakota in many decades and perhaps the first to be recorded on a North Dakota CBC.

A warm fall, for example December temperatures were running 7 degrees above average, kept enough water open to allow five species of waterfowl to be recorded. A Brown Thrasher had been coming to the compiler's feeders since November 22. Count Day began with low temperatures but little wind, and ended under blizzard conditions. The adverse conditions seemed to keep the birds more active than usual.

Despite the diversity of birds present as indicated by the record species totals, the numbers of many species were quite low and far from their record highs. Particularly low numbers were recorded for Blue Jay and Hairy Woodpecker. The number of crows was the lowest since 1997 and one wonders if this reflects the impact of West Nile Virus, which may also be affecting other species. Of the blackbird group, only Red-winged Blackbird was recorded during Count Week. Red-tailed Hawk and Chipping Sparrow were also found during Count Week, but not Count Day. A variety of northern finches were present, but not in exceptional numbers. Pine Siskins were back in good numbers after being all-but-absent for two years.

The exceptional number of species on this count is due in large part to species found in native prairie, the grasslands enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program, and Kellys Slough National Wildlife Refuge. Springs within the refuge allow a few waterfowl to linger into mid to late December when conditions are mild. Two pairs of Northern Cardinals found Count Day/Week provide further evidence that this species is becoming established as a breeder in Grand Forks.