

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Nebraska Bird Review

Nebraska Ornithologists' Union

3-1993

Bird Count, NOU Winter Meeting, Grand Island, NE, February 26-28, 1993 and 1992 Nebraska Christmas Bird Count

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nebbirdrev>



Part of the [Ornithology Commons](#), [Poultry or Avian Science Commons](#), and the [Zoology Commons](#)

"Bird Count, NOU Winter Meeting, Grand Island, NE, February 26-28, 1993 and 1992 Nebraska Christmas Bird Count" (1993). *Nebraska Bird Review*. 460.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nebbirdrev/460>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Nebraska Bird Review by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

BIRD COUNT, NOU WINTER MEETING, GRAND ISLAND, NE FEBRUARY 26-28, 1993

The list of 56 species was compiled by Scott Purdy, Vice-President, NOU. The temperature ranged from 0-30° F and the days were sunny. There was 100% snow cover, and water areas were 99% iced over. The five counties included are abbreviated as follows: B = Buffalo, H = Hall, HA = Hamilton, HO = Howard, M = Merrick.

Great Blue Heron (H); Canada Goose (H); Mallard (H); Northern Pintail (H); Northern Shoveler (H); American Wigeon (H); Common Goldeneye (H); Common Merganser (H, M); Bald Eagle (B, H, HO); Northern Harrier (H); Sharp-shinned Hawk (H); Red-tailed Hawk (H, M); Rough-legged Hawk (H, M); American Kestrel (H); Merlin (H); Prairie Falcon (H); Ring-necked Pheasant (B, H); Greater Prairie-Chicken (H); Wild Turkey (H); Northern Bobwhite (HO); American Coot (H); Common Snipe (H); Rock Dove (H); Great Horned Owl (H); Belted Kingfisher (H); Red-bellied Woodpecker (HO); Downy Woodpecker (H, HO); Hairy Woodpecker (H, HO); Northern Flicker (H); Horned Lark (H, HA, HO, M); Blue Jay (H); Black-billed Magpie (H, HO, M); American Crow (H, HO); Black-capped Chickadee (H, HO, M); White-breasted Nuthatch (H, HO); Brown Creeper (H); Golden-crowned Kinglet (H); American Robin (H, M); Cedar Waxwing (H); Northern Shrike (H); Loggerhead Shrike (H); European Starling (H, HA, M); Northern Cardinal (H, M); Rufous-sided Towhee (H); American Tree Sparrow (H, HO); Song Sparrow (H); White-crowned Sparrow (H); Harris' Sparrow (H, HO); Dark-eyed Junco (H, M); Red-winged Blackbird (H); Western Meadowlark (B, H, HA, M); Purple Finch (H); House Finch (H); Pine Siskin (H, HO); American Goldfinch (H, HO); House Sparrow (H, HO).

1992 NEBRASKA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The 1992 count was based on eight locations, giving a total of 98 species. This is 11 less than for the 1991 count, and is the first time the number of species has dropped below 100 in the past six years. There were 51,158 individual birds in the 1992 count, which is also the lowest individual count over the six-year period. The individual count includes 271 not identified to species, distributed as follows: Accipiters (3), Buteos (3), Hawks (5), Falcons (1), Gulls (2), Owls (1), Wrens (1), Meadowlarks (219), and Blackbirds (36). They are included in Table 1 following the species observations for each group. Lake McConoughy, which was a very successful area in 1991, was not covered for the 1992 count.

Locations and Participants (Compilers in Parentheses):

Beaver Valley: center at NW corner of Sec. 5, T21N, R7W, 41° 50' N, 98° 10' W, near Petersburg, Boone County. WAYNE MOLLHOFF. Count made after 4-5 days of intermittent freezing drizzle, which made most of the normal food inaccessible, and made the birds difficult to find. These conditions also were present in the Loup City area.

Grand Island: center at NW $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 1, T10N, R10W, including all of Grand Island, Cornhusker State WMA, south half of Hall County Airport, and Crystal Lake. Colleen Babcock, Faye Conlon, Tom Conlon, Anne Kruse, Ron Kruse, GARY LINGLE, Ryan Lingle, Connie McCartney, Jim Meyer, Scott Purdy, John Purdy, Vern Throop, Erika Wilson. There were record high counts for Sharp-shinned Hawk, Eastern Screech-Owl, and Pine Siskin, and one new species for the region, the Lark Sparrow.

Kearney: center at bridge over the Platte River south of Kearney, including Kearney Cemetery, Harmon Park, Cottonmill Park, Alfalfa Center, Odessa bridge, Fawn Woods Lake, Fort Kearny State Historical

Park, and the Bike-Hike Trail. Field Observers: Bonnie Bernholtz, George Brown, Marian Brown, Laurie Brown, Bonnie Chuzara, ROBIN HARDING, LANNY RANDOLPH, Mark Urwiller, Vicki Urwiller, Zack Urwiller, Jamie Urwiller, Heather Whitaker. Feeder Observers: John Bliese, Margaret Bliese, Bev Kimball, Norma Schrack, Ward Schrack.

Lincoln: center at South Coddington and West A Streets, including Pioneers Park, about 8 miles of Wilderness Park, Lagoon Park, Yankee Lake and Conestoga Lake areas, eastern half of Pawnee Lake, and Wyuka Cemetery. Field Observers: Irene Alexander, Ann Bleed, Cindy Cochran, David Cochran, Jan DeGarmo, Kevin DeGarmo, Joe Doremus, Larry Einemann, DARYL GIBLIN, MARGARET GIBLIN, Joseph Gubanyi, Carolyn Hall, Nancy Hall, Ellen Harrington, Jeffrey Huebschman, Norma Johnson-Mueller, Karla Kaufman, Paul Kaufman, Tim Knott, Thomas Labedz, Rosalind Morris, Ken Reitan, Roger Riss, Hazel Scheiber, Don Showen, Charles Sullivan, John Sullivan, Frances Taylor. Feeder Observers: George Alexander, Maxine Keller, Barbara Voeltz.

Daryl Giblin's detailed account about trends in species in the Lincoln area is summarized in the following paragraphs:

"The decline in the density of Eastern Screech-Owls is continuing, as is the decline in the number of Long-eared Owls that overwinter in this region. In the former case, the lack of suitable nesting and roosting sites may be more significant than the creeping urbanization and clean farming practices. Twenty years ago, there were many dead trees following in the wake of Dutch elm disease through the countryside. Today, there are few dead trees left; most get rendered to firewood. The slow decline of Wood Ducks in this area is probably due to the same problems. Resident Canada Geese are increasing in numbers and are starting to be seen as nuisances by residents around the lakes.

"A male Hooded Merganser was reported from Holmes Lake, and several more were seen at Branched Oak Lake, which is outside the count area. An immature Double-crested Cormorant was reported from Yankee Hill Lake, and a number at Branched Oak Lake. These two species, along with other waterfowl and water-related birds, have lingered in the area due to favorable weather and open water conditions, which persisted throughout the fall until the count date. Therefore, none of these species ought to be considered unusual or rare.

"Some species appear to have moved into this area. They include Wild Turkey, Great-tailed Grackle, House Finch, and Black-billed Magpie. In addition, there has been a resident Peregrine Falcon in Lincoln for over three years.

"The Prairie Falcon used to be uncommon in the winter but had gone into decline. However, in the last few years, this species has been appearing in the winter, and this year there are several in the Lincoln area. Observers described a large, light-brown falcon with black wingpits, which help to distinguish this species from the Peregrine Falcon. Merlins often persist into early winter here, and are usually found near grain elevators, where they prey upon pigeons and other birds that congregate there.

"The Swamp Sparrow, which used to be a common migrant and uncommon winter bird, has declined dramatically. It is not evident that there is an underlying problem with winter habitat compared to 10-15 years ago.

"Meadowlarks and American Tree Sparrows are slowly increasing in numbers after populations decimations during the severe winter of 1983-1984. Western Meadowlarks were identified by songs, and all non-singing meadowlarks were reported as meadowlark sp.

"The Field Sparrow and Brewer's Blackbird are examples of common and still lingering migrants. The characteristic markings of the Field Sparrow (solid rusty cap and eye line, white eye-ring, pink bill and legs, and clear, light breast) serve to distinguish this species form

the immature White-crowned Sparrow and American Tree Sparrow.

"Identification of the Brewer's Blackbird was made on the basis of its smaller size (Robin size) relative to the Common Grackle, with a proportionately much shorter tail, lack of rusty appearance, which is characteristic of the Rusty Blackbird in winter, relatively shorter bill than the Rusty Blackbird, and overall shiny-black appearance (no brown head).

"The Smith's Longspurs were found in the company of the Lapland Longspurs, the Snow Bunting, and a flock of about 500 Horned Larks that were feeding in, and flying about, a field of short winter wheat. They were spotted first on the basis of their overall buffy color below and above. Their backs were streaked and breasts were lightly streaked. The outer tail feathers were whitish. The light-colored, streaked back, sparrow bill, and behavior (no tail-bobbing) distinguished them from Water Pipits. The horizontal posture, light (not heavy) streaking on breast, and lack of a rufous wing-patch serve to distinguish them from Vesper Sparrows. We are just outside of the normal wintering range for the Smith's Longspur, but it was observed regularly during the severe winters in the late 1970s and early 1980s, presumably due to the ice and snow forcing them closer to roads and making them more visible. During those severe winters, the Horned Larks, Lapland Longspurs, and Snow Buntings appeared to be more numerous."

Frances Louise Taylor indicated that the Hooded Merganser, Ruddy Duck, and Smith's Longspurs were first occurrences for the Christmas count in the Lincoln area, while the Double-crested Cormorant was a second occurrence. The Lapland Longspurs and the single Snow Bunting were the first to be seen since the early 1980's.

Loup City: center at NW corner of Sec 13, T15N, R15W, 1N, 41° 17' N, 98° 59' W, Sherman County. WAYNE MOLLHOFF.

North Platte: The group did not use an official center according to the rules of the National Audubon Society. They branched out from Centennial Road to include different types of terrain. Robert Bailey, Esther Cunningham, Harold Cunningham, Greg Hoover, Margaret Morton, R. M. Raney, Darlene Schick, Marvin Tickle, Ryan Tickle, WILMA WYMAN, Howard Wyman.

Omaha: center at Offutt Air Force Base Lake including Fontenelle Forest, Lake Manawa (Iowa) State Park, Plattsmouth Waterfowl Refuge, and portions of the Platte and Missouri Rivers. Glenn Albert, Betty Allen, Jim Alt, Mary Babcock, Treasure Baker, Carol Beaty, Shelly Bonsall, Tanya Bray, Sue Gentes, Sue Gilliam, Ruth Green, BETTY GRENON, Sam Grill, Essie Grill, Craig Hensley, Ed Higgins, Father Thomas Hoffman, Clem Klaphake, Ray Korpi, Jim Kovanda, Sandy Kovanda, Susan Lobmeier, Babs Padelford, Loren Padelford, Chris Rasmussen, Richard Rasmussen, Neal Ratzlaff, Kathleen Rose, Eric Scholar, David Smith, Robert Starr, Jerry Toll, Suzanne Winkler.

Betty Grenon sent the following documentation for the two Ring-necked Ducks: white crescent on side, dark head, dark bill with a white stripe above the nail, light belly, smaller than a Mallard.

Scottsbluff: center at Visitors' Center at Scotts Bluff National Monument, 41° 51' N, 103° 39' W. Mary Allison, Helen Hughson, ALICE KENITZ, Robert Larkin, Brad McKinney, Doug Thomas, Edna Claire Thomas, Nora Mae Vance, Margaret Varga. Additional species seen during count week but not on count day were Golden Eagle, Ring-necked Pheasant, and Northern Cardinal.

Details of the on the Christmas counts in eight locations is given in Table 1 on pages 14-19, and the data on weather conditions, hours, distances, and numbers of observers are shown in Table 2 on pages 19-20.

TABLE 1. 1992 CHRISTMAS COUNTS FOR EIGHT LOCATIONS IN NEBRASKA

Name of Bird	Scotts-bluff	North Platte	Loup City	Kearney	Grand Island	Beaver Valley	Lincoln	Omaha
Amer. White Pelican		1						
Double-crested Cormorant							1	
Great Blue Heron	3	3					8	2
Greater White-fronted Goose								3
Snow Goose		1			3		26 + 2 Blue	5
Canada Goose	1195	1138		5000	1043		1804	527
Green-winged Teal	40	1		4				1
Mallard	1636	5	78	106	4186	2500	773	393
Northern Pintail	1				1		1	
Gadwall	2		2				1	
Amer. Wigeon	1		2					
Redhead					1			
Ring-necked Duck								2
Lesser Scaup								1
Common Goldeneye	5		1	4	2		19	146
Hooded Merganser							1	
Common Merganser	1			8	3		17	288
Ruddy Duck							1	1

Name of Bird	Scotts-bluff	North Platte	Loup City	Kearney	Grand Island	Beaver Valley	Lincoln	Omaha
Bald Eagle (total)	9	38		14	16	9	2	43
Immature	3				11	3		6
Adult	6				5	6	2	37
Undesignated		38		14				
Northern Harrier	2			1	6		4	
Sharp-shinned Hawk				1	3		1	1
Cooper's Hawk		2		1			1	
Northern Goshawk					1			
Accipiter sp.							1	2
Red-tailed Hawk	1	20	1	7	25	4	47	53
Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk						1		
Ferruginous Hawk			1					
Rough-legged Hawk	1	1	1		1	5	2	
Buteo spp.								3
Hawk spp.							5	
Golden Eagle		2				1 ad		
Amer. Kestrel	3	21	1	7	11	1	25	35
Merlin	1				1		1	1
Peregrine Falcon							1	
Prairie Falcon	1	1			3		2	
Falcon sp.							1	

TABLE 1. 1992 CHRISTMAS COUNTS FOR EIGHT LOCATIONS IN NEBRASKA

Name of Bird	Scotts-bluff	North Platte	Loup City	Kearney	Grand Island	Beaver Valley	Lincoln	Omaha
Ring-necked Pheasant			3	8	17	3	46	2
Greater Prairie-Chicken		35				12		
Sharp-tailed Grouse	2	104				1		
Wild Turkey	39	38			7			38
Northern Bobwhite					16		34	
Amer. Coot					5			
Common Snipe	1				3	4		
Ring-billed Gull				1			360	1
Herring Gull							33	
Gull spp.								2
Rock Dove	62	60	2	222	134	4	685	118
Mourning Dove	2	2			3		53	10
Eastern Screech-Owl			1		10	1	18	5
Great Horned Owl	3	3	2	2	8	2	22	3
Barred Owl							3	2
Long-eared Owl							10	1
Owl sp.							1	
Belted Kingfisher	2			1	4	1	5	3
Red-headed Woodpecker					2		3	
Red-bellied Woodpecker		6	4	1	4	1	17	56

Name of Bird	Scotts-bluff	North Platte	Loup City	Kearney	Grand Island	Beaver Valley	Lincoln	Omaha
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker				1			2	1
Downy Woodpecker	6	13	2	10	13	3	51	99
Hairy Woodpecker		4		1	1		17	14
Northern Flicker (total no.)	26	16	1	23	42	1	26	52
Yellow-sh.	1		1			1	13	50
Red-sh.	19						1	2
Yellow-sh. x Red-sh.	2							
Undesignated	4	16		23	42		12	
Horned Lark	1317	2	43	62	40	21	718	153
Blue Jay	35	12	7	17	16	2	327	86
Black-billed Magpie	38	10	1	9	8	3	1	
American Crow	87	357	57	162	62	12	482	149
Black-capped Chickadee	22	25	13	20	111	6	290	421
Tufted Titmouse								31
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	1					6	2
White-breasted Nuthatch	1	4	5	30	11	5	60	123
Brown Creeper		1		5		1	23	5

TABLE 1. 1992 CHRISTMAS COUNTS FOR EIGHT LOCATIONS IN NEBRASKA

Name of Bird	Scotts-bluff	North Platte	Loup City	Kearney	Grand Island	Beaver Valley	Lincoln	Omaha
Carolina Wren							1	4
Marsh Wren						1		
Wren sp.					1			
Golden-crowned Kinglet				10	8		51	13
Eastern Bluebird				1				1
Mountain Bluebird		68						
Townsend's Solitaire	3	1		4				
American Robin	34	1081	226	70	459		11	5
Brown Thrasher					1		1	
Cedar Waxwing		88	6	38	10			81
Northern Shrike	3	6	1		2	1	3	
Loggerhead Shrike					1		1	
European Starling	1694	451	50	205	1532	23	2507	844
Northern Cardinal		9	7	6	8	1	126	194
Rufous-sided Towhee							1	
American Tree Sparrow	48	396	12	82	169	74	414	193
Field Sparrow				1			1	
Lark Sparrow					3			
Song Sparrow	2		1	5	1	1	14	8
White-throated Sparrow				1			4	

Name of Bird	Scotts-bluff	North Platte	Loup City	Kearney	Grand Island	Beaver Valley	Lincoln	Omaha
White-crowned Sparrow	53						1	
Harris' Sparrow		1	2	3	26	3	130	8
Dark-eyed Junco (total)	138	670	4	40	201	44	484	460
Slate-color.	9		1			32	76	460
Oregon	86		3			12	7	
Undesignated	43	670		40	201		401	
Lapland Longspur							16	
Smith's Longspur							2	
Snow Bunting							1	
Red-winged Blackbird	150			1	1	100	207	89
Western Meadowlark	32	3		5	25	2	9	
Meadowlark spp.							167	52
Brewer's Blackbird							1	
Common Grackle		14	1			3	3	2
Brown-headed Cowbird				1		26	40	
Blackbird spp.							2	34
Purple Finch		6			2			
House Finch	130	140		18	13		46	
Pine Siskin	28	3		3	72		109	119
American Goldfinch	25	479		35	166	5	288	221

TABLE 1. 1992 CHRISTMAS COUNTS FOR EIGHT LOCATIONS IN NEBRASKA

Name of Bird	Scotts-bluff	North Platte	Loup City	Kearney	Grand Island	Beaver Valley	Lincoln	Omaha
House Sparrow	1261	701	70	77	288	16	1551	865
No. of Species	46	48	32	48	58	38	74	55
Total No. of Birds	8147	6044	640	6334	8811	2904	12	

TABLE 2 . 1992 CHRISTMAS COUNT INFORMATION AND WEATHER CONDITIONS, 1992.

Count data	Scotts-bluff	North Platte	Loup City	Kearney	Grand Island	Beaver Valley	Lincoln	Omaha
Date	Dec. 19	Jan. 2	Jan. 3	Dec. 19	Dec. 19	Jan. 2	Dec. 20	Dec. 19
Start a.m.	7:30	7:30	7:45	8:00	5:20	8:00		6:45
End p.m.	4:00	3:00	4:30	5:00	5:45	5:00		5:00
Miles, Car	160.75.7		96		335	80	377	542.6
Miles, Foot	1.5		5		7	6	79	33.5
Miles Owling	0		0		25	0	45.3	47
Hours, Car	15		5.5		24	5	28.1	39.5
Hours, Foot	1.5		3.75		8	4	72.3	38.25
Hours, Owling	0		0		3	0	7.2	6.75
Hours at Feeders	10		0		0	0	16.1	7.5
Max.Temp. (F)	24	31	20	25	30	26		28
Min. Temp. (F)	0	20	12	12	16	20		18
Wind Direction	WNW	SE	NW		NW	NW		NW
Wind Speed (mph)	0-15	10-15	15-25	Little wind	5-10	5-15		5-10

Count data	Scotts-bluff	North Platte	Loup City	Kearney	Grand Island	Beaver Valley	Lincoln	Omaha
Weather (a.m.)	Clear	Heavy overcast & frosty	Cloudy, light snow	Clear	Clear		Clear	Clear
Weather (p.m.)	Partly cloudy	Same	Cloudy	Clear	Clear		Clear	Cloudy
Snow Cover	0.5-12"	Icy	2"	Snow cover,	100% (90% ice)	2"		
Still Water	Partly open		Frozen	Ice cover		Frozen		Partly open
Moving Water	Open		Partly open	50% ice cover		Partly open		Open
# Field Observers	9	11	1	12	13	1	27	33
# Parties	1-3		1			1	16-17	13
# Feeder Watchers	2		0	5	0	0	5	1