

SUMMARY
Grand Forks – East Grand Forks CBC
December 20, 2020

Note: Species names that are bold-faced have been seen five or fewer times.

	TOTAL	ND	MN
Canada Goose	880	205	675
Ring-necked Duck	1		1
Ring-necked Pheasant	7	7	
Gray Partridge	21	21	
Sharp-tailed Grouse	71	71	
Greater Prairie-Chicken	2	2	
Rock Pigeon	800	574	226
Eurasian Collared-Dove	CW	CW	
Bald Eagle	10	7	3
Rough-legged Hawk	1		1
Great Horned Owl	4	4	
Snowy Owl	1	1	
Barred Owl	CW	CW	
Red-bellied Woodpecker	3	2	1
Downy Woodpecker	39	33	6
Hairy Woodpecker	31	23	8
Pileated Woodpecker	2		2
Northern Flicker	8	7	1
Merlin	2		2
Northern Shrike	3	2	1
Blue Jay	53	29	24
Black-billed Magpie	3	3	
American Crow	250	98	152
Common Raven	2	2	
Black-capped Chickadee	212	153	59
Golden-crowned Kinglet	3	3	
Red-breasted Nuthatch	22	13	9
White-breasted Nuthatch	64	45	19
European Starling	426	364	62
American Robin	86	52	34
Cedar Waxwing	59	9	50
House Sparrow	324	263	61
House Finch	137	102	35
Purple Finch	13	3	10
Common Redpoll	204	173	31
White-winged Crossbill	7	7	
Pine Siskin	324	171	153
American Goldfinch	6	6	

	Total	ND	MN
Lapland Longspur	<u>CW</u>	<u>CW</u>	
Snow Bunting	83	83	
American Tree Sparrow	1	1	
Dark-eyed Junco	190	110	80
White-crowned Sparrow	1	1	
Harris's Sparrow	11	11	
White-throated Sparrow	1	1	
Song Sparrow	1		1
Red-winged Blackbird	12	12	
Rusty Blackbird	CW		CW
Common Grackle	CW		CW
Northern Cardinal	16	13	3

Species Summary: Forty-five species reported for Count Day and five additional species during Count Week giving a total of 50 species. Total number of individuals = 4397. (For MN, 28 species count day, 2 count week, total of 1710 individuals; For ND, 40 species count day, 3 count week, total of 2687 individuals).

Observers: 26 field participants in 16 parties (6 field participants in 4 parties in MN, 20 field participants in 12 parties in ND), plus 20 at feeding stations (4 in MN, 16 in ND).

Effort: Total party-hours by Field Participants = 60 and total party miles = 462 (46 hours and 445 miles in cars, 14 hours and 17 miles on foot). Two hours and two miles of nocturnal birding, using playbacks for owls. A total of 60 hours was spent by feeder watchers.

Minnesota: Total party-hours by Field Participants = 9 hours and total party miles = 35 (7.7 hours and 32.6 miles in cars, 1.5 hours and 2.5 miles on foot). 0.5 hours and 0.5 of nocturnal birding, 9 hours watching feeders.

North Dakota: Total party-hours by Field Participants = 51 hours and total party miles = 427 (39 hours and 413 miles in cars, 12 hours and 14 miles on foot, 1.5 hours and 1.5 miles nocturnal birding, 51 hours watching feeders.

Participants in Field:

In Minnesota: Sandy Aubol, Terry and Joanne Johnson, Bruce Kiefenheim, Catherine Johnson, Dave Lambeth. *In North Dakota:* Patti Alleva, Sandy Aubol, Mike Aubol, Jodi Boe, Sharon Boe, John Breker, Jane Croeker, Ron Franz, Deb Hanson, Catherine Johnson, Judy Johnson, Bruce Keifenheim, Dave Lambeth, Rolf Paulson, Bob Seabloom, Nikki Seabloom, Pat Wilber, Russ Wilber, Bill Zaks, Deb Zaks.

Feeder Watchers: *In Minnesota:* Sandy and Tim Aubol, Sandy Martens, Diane Wales. *In North Dakota:* Heidi, Eric, Elias, and Ruby Lamb Castle; Ron Elgin, Erik Fritzell, Karen George, Julie Gladwin, Gordon Iseminger, Cec Lambeth, Mona Leake, Lucy Matejcek, AJ Miller, Dexter and Betsy Perkins Robert Seabloom.

Weather: Temperature range: 19 to 29 deg F. Winds southerly, 5-10 in the morning and up to 15 mph in the afternoon. Clear sky in the beginning soon gave way to clouds. Snow cover was about two inches but many areas were snow free. Still water was mostly frozen. Where water moving there was areas of open water on the Red River and Red Lake River, and Crystal Sugar lagoons in MN where warm water is discharged.

Comments:

This was the 60th consecutive Grand Forks – East Grand Forks CBC conducted within the present circle. A Ring-necked Duck at the Crystal Sugar ponds was a first for the GF-EGF CBC and was the only duck species observed during the count period. All other species had been seen on more than five counts.

The count was conducted following strict protocols for the Covid-19 pandemic, which precluded participants birding together except within their pod. The weather was the best that can be expected in mid-December. This allowed many more miles of walking than usual. Overcast skies allowed views in all direction and low winds allowed listening outside with ears unprotected. The fall season ahead of the count was very dry with above average temperatures. The lack of snow fall allowed minimum maintenance roads to be driven. All crops had been harvested and most fields had been tilled in preparation for spring planting.

Field participants surveying open country commented on the scarcity of birds, which is consistent with late fall observations. The lack of snow likely accounted for the lack of birds feeding along roadsides. The vole population in the grasslands may be at a low in their cycle as few raptors lingered in the fall. The lone Rough-legged Hawk was foraging above planted grassland at the Crystal Sugar facility. No Short-eared Owls were reported. After being missed on last year's count for the first time in 50 years, one Snowy Owl was seen this year. Given the excellent conditions and usual level of participation, the lack of high counts for species was notable. The one exception was Harris's Sparrow where the total of 11 was 3 times the previous high. White-winged Crossbill added interest to the count. Pine Siskins had been abundant all fall yet the count total was not impressive. House Sparrow was the lowest yet recorded continuing a long-term decline.

This report and other CBC-related information will be archived under the Christmas Bird Count link at <http://grandcitiesbirdclub.weebly.com/>. Count data will be submitted to the National Audubon Society and the Minnesota Ornithological Union. The email group that is now connecting area birders is grandcitiesbirdclub@groups.io.