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1990 Christmas Count Report

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1990 Christmas Count Report

101 species were reported on Christmas counts during 1990. An additional 2 species were recorded during count weeks but not during a specific count day. Direct comparison with 1990 count data is difficult due to a disparity in the number of counts; 110 species plus 2 in the count week were found in 1990. 14 counts were held during 1989, but only 6 counts are reported in 1990. The DeSoto NWR count was cancelled due to icy roads and bad weather. Wayne Mollhoff's 4 central Nebraska counts were apparently not held because he is a member of the Reserves and was on constant stand-by throughout this period due to the Persian Gulf crisis. No reports were received from 3 counts—Norfolk, Kearney, and Sioux City.

In the counts that were held, an observer could see a difference in the number and types of birds seen between counts early in the period and later ones. The four counts held on December 15 and 16, the first weekend of the period, all showed increases in the number of birds seen. In fact, Grand Island set a record high, nearly doubling the number of birds seen on the record 1989 count, including 5000 Sandhill Cranes, a species never before recorded on a Grand Island count. But, as Lincoln compiler Daryl Giblin noted, two or three days later, the open water which enhanced bird numbers had frozen in the face of the severe arctic blast. The Tristate count, the most southeasterly of all counts, did show some increase, mainly due to an influx of Horned Larks; however, the Omaha count, held in subzero weather with approximately half the normal participants, showed a 4000-bird reduction.

Many interesting birds were seen in all points of the count. The Pine Grosbeak at Grand Island was the one of the four new birds seen on this count, and a Prairie Falcon was seen on the Omaha count for the first time. The Lincoln count had its share of good birds: Double-crested Cormorants, a bird not often noted on any Nebraska count, were found, a Black-billed Magpie was recorded for the first time, and a Townsend's Solitaire was recorded for the second straight year. Also significant in Lincoln was the count week report of a Bonaparte's Gull, which may be the first time this species has been recorded in a count period, along with a record number of all gull species reported. More information on the Bonaparte's would be highly desired by the *NBR*. The Lincoln County (formerly North Platte) count recorded the only Mountain Bluebirds and a single Yellow-headed Blackbird. The Scottsbluff count had one of its highest species totals ever, and the Tristate count had the only Hermit Thrush and Snow Bunting recorded (though it is not known if these were in Nebraska, Missouri, or Iowa).

Several tables follow. The first of these gives count conditions, the second lists those birds not identified to species (for example, Meadowlark sp.), and the third gives species totals. The "h" refers to high counts, and those with the designation "IA" are ones on the Omaha count which were only found in Iowa. A blank in the conditions table refers to the fact that the information was not provided, and a "W" in the main table denotes a species found in the area during the count week but not on the exact day of the count.

PARTICIPANTS (Compilers in caps)

Scottsbluff—Mary Allison, Lucile Bigelow, Jeff Essman, Marie Fernandez, Vonie Hatch, Helen Hughson, ALICE KENITZ, Robert Larkin, Brad McKinney, Connie McKinney, Loni Schlothauer, Sam Schlothauer, Nora Mae Vance.

Lincoln County—Robert Bailey, Esther Cunningham, Harold Cunningham, Erma Grill, Gregg Hoover, Nancy Jones, Pat McEvoy, MARGARET MORTON, John Orcutt, Darlene Schick.

Grand Island—Colleen Babcock, Bob Braun, Faye Conlon, Paul Currier, Kenny Dinan, Craig Faanes, Tim Fannin, Louis James, Pauline James, Todd Jensen, Anne Kruse, Ron Kruse, Liz Kuta, GARY LINGLE, Connie McCartney, Deb Meyer, Jim Meyer, Scott Purdy, Helen Seim, Vern Throop, Drew Tustin, Steve Walker, Diane Zwink.

Lincoln—Irene Alexander, Matt Beisel, Michael Bessert, Ann Bleed, Didi Brogden, Douglas Brogden, Cindy Cochran, Carol Crosby, Kevin DeGarmo, Joe Doremus, Hans Draayer, Larry Einemann, William Garthright, DARYL GIBLIN, MARGARET GIBLIN, Everett Gross, Mildred Gross, Joseph Gubanyi, Carolyn Hall, Nancy Hall, Ellen Harrington, Keith Heinrich, Karla Kaufman, Paul Kaufman, Paul Kay, Timothy Knott, Thomas Labeledz, Rosalind Morris, Kevin Poague, Gary Purdy, John Purdy, Kenneth Reitan, Richard Rhodes, Roger Riss, Hazel Scheiber, Donald Showen, Ellen Stepleton, Alyce Studnicka, James Studnicka, Clare Sward, Frances Taylor, Joyce Vanier, Lyle Vanier, Angela Williams, Donald Williams, Gertrude Wood.

Omaha—Betty Allen, Elliott Bedows, Russ Benedict, John Brennehan, Amy Galperin, ALAN GRENON, Betty Grenon, Essie Grill, Sam Grill, Dennis Hopp, JoEllen Hopp, Robert Hopp, Steven Hopp, Clem Klaphake, Damon Klaphake, Jim Kovanda, Sandra Kovanda, Babs Padelford, Loren Padelford, Chris Rasmussen, Ross Silcock, Bob Starr, Jerry Toll, Rick Wright.

Tristate—ROSS SILCOCK. Other participants not listed.

TABLE 1. COUNT COVERAGE AND WEATHER CONDITIONS.

	Scottsbluff	Lincoln County	Grand Island	Lincoln	Omaha	Tristate
Date	Dec. 15	Dec. 15	Dec. 15	Dec. 16	Dec. 29	Dec. 23
Start Time (am)	7:40	8:00	7:30	4:05		
End time (pm)	4:10	3:00	6:00	5:45		
Miles by Vehicle	186		505	508	446	316
Miles on Foot	4.5		10	85	18	7
Miles Owling	0		4.5	51.5	11.5	0.5
Hours by Vehicle	17.75		33	33.5	61.5	26.5
Hours on Foot	3.75		9	104.25	total	total
Hours Owling	0		2	6.5	2.5	0.5
Hours at Feeders	6			8	21	5.5
Maximum Temp. (°F)	43	45	40	38	-5	10
Minimum Temp. (°F)	28	26	30	19	-9	-10
Wind Direction	W-NW; NE (pm)		NW	SW	NW	S
Wind Speed (mph)	7-8; 10-12	5-15	5-15	0-10	18-24	0-5
AM Weather	clear	clear	cloudy to clear	partly cloudy	cloudy, snow	clear
PM Weather	partly cloudy	clear	clear	cloudy, light rain and sleet	cloudy, snow	clear
Snow Cover	0	gone by pm	0	0	4	0-1

	Scottsbluff	Lincoln County	Grand Island	Lincoln	Omaha	Tristate
Still Water	pt. open		open	open		
Moving Water	open		open	open		
# of Field Observers	13	10	23	46	24	6
Number of Parties	1-4		8	16-20	9	3
# of Feeder Watchers	3			8	5	1

TABLE 2. BIRDS NOT IDENTIFIED TO SPECIES. Those listed in bold were the only birds of that type identified on the count.

Bird	Location and Number
Buteo sp.	Scottsbluff—3; Lincoln—11
Hawk sp.	Lincoln—1
Gull sp.	Lincoln—16 (high)
Owl sp.	Lincoln—4
Meadowlark sp.	Lincoln—130; Omaha—28; Tristate—17
Blackbird sp.	Lincoln—2

TABLE 3. COUNT RESULTS. All count centers and coverage areas are the same as reported last year. Further details can be found in *NBR* 58: 3-12.

	Scotts-bluff	Lincoln County	Grand Island	Lincoln	Omaha	Tristate
Double-crested Cormorant				2 (h)		
Great Blue Heron	2			3 (h)		1
Gr. White-fronted Goose			155 (h)			
Snow Goose			13 (h)	1101 (h)		200
Canada Goose	11,902 (h)	5807	20,449 (h)	882 (h)	45	
Wood Duck			2			
Green-winged Teal			105 (h)	30 (h)	3 (IA)	
American Black Duck					2 (IA)	
Mallard	2342	395	9682	584 (h)	760	6
Northern Pintail	6		1			
Northern Shoveler	12 (h)					
Gadwall	14 (h)		5 (h)			
American Wigeon	51		18	4	1 (IA)	
Redhead	W					
Lesser Scaup				2		
Common Goldeneye	22		7 (h)	14	130	1
Bufflehead			1 (h)	1		
Common Merganser			1	1369 (h)	88	1
Turkey Vulture			1 (h)			
Bald Eagle	7	8	21 (h)	1	42	5
<i>adult</i>	4		11	1		
<i>immature</i>	3		10			
<i>undesignated</i>		8			42	5
Northern Harrier	2	1	8	10		
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1		2	8		1

	Scottsbluff	Lincoln County	Grand Island	Lincoln	Omaha	Tristate
Cooper's Hawk			1	W	1 (IA)	
Red-tailed Hawk		20	47 (h)	77	40	48
Ferruginous Hawk			1			
Rough-legged Hawk	1	6	5	6	3	1
Golden Eagle	3					
American Kestrel	10	22	39 (h)	28	7	13
Merlin		1	1	1		1
Peregrine Falcon			1	W		
Prairie Falcon			4 (h)		1 (h)	1
Ring-necked Pheasant	2		50	86 (h)	5	21
Wild Turkey	14	32	20		20	16
Northern Bobwhite			76	1	1	5
Sandhill Crane			5000 (h)			
American Coot			2	W		
Killdeer				2		
Common Snipe	2		3			
Bonaparte's Gull				W		
Ring-billed Gull		25		232 (h)		
Herring Gull		1		31 (h)		
Rock Dove	244 (h)	17	161	579	7	67
Mourning Dove		2	1	156	5	40
Eastern Screech-Owl			2	15	2	5
Great Horned Owl	2	1	10	30	1	8
Barred Owl				4	1	2
Long-eared Owl				13		
Short-eared Owl			3			
Northern Saw-whet Owl				1		
Belted Kingfisher	3		5	10	W	1
Red-headed Woodpecker		1		7	22	6
Red-bellied Woodpecker			7	41	32	36
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker				2	3	1
Downy Woodpecker	7	7	16	77	87	42
Hairy Woodpecker		2	5	18	17	6
Northern Flicker	36	14	56	50	38	62
<i>yellow-shafted</i>	1			23		
<i>red-shafted</i>	13			1		
<i>yellow x red</i>	1					
<i>undesignated</i>	21	14	56	26	38	62
Horned Lark	10	7	30	3	420	2257
Blue Jay	41 (h)	12	25	487	95	151
Black-billed Magpie	35	16	3	1 (h)		
American Crow	67	175	2767 (h)	505	197	67
Black-capped Chickadee	75 (h)	25	156	372	238	184
Tufted Titmouse					26	15
Red-breasted Nuthatch	4			3		
White-breasted Nuthatch	2		14	93	35	31
Brown Creeper	1	5	5	19	7	5

	Scottsbluff	Lincoln County	Grand Island	Lincoln	Omaha	Tristate
Carolina Wren				1	2	3
Winter Wren					1	
Golden-crowned Kinglet	5 (h)		13	27	4	6
Eastern Bluebird		58	6	2	2	25
Mountain Bluebird		15				
Townsend's Solitaire	5		1	1 (h)		
Hermit Thrush						1
American Robin	66	271	718 (h)	129	325	227
Brown Thrasher				2		
Cedar Waxwing	1	5	32	113	147	41
Northern Shrike	1	6	2	2		1
Loggerhead Shrike			3 (h)	1		2
European Starling	1805	7299	8442 (h)	2666	310	250
Northern Cardinal		5	13	206	171	182
Rufous-sided Towhee			1	3		2
American Tree Sparrow	11	21	340	741	266	535
Song Sparrow	1		3	45 (h)	9	17
Swamp Sparrow					W	
White-throated Sparrow				34 (h)	1	
White-crowned Sparrow	9		1	10		
Harris' Sparrow			28	432 (h)	59	53
Dark-eyed Junco	43	74	299	1328	512	970
<i>Slate-colored</i>	1			163		
<i>Oregon</i>				9		
<i>undesignated</i>	42	74	299	1156 (fi)	512	970
Lapland Longspur			77 (h)		55 (IA)	575
Snow Bunting						1
Red-winged Blackbird	5585 (h)	1700	350 (h)	259		1
Eastern Meadowlark				2		
Western Meadowlark		1	57	3	2	11
Yellow-headed Blackbird		1				
Rusty Blackbird			156 (h)	1		
Great-tailed Grackle				W		
Common Grackle	45 (h)		3	50		1
Brown-headed Cowbird			3 (h)			
Pine Grosbeak			1 (h)			
Purple Finch			1	11	9	
House Finch	127	30	74 (h)	51 (h)	1	
Red Crossbill			3 (h)	1		
Pine Siskin	16		11	7		
American Goldfinch	41	208	47	370	243	66
House Sparrow	429	1731	790	4003	1390	1420
Total Number of Species	46	40	75	74	46	56
Number Species During Week	2	0	0	5	2	0
Total Number of Birds	23,113	16,462	50,459	17,628	23,113	7706