

SUMMARY

Grand Forks – East Grand Forks CBC

December 18, 2011

Snow Goose	CW (2 nd record)	Northern Flicker	2
Cackling Goose	20 (1 st record)	Pileated Woodpecker	7 (highest ever)
Canada Goose	3005 (highest ever)	Northern Shrike	3
Mallard	29	Blue Jay	19
Lesser Scaup	1 (3 rd record)	Black-billed Magpie	4
Common Goldeneye	1 (4 th record)	American Crow	532 (highest ever)
Common Merganser	1 (1 st record)	Horned Lark	2
Gray Partridge	37	Black-capped Chickadee	263
Ring-necked Pheasant	4	Red-breasted Nuthatch	3
Sharp-tailed Grouse	35	White-breasted Nuthatch	94
Greater Prairie-Chicken	4	Golden-crowned Kinglet	3
American White Pelican	CW (1 st record)	American Robin	14
Bald Eagle	4	European Starling	319
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	Cedar Waxwing	26
Cooper's Hawk	1	Eastern Towhee	1 (3 rd record)
Red-tailed Hawk	1	White-throated Sparrow	5
American Kestrel	CW	Harris's Sparrow	2
Merlin	1	Dark-eyed (Slate-col) Junco	200 (2 nd highest)
Rock Pigeon	1340	Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco	CW
Eurasian Collared-dove	4	Lapland Longspur	CW
Mourning Dove	2	Snow Bunting	12
Eastern Screech-owl	1	Northern Cardinal	3
Great Horned Owl	5	Purple Finch	3
Snowy Owl	CW	House Finch	253
N. Saw-whet Owl	CW	Common Redpoll	3
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1	Pine Siskin	183
Downy Woodpecker	39	American Goldfinch	18
Hairy Woodpecker	36	House Sparrow	434 (very low)

Total of 49 species on Count Day. Seven additional species plus one race (Oregon Junco) were observed during Count Week, making a total of 56 species. Total number of individuals = 6961.

Observers: 26 observers in field in 14 parties, plus 18 observers at feeders. **Time and Distance:** 32 hours at feeders; 1.5 hours and 10 miles owling (nocturnal). Total party-hours = 73 and total party miles = 698 (18 hours and 25 miles on foot; 51 hours and 669 miles by car; 25 miles and 4 hours on bicycle).

Participants in Field:

Sandy Aubol, Corey Bergsrud, Betsy Batstone-Cunningham, Charlie Christianson, Don Croeker, Greg Cain, Jane Croeker, Tim Driscoll, Ann Flower, Erik Fritzell, Eve Freeberg, Will Gosnold, Deb Hanson, Frank Kelley, Mike Jacobs, Cec Lambeth, Dave Lambeth, Gladwin Lynne, Bette Olson, Ed Olson, Steve Rossiter, Bob Seabloom, Pat Wilber, Russ Wilber, Bill Zaks, Deb Zaks

Feeder Watchers:, Tim Aubol, David Berg, Charlie Christianson, Ann Flower, Perky Hertel, Mike and Cathy Kamedula, Dave Lambeth, Doug Peters, Rhonda Poellot, Bev Rosencrans, Paul Ray, Nancy Swerdlow, Virginia Stewart, Keith Trzynka, Julia Wallin, Russ Wilbur, Deb Zaks

Weather: Temperature range: 25 to 51 deg F. Winds southerly in AM switching to northwest in afternoon, 10-17 mph. Mostly cloudy. No snow cover.

Conditions: Field crops within the circle had been completely harvested and the acreage tilled in preparation for planting season next spring. Good crop of crabapples and mountain ash. Small patches of open water were present at Kellys Slough, below the dams on the Red and Red Lake Rivers, and Grand Forks lagoons.

Comments:

The 51st Grand Forks – East Grand Forks CBC was conducted under record-breaking temperatures (high of 51 deg F), and with no snow coverage. This was likely the most thorough census ever within the circle because all minimum maintenance roads could be driven, all of the greenway trails were either walked or biked, and there were no impediments to covering city streets and alleys. Although 49 species is the 3rd highest number for count day, it was widely perceived by both observers in the country and in the city as well as feeder watchers that birds were very scarce this year. Very few birds were seen at feeders and open country was mostly devoid of birds. Due to a sizeable patch of open water at the Grand Forks lagoons, many geese were present including a first count record for Cackling Goose. The estimated 3000 Canada Geese broke the previous high by nearly 100-fold and was the most abundant species on the count. Three species of ducks were present at the lagoons, and a female Common Merganser in a spring-fed pool at Kellys Slough provided a first count record. Another first count record was American White Pelican, seen off and on at the lagoons during count week but not on count day. Where this bird spent its time when away from the lagoons is a mystery. Open field birds such as Lapland Longspur, Snow Bunting, Horned Lark, and blackbirds were all but absent. This could have been due to the complete harvest and subsequent tillage made possible by the very dry fall. Also absent (except for one Snowy Owl at the end of count week) were grassland raptors that forage on voles. A strong movement of Common Redpolls and Snowy Owls earlier in the fall did not result in good numbers at the time of the Christmas Bird Count. Except for Sandy and Tim Aubol's remarkable feeding station in East Grand Forks, where the count's 3rd Eastern Towhee, two Harris's Sparrows, and one White-throated Sparrow were present, nothing unusual was seen within the two cities. This counters the frequent assumption that a mild fall leads to survival and lingering of semi-hardy species. Highest ever counts were recorded for American Crow and Pileated Woodpecker, which could be more a reflection of the extensive coverage than an actual increase in population.

A summary of this report and other CBC-related information can be found under the Christmas Bird Count link at <http://grandcitiesbirdclub.weebly.com/>

A yahoo e-mail group for bird enthusiasts to communicate about birds in the Grand Forks/East Grand Forks area including surrounding communities is located at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/grandcitiesbirdclub/> To join, follow the links on the home page.