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2005-06 Christmas Bird Counts in Nebraska

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2005-06 Christmas Bird Counts in Nebraska

For the first time this year, two additional counts, Ames and Harrison-Sioux Counties, were reported, bringing our total to 14 counts. The all-time high numbers reached for several species this year need to be regarded in light of that fact. We tend now to have more counts, more counters, and more hours spent counting than ever before. While this is a good thing, it is useful to remember that counting more birds does not in this case mean that there are necessarily more birds present. A look at the effort data, such as number of birds per party hour, on the Audubon Christmas Bird Count web pages (www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/hr) can be instructive.

Only 19 Snow Geese were counted this year, the fewest since 1983, when none at all were found. Numbers for this species vary dramatically from year to year: 129,415 were counted in 2002. This was the second year Cackling Geese were reported, a total of 1361 compared to 70 last year. Canada Goose numbers were the highest since 1996. The 96 Northern Pintails are the highest since 157 in 1966. Wild Turkeys saw their first decline since 1998, although they are still doing well with 1075 counted.

The Bald Eagle total (350) was the highest ever, but last year's total was 341 from fewer counts. Sharp-shinned Hawks were recorded in the highest numbers ever: 40 in all. The Rough-legged Hawk count of 83 was the highest since 1996. The Red-tailed Hawk total of 472 is the second highest ever; there were 518 in 1994. Of this year's total, 98 were seen at DeSoto and 84 were from Omaha, prompting one observer to comment both on the proximity of those counts to the Loess Hills migration flyway and on the high percentage of participants on those two counts who are also counters at the hawkwatch at the Hitchcock Nature Center north of Crescent, Iowa.

The American Coot total of 11, 10 of which were at Scottsbluff, was the lowest in 10 years. Eight gull species were found, all from Lake McConaughy and Calamus-Loup.

The Rock Pigeon count of 4731, over one quarter of which came from the Lincoln count, was the highest ever and would be even without including totals from the two new counts. Eurasian Collared-Doves were first reported on Christmas counts in 2000 with 7 counted; this year's total was 172. It will be interesting to watch the White-winged Dove expansion in future CBC totals. The first White-winged Dove reported on a Nebraska CBC came this year from Scottsbluff.

Even without the two new counts, the Red-bellied Woodpecker number of 433 is the highest ever. The Downy Woodpecker total of 526 is the highest since a count of 575 in 1988. Hairy Woodpeckers also hit a new high of 111. No Pileated Woodpeckers had been seen on Nebraska CBCs since 1 in 1999: 2 were found on the Omaha count this year.

The overall total of Black-capped Chickadees is back to what could be considered normal: 1068 this year, up from 699 in 2004 and 774 in 2003. However, individual counts in the central part of the state (Beaver Valley, Branched Oak, Calamus-Loup, Grand Island, Lincoln, Norfolk) still have counts which are much lower than in the past. For example, the count from Lincoln this year was 56, which is twice the previous year's 27, but still dramatically lower than Lincoln's average yearly count of 322 from the 1980s and 1990s.

American Crows dropped to less than half of last year's 9870 total (4145) but such fluctuation is not unusual with this species. Pygmy Nuthatch numbers reached a new high of 131, 104 of those contributed by counters from the new Harrison-Sioux Co. count.

The Eastern Bluebird total also reached a new high: 305, 95 of which were counted at DeSoto. The yearly average count of Eastern Bluebirds since 2000 is 187; the yearly average from the 1980s and 1990s is 40. This year's Townsend's Solitaire total was the highest ever at 209. Five of this year's 7 Hermit Thrushes were found on the Lincoln count; groups that large are unusual on Christmas counts. This year counters at Scottsbluff found the first-ever Varied Thrush for a Nebraska CBC.

No Bohemian Waxwings were found this year; last year 562 were seen on 3 counts. Harris's Sparrow numbers were up: 128 this year compared to 52 in 2004 and 75 in 2003. The White-crowned Sparrow count was the highest ever at 193.

More Lapland Longspurs were counted this year (5253) than in the previous 14 years combined, and 4894 of those were from the Ames count. This is by no means an all time high, however. (See the Winter Field Report.)

The count of 6 Brown-headed Cowbirds is the lowest since 1997. House Finches were first recorded on Nebraska Christmas counts in 1964, with a total of 16 counted, all at Scottsbluff. We hit a new high for the species this year, with 1250 counted on 13 counts.

2005-06 CBC Participants

Ames Larry Einemann, William Flack, Robin Harding, Rita Jensen, Clem Klaphake, Steve Lamphere, Elizabeth Mulliken, Jerry Mulliken, Colleen Noecker, Don Noecker, Babs Padelford, Loren Padelford, Don Paseka (compiler), Janis Paseka, Lanny Randolph, Jerry Toll (16)

Beaver Valley Belle Esau, William Flack, Mitzi Fox, Janece Mollhoff, Wayne Mollhoff, Colleen Noecker, Don Noecker (compiler), Don Paseka, Janis Paseka, Ramona Theiman, Ted Theiman, Elsie Wheeler (12)

Branched Oak- Seward Paul Dunbar, Rick Eades, Larry Einemann, Mike Ellis, Joseph Gubanyi (compiler), Tom Labeledz, Ted LaGrange, Marli Ockander, Mary Steinbeck (9)

Calamus-Loup Donna Christiansen, William Flack, Robin Harding, David Heidt (compiler), Lyla Koehlmoos, Lanny Randolph, Duane Wolff (7)

Crawford Elliott Bedows, Bob DeLara, Kathy DeLara, Jim Gibson, Randy Lawson, Ruben Siegfried, David Smith, Bruce Walgren (compiler), Donna Walgren, Jack Watson (10)

DeSoto Bob Barry (compiler), Carla Delucchi, Nelli Falzgraf, Clem Klaphake, Steve Lamphere, Sue Mattix, Jim Meyer, Rosalie Noteman, Michele Parde, Don Paseka, Janis Paseka, Sandy Reinken, Paul Roisen, Jerry Toll, Patricia Williams, Betty Young (16)

Grand Island Gordon Backer, Felipe Chavez-Ramirez, Anton Curtis, Dan Glomski, Blake Hatfield, Dan Kim, Ron Kruse, Ray Kusek, Connie McCartney (compiler), Jim Meyer, Vicky Orr, Jerry Pekas, Luis Ramirez, Patricia Smith, Vern Throop, Eric Volden, Chuck Witter Feeder Watchers: Dottie Aubushon, Kathy Aubushon, Leah Clark, Gay Crandell, Lewis Hilligas, Helen Siem (17 + 6 feeder watchers)

Harrison/Sioux Co. Elliott Bedows (compiler), David Smith, Bruce Walgren, Donna Walgren (4)

Lake McConaughy Henry Armknecht, Elliott Bedows, Stephen J. Dinsmore (compiler), Robin Harding, Bill Huntley, Todd Jensen, Bette Klaphake, Clem Klaphake, Peter Kondrashev, Kay Niyo, Lanny Randolph, Tommie Rogers, Ross Silcock, Mark Urwiller, Zack Urwiller (20)

Lincoln Linda R. Brown (compiler), Jackie Canterbury, Kevin Degarmo, Barbara DiBernard, Rick Eades, Larry Einemann, Joe Gubanyi, Paul Johnsgard, Michelle Johnson, Tim Knott, Thomas E. Labeledz, Pete Maslowski, John Miller, Ken Reitan, Carol Rustad, Rachel Simpson, Brooke Stansberry, Emily Thaden, Joyce Vannier, Lyle Vannier, Gertrude Wood (21)

Norfolk Norma Brockmoller, Ed Brogie, Mark Brogie, Donna Christiansen, William Flack, Cody Hartman, David Heidt, Tony Jacobsen, Raymond E. Kincanon, Lyla Koehlmoos, Tyler Sherman, Paul Timm, Jan Uttecht, Duane Wolff (compiler), Bonnie Wylie (15)

Omaha Elliott Bedows, Ed Chance, Emma Chance, Dave Christiansen, David Crawford, Sharon Draper, Nelli Falzgraf, Betty Grenon (compiler), Neil Holstein, Clem Klaphake, Jim Kovanda, Sandy Kovanda, Catherine Kuper, Steve Lamphere, Terry Lassek, Urban Lehner, Sue Mattix, Rosalie Noteman, Babs Padelford, Loren Padelford, Don Paseka, Janis Paseka, Kathleen Pyper, Dick Rasmussen, Jean Richter, Kathleen Rose, Rick Schmid, Steve Schmitt, Eric Scholar, David Smith, Greg Stoiber, Michele Widhalm, Pat Williams, Chunhui Yi, Penny Zahurones (35)

Ponca Bill Bossman, Jeff Fields, Bill Huser (compiler), Jan Johnson, Richard Johnson, Bill Morris, Paul Roisen, Jerry Von Ehwegen, Eric Wiebe (9)

Scottsbluff Bob DeLara, Kathy DeLara, Dean Drawbaugh, Phyllis Drawbaugh, Ann Duey, Jan Foster, Robin Harding, Michelle Hoff, Helen Hughson, Alice Kenitz (compiler), Lanny Randolph, Al Reyer, Cindy Reyer, Bonnie Schoen, Ruben Siegfried (15)

2005-2006 Christmas Bird Counts

	Ames	Beaver Valley	Branched Oak-Seward	Calamus-Loup	Crawford	DeSoto-Boyer	Grand Island	Harrison-Sioux Co.
Gr. White-fronted Goose							1	
Snow Goose	2					9		
Ross' Goose			4			1		
Cackling Goose			100	2		2	29	
Canada Goose	223		432	2,240		1,672	9,967	
Trumpeter Swan				cw				
Wood Duck							4	
Gadwall				10				
American Wigeon							1	
Mallard	3,820	184	13	4,952	6	2,000	4,562	
Blue-winged Teal								
Northern Shoveler								
Northern Pintail								
Green-winged Teal				1				
Casvasback								
Redhead	1							
Ring-necked Duck								
Greater Scaup								
Lesser Scaup	1							
Bufflehead				1				
Common Goldeneye				570		193	34	
Hooded Merganser								
Common Merganser	1			51		72		
Red-breasted Merganser								
Ruddy Duck				1		2		
Ring-necked Pheasant	19	12	15	2	17	9	35	
Sharp-tailed Grouse				1				
Greater Prairie-Chicken		36		51				
Wild Turkey	67			16	139	371	179	
Northern Bobwhite	1		2		5	2	20	
Pied-billed Grebe								
Horned Grebe								
Western Grebe								
American White Pelican								
Great Blue Heron	4							
Bald Eagle	2	12	1	52	4	28	11	

2005-2006 Christmas Bird Counts

	Lake McConaughy	Lincoln	Norfolk	Omaha	Ponca State Park	Scottsbluff	Total
Gr. White-fronted Goose	49	1					51
Snow Goose	8	cw					19
Ross' Goose	2						7
Cackling Goose	1,200		1			27	1,361
Canada Goose	18,800	3,291	1,504	3,800	67	14,644	56,640
Trumpeter Swan	11						11
Wood Duck						1	5
Gadwall	30				15		55
American Wigeon	6	2	1			120	130
Mallard	19,500	573	119	37	508	12,826	49,100
Blue-winged Teal		6					6
Northern Shoveler						5	5
Northern Pintail	55		2		25	14	96
Green-winged Teal	96	7		30		9	143
Casvasback	1					1	2
Redhead	6						7
Ring-necked Duck	12			2		8	22
Greater Scaup	15						15
Lesser Scaup	23		2			4	30
Bufflehead	73						74
Common Goldeneye	1,307	9	1	36	3	68	2,221
Hooded Merganser	17	1					18
Common Merganser	6,545		1	107	8	1	6,786
Red-breasted Merganser	6						6
Ruddy Duck	5						8
Ring-necked Pheasant	4	17	168		8	9	315
Sharp-tailed Grouse							1
Greater Prairie-Chicken	20						107
Wild Turkey	2		7	178	6	110	1,075
Northern Bobwhite	13		16			cw	59
Pied-billed Grebe			cw				
Horned Grebe	1						1
Western Grebe	cw						
American White Pelican	1						1
Great Blue Heron	7	12	1			1	25
Bald Eagle	172	3	9	24	18	14	350

2005-2006 Christmas Bird Counts

	Ames	Beaver Valley	Branched Oak-Seward	Calamus-Loup	Crawford	DeSoto-Boyer	Grand Island	Harrison-Sioux Co.
Northern Harrier		4	1	5	1	3	23	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	2	11	2		6	4	
Cooper's Hawk			3	1		1	2	
Northern Goshawk		1						
accipiter sp.			4					
Red-tailed Hawk	23	16	51	21	5	98	42	
Ferruginous Hawk								
Rough-legged Hawk	1	3	3	6	8	5	26	5
Buteo sp.			2					
Golden Eagle					cw			
American Kestrel	6	2	8	4	4	24	21	
Merlin			2		1			
Prairie Falcon			1	1	1		1	1
large falcon sp.	1							
hawk sp.			1					
Virginia Rail								
American Coot							1	
Killdeer								
Wilson's Snipe							1	
Bonaparte's Gull								
Ring-billed Gull				8				
California Gull								
Herring Gull				2				
Thayer's Gull								
Lesser Black-backed Gull								
Glaucous Gull								
Great Black-backed Gull								
Rock Pigeon	111	10	306	94	74	345	877	2
Eurasian Collared-Dove			7	29	16		33	8
White-winged Dove								
Mourning Dove	cw		7		1		1	
Eastern Screech-Owl	1		4		1	2	13	
Great Horned Owl	2	1	10	2	cw	2	4	1
Snowy Owl								
Barred Owl			3			6		
Long-eared Owl			9			2		

2005-2006 Christmas Bird Counts

	Lake McConaughy	Lincoln	Norfolk	Omaha	Ponca State Park	Scottsbluff	Total
Northern Harrier	7	1	2	1	7	2	57
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	3	2	3		2	40
Cooper's Hawk	1	4	2	2			16
Northern Goshawk			1				2
accipiter sp.	1	2	2			2	11
Red-tailed Hawk	24	24	49	84	24	11	472
Ferruginous Hawk	3						3
Rough-legged Hawk	1	4	5		15	1	83
Buteo sp.			1			1	4
Golden Eagle	1				1		2
American Kestrel	31	3	11	10	9	30	163
Merlin			4			1	8
Prairie Falcon	2		1				8
large falcon sp.							1
hawk sp.							1
Virginia Rail	2						2
American Coot						10	11
Killdeer	9	1				2	12
Wilson's Snipe	4		1			1	7
Bonaparte's Gull	1						1
Ring-billed Gull	1,430						1,438
California Gull	3						3
Herring Gull	415						417
Thayer's Gull	5						5
Lesser Black-backed Gull	2						2
Glaucous Gull	3						3
Great Black-backed Gull	1						1
Rock Pigeon	69	1,286	395	831	27	304	4,731
Eurasian Collared-Dove	28		1			50	172
White-winged Dove						1	1
Mourning Dove	2	95	2	27	3		138
Eastern Screech-Owl	3	3	1	3			31
Great Horned Owl	10	12	4	3		1	52
Snowy Owl	cw						
Barred Owl		2	1	12	1		25
Long-eared Owl	3		3		2		19

2005-2006 Christmas Bird Counts

	Ames	Beaver Valley	Branched Oak-Seward	Calamus-Loup	Crawford	DeSoto-Boyer	Grand Island	Harrison-Sioux Co.
Short-eared Owl							2	
Northern Saw-whet Owl							1	
owl sp.								
Belted Kingfisher	1	1	1	2		4	2	
Red-headed Woodpecker						2		
Red-bel. Woodpecker	21	4	61	2		94	11	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker			1					
Downy Woodpecker	26	14	61	10	7	114	33	4
Hairy Woodpecker	8	1	7	5	6	16	4	3
Northern Flicker	24	5	68	14	5	142	37	
Pileated Woodpecker								
Loggerhead Shrike							1	
Northern Shrike		1	4	7	4			3
Shrike sp.		1						
Blue Jay	5	5	124	5	5	143	49	
Black-billed Magpie			2		35		16	
American Crow	21	16	476	2,671	78	131	67	25
Horned Lark	39	4	37	82	187	1	17	64
Black-cap. Chickadee	32	5	14	7	79	214	21	26
Tufted Titmouse						5		
Red-breasted Nuthatch			11			1	2	5
White-br. Nuthatch	24	15	69	4	33	108	22	6
Pygmy Nuthatch					27			104
nuthatch sp.					1			
Brown Creeper	5		2			5	17	
Carolina Wren						2		
Winter Wren			1			2		
Marsh Wren				2				
Golden-cr. Kinglet	6	1	10			6		
Eastern Bluebird	6		80	9		95	8	
Mountain Bluebird								
Townsend's Solitaire				1	7			27
Hermit Thrush	1							
American Robin	47	37	1,905	444	5	90	77	61
Varied Thrush								
Northern Mockingbird			1					

2005-2006 Christmas Bird Counts

	Lake McConaughy	Lincoln	Norfolk	Omaha	Ponca State Park	Scottsbluff	Total
Short-eared Owl							2
Northern Saw-whet Owl							1
owl sp.		1					1
Belted Kingfisher	7	6	2	1	1	4	32
Red-headed Woodpecker		2		49	2		55
Red-bellied Woodpecker	13	56	27	123	21		433
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker		1		1			3
Downy Woodpecker	35	53	31	113	17	8	526
Hairy Woodpecker	13	7	10	27	4 cw		111
Northern Flicker	51	13	16	74	17	37	503
Pileated Woodpecker				2			2
Loggerhead Shrike							1
Northern Shrike	2		2		2	4	29
Shrike sp.							1
Blue Jay	11	118	47	137	54	64	767
Black-billed Magpie	62				1	34	150
American Crow	8	214	119	94	222	3	4,145
Horned Lark	676				327	186	1,620
Black-capped Chickadee	40	56	54	426	82	12	1,068
Tufted Titmouse				41			46
Red-breasted Nuthatch	3	8	2	3		5	40
White-breasted Nuthatch	17	64	40	209	53	1	665
Pygmy Nuthatch						cw	131
nuthatch sp.							1
Brown Creeper	6	19	1	7	1 cw		63
Carolina Wren		5		5			12
Winter Wren			1	1	1		6
Marsh Wren	2					1	5
Golden-crowned Kinglet	1	34		23		2	83
Eastern Bluebird	7	27		52	21		305
Mountain Bluebird	1						1
Townsend's Solitaire	157					17	209
Hermit Thrush		5		1			7
American Robin	2,291	247	6	53	56	380	5,699
Varied Thrush						1	1
Northern Mockingbird							1

2005-2006 Christmas Bird Counts

	Ames	Beaver Valley	Branched Oak-Seward	Calamus-Loup	Crawford	DeSoto-Boyer	Grand Island	Harrison-Sioux Co.
European Starling	4,996	231	2,287	1,296	295	1,853	1,242	22
Cedar Waxwing	12		89	67		162	26	
Yellow-rumped Warbler			1					
Spotted Towhee			1		1			
Eastern Towhee						2		
Am. Tree Sparrow	37	158	239	92	280	384	295	24
Fox Sparrow			3					
Song Sparrow	7	1	16	2	4	23	1	
Lincoln's Sparrow								
White-th. Sparrow	3					cw	1	
Harris' Sparrow	cw		47	6		15	22	
White-crowned Sparrow							7	
sparrow sp			38					
Dark-eyed Junco	138	58	431	51	57	429	552	148
Lapland Longspur	4,894	7		50	5			
Snow Bunting				2				
Northern Cardinal	39	4	90	5		127	77	
Red-winged Blackbird		714	22	26		380	22	
meadowlark sp.	5		34	26		19	115	
Yellow-headed Blackbird								
Rusty Blackbird			12					
Brewer's Blackbird								
Common Grackle							1	
Great-tailed Grackle		10		cw			1	
Brown-headed Cowbird						1		
blackbird sp.			22	200				
Purple Finch	2		20			75		
Cassin's Finch								
House Finch	5	53	51	48	1	9	94	
Red Crossbill	3				2			85
Pine Siskin		2	12	6				50
American Goldfinch	19	104	309	269	64	132	203	1
House Sparrow	117	84	123	12	109	256	1,678	102
TOTAL SPECIES	48	37	60	56	38	57	59	23
INDIVIDUALS	14,831	1,819	7,782	13,548	1,580	9,897	20,616	777

2005-2006 Christmas Bird Counts

	Lake McConaughy	Lincoln	Norfolk	Omaha	Ponca State Park	Scottsbluff	Total
European Starling	2,197	3,593	13,484	3,504	1,170	997	37,167
Cedar Waxwing	31	5		106	86		584
Yellow-rumped Warbler	2	3					6
Spotted Towhee		2	1				5
Eastern Towhee				1			3
American Tree Sparrow	162	271	220	149	45	92	2,448
Fox Sparrow		2					5
Song Sparrow	27	3 cw		10		12	106
Lincoln's Sparrow	1						1
White-throated Sparrow	3	8		4			19
Harris' Sparrow	6	15	2	14		1	128
White-crowned Sparrow	24					162	193
sparrow sp							38
Dark-eyed Junco	598	503	364	896	100	463	4,788
Lapland Longspur	172				125		5,253
Snow Bunting	29						31
Northern Cardinal	26	116	70	168	45	1	768
Red-winged Blackbird	1,405		26	1	2	162	2,760
meadowlark sp.	79		16	45		3	342
Yellow-headed Blackbird						1	1
Rusty Blackbird			3				15
Brewer's Blackbird	5						5
Common Grackle		1	1				3
Great-tailed Grackle							11
Brown-headed Cowbird	2		3 cw				6
blackbird sp.							222
Purple Finch	2	14	30	1	9		153
Cassin's Finch	1						1
House Finch	172	280	42	95	52	348	1,250
Red Crossbill							90
Pine Siskin	50	2		cw		162	284
American Goldfinch	234	314	191	215	53	85	2,193
House Sparrow	190	496	1,015	646	111	348	5,287
TOTAL SPECIES	96	58	59	54	46	60	129
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	58,872	11,926	18,146	12,487	3,427	31,877	207,585