

3-1980

## 1979 Christmas Count

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"1979 Christmas Count" (1980). *Nebraska Bird Review*. 721.  
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## 1979 CHRISTMAS COUNT

Ninety-nine species (four less than last year) were reported in the 1979 Christmas Count, and one species was reported present but not seen on the count. (There was no such species reported last year.) This drop was in spite of one more count — from Kearney — this year. The number of additional races reported — three — was the same as last year. The individual count this year was 188,102 compared to 90,000 last year, and most of the increase was due to the Snow Goose and Mallard counts along the Missouri River, which in turn was due to the relatively open winter to the time of the counts. Only twelve species were reported from all stations this year, compared to seventeen last year, and surprisingly, the Brown Creeper was one of the twelve.

The columns are arranged in an approximate west (left) to east (right) order, with the northernmost location of those of about equal longitude given first. The symbol "H" is used to indicate a species present during the count period but not recorded on the count day.

Crawford, 16 December, the count circle centered on the southeast corner of town, to include parts of the White River valley and the Pine Ridge at Fort Robinson State Park, Cochran State Wayside Area, Ponderosa Wildlife Management Area, and Crow Butte; elevation 3,500 to 4,000 ft.; habitat coverage: riparian woodland 31%, open prairie 23%, coniferous woodland 19%, residential 15%, cropland 12%; 6:30 AM to 4:30 PM, clear all day, temperature — 10° to 29° F., wind variable, 5-10 mph., snow cover 0-12", fresh water partly open, wild food crop fair. Four observers in 3 parties: total party hours 26 (8 on foot, 18 by car), total party miles 241 (8 on foot, 233 by car). Dorothy and Richard Rosche (compiler) and Fred and Melly Zeillenmaker. The counts for Mallards, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Common Snipe, and Pygmy Nuthatches were the highest in the six years the count has been taken — the Pygmy Nuthatch count might be the highest one-day count recorded in Nebraska. The total individual count, and those for Robins, Starlings, Goldfinches, and Tree Sparrows were the lowest for the six years of the counts. It was the first year no Robin was recorded.

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	Craw- ford	Scotts Bluff	North Platte	Kear- ney	Hast- ings	Lin- coln	DeSoto	Omaha
Canada Goose	-	180	463	-	-	30	7	1
White-fronted Goose	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	-
Snow Goose	-	-	-	-	-	-	40,512	30,201
Ross' Goose	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Mallard	7	1,132	401	406	-	47	69,591	42
Black Duck	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-
Gadwall	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Pintail	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	1
Green-winged Teal	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-
Blue-winged Teal	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-
American Wigeon	-	3	-	-	-	-	4	-
Wood Duck	-	H	-	-	-	-	-	-
Redhead	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1
Canvasback	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Lesser Scaup	-	-	39	-	-	-	1	18
Common Goldeneye	-	-	-	-	-	-	51	22
Common Merganser	-	-	1	-	-	-	9	8
Duck sp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	35	89
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	-	-	1	-	2	1	1
Cooper's Hawk	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	1
Red-tailed Hawk	1	1	2	4	4	20	31	84
Rough-legged Hawk	4	-	7	-	2	1	1	1
Ferruginous Hawk	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-
Buteo sp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2
Golden Eagle	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
adults	(1)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
immatures	(3)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bald Eagle	2	H	11	3	-	-	25	16
adults	(2)	(2)	-	-	-	-	(12)	-
immatures	-	(1)	-	-	-	-	(13)	-
Marsh Hawk	-	1	1	2	3	4	5	1
Prairie Falcon	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Merlin	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	-
American Kestrel	-	11	34	2	1	15	9	27
Greater Prairie Chicken	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Sharp-tailed Grouse	53	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bobwhite	-	-	-	1	-	14	25	47
Ring-necked Pheasant	9	1	20	-	3	21	62	28
Killdeer	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Common Snipe	3	H	-	-	-	-	-	-
Herring Gull	-	-	260	-	-	-	-	4
Ring-billed Gull	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Gull sp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Rock Dove	20	163	75	15	300	227	36	164

	Craw- ford	Scotts Bluff	North Platte	Kear- ney	Hast- ings	Lin- coln	DeSoto	Omaha
Mourning Dove	-	-	1	1	1	339	51	6
Screech Owl	-	-	-	-	-	40	14	8
Great Horned Owl	3	1	3	1	1	14	12	3
Snowy Owl	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-
Barred Owl	-	-	-	-	-	4	H	2
Long-eared Owl	-	H	-	-	-	4	-	-
Owl sp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
Belted Kingfisher	1	3	2	-	1	2	1	4
Common Flicker	7	29	21	8	9	65	135	249
red-shafted	-	-	-	-	-	(2)	(3)	(3)
yellow-shafted	-	-	-	-	-	(44)	-	(246)
undesignated	(7)	(29)	(21)	(8)	(9)	(19)	(132)	-
Red-bellied Woodpecker	-	-	-	2	-	20	37	95
Red-headed Woodpecker	-	-	-	-	-	14	1	14
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	-	-	-	1	-	3	H	7
Hairy Woodpecker	22	2	2	-	2	10	15	21
Downy Woodpecker	14	6	5	1	9	52	78	168
Horned Lark	-	6	348	8	24	10	25	14
Blue Jay	-	22	10	4	5	133	114	77
Black-billed Magpie	30	73	5	7	1	-	-	-
Common Crow	145	3	81	-	20	164	35	131
Pinon Jay	12	40	-	-	-	-	-	-
Black-capped Chickadee	110	39	34	6	19	260	129	609
Tufted Titmouse	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	21
White-breasted Nuthatch	7	-	4	2	5	47	36	106
Red-breasted Nuthatch	5	2	1	1	1	9	-	-
Pygmy Nuthatch	49	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Brown Creeper	3	2	1	4	6	13	4	14
Winter Wren	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	4
Brown Thrasher	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	1
American Robin	-	8	887	576	47	924	1,055	819
Eastern Bluebird	-	-	4	-	-	6	-	12
Townsend's Solitaire	6	4	-	1	-	-	1	-
Golden-crowned Kinglet	-	H	1	-	-	14	2	13
Bohemian Waxwing	175	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cedar Waxwings	-	-	85	66	23	336	301	250
Northern Shrike	8	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Loggerhead Shrike	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-
Shrike sp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Starling	43	1,904	1,685	3,280	500	2,125	1,306	2,622
Yellow-rumped Warbler	-	1	-	-	-	H	-	4
House Sparrow	175	1,547	831	380	201	3,147	1,352	1,294

	Craw- ford	Scotts Bluff	North Platte	Kear- ney	Hast- ings	Lin- coln	DeSoto	Omaha
Western Meadowlark	-	12	43	5	5	-	-	-
Meadowlark sp.	-	-	-	-	-	21	-	27
Yellow-headed Blackbird	-	-	2	-	-	-	6	-
Red-winged Blackbird	H	150	326	-	30	300	1,708	21
Northern Oriole	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Rusty Blackbird	-	-	-	-	-	2	6	1
Brewer's Blackbird	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-
Common Grackle	2	-	1	-	1	6	17	6
Brown-headed Cowbird	-	-	-	-	-	16	15	2
Blackbird sp.	-	-	-	-	-	51	2	10
Cardinal	-	-	7	8	7	107	68	194
Evening Grosbeak	47	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Purple Finch	-	-	-	-	-	H	2	4
House Finch	-	24	13	-	-	-	-	-
Common Redpoll	-	-	15	-	-	-	-	-
Pine Siskin	78	20	-	-	-	3	-	-
American Goldfinch	79	25	31	12	21	268	50	217
Red Crossbill	28	-	12	-	-	H	1	5
Rufous-sided Towhee	-	-	-	-	-	-	H	2
Dark-eyed Junco	124	36	175	28	39	402	844	767
white-winged	(61)							
slate-colored	(2)				(39)	(400)	(843)	(766)
oregon	(61)					(2)	(1)	(1)
Tree Sparrow	45	11	2	3	35	867	1,295	700
Field Sparrow	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	-
Harris' Sparrow	2	-	1	23	74	292	65	12
White-crowned Sparrow	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
White-throated Sparrow	-	-	-	1	-	4	1	4
Swamp Sparrow	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Song Sparrow	3	-	6	3	-	5	3	8
Lapland Longspur	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Species Reported	38	36	49	34	34	54	64	67
Additional Races Reported	2	-	-	-	-	2	2	2
Present but not seen	1	5	-	-	-	3	3	-
Total Individuals	1,329	5,475	5,966	4,866	1,412	10,488	119,243	39,323

DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge, 22 December, the count circle centered on the headquarters building, west to Blair, and east to Missouri Valley, Iowa, including all of the Refuge, Wilson Island, and Fort Calhoun; elevation 992 to 1375 ft.; habitat coverage: cultivated fields 40%, woodland 40%, water areas 15%, residential 5%; 5:00 AM to 5:00 PM; AM overcast, PM overcast, fog, intermittent light rain; 29° to 40°F.; wind calm; no snow cover; fresh water partly open; wild food crop excellent. Twenty observers in 5 parties: total party hours 49.25 (26 on foot, 23.25 by car), plus 6.75 owl, total party miles 297 (36 on foot, 261 by car). Tanya Bray, Hal Chase, Bill Gidley, Ruth Gochenour, Ruth Green, Janet Greer, Alan Grenon, Fr. Thomas Hoffman, Charles Johnson, Eric Joranson, Sandy Kovanda, David Menke (compiler), Steve Moorman, Babs and Loren Padelford, Neal Ratzlaff, Ross Silcock, Phyllis Walker, Barb Wilson,

Rick Wright. The Ross' Goose was checked by 5 observers, with spotting scopes, at about 130 yards, in with Mallards and Snow Geese. The Blue-winged Teal were 60-75 yards away, and the cheek-mark was noted. The Snowy Owl was checked with scopes at about 150 yards, the Solitaire was seen at 15-25 ft., with a scope as well as binoculars, the Yellow-headed Blackbirds (adult males) were seen at 20-25 yards with both glasses and scope, and the Brewer's Blackbirds were seen at 50 yards, with scopes. They were in a mixed flock of blackbirds in a feedlot.

Hastings, 15 December, the count circle centered south of town, 1.5 miles south of Highway 6 and .5 miles east of Highway 281, which includes the city parks, Parkview Cemetery, Crystal Lake Recreation Grounds, fields and pastures, woodlands along the Little Blue River, and lagoons west of Glenvil; elevation 1928 ft.; 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM; clear all day; 30°-50° F.; wind SW 5-15 mph.; no snow cover; fresh water partly open; wild food crop fair. Ten observers, 7 in three parties, 3 at feeders; total party hours 13.25 (4 on foot, 9.25 by car), total party miles 125.5 (5.5 on foot, 120 by car). Frances Alberts, Vlasta Butler, Elsie Helzer, George and Norma Janko, Dorothy Marsh, Gladys Nelson, Carl Throckmorton, Bernice Welch (compiler).

Kearney, 29 December, count circle centered on the bridge over the Platte River, south of Kearney, including Kearney Cemetery, Harmon Park, Cottonmill Lake Park, Odessa bridge, Fawn Lake area, and connecting streets and roads; elevation 2149 ft.; habitat coverage: parks and cemetery 40%, river bottomlands 30%, roadsides 30%; 8:00 AM to 12 N., 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM; completely overcast at all times, with intermittent light snow showers, foggy after 3:30 PM; 29°-31° F.; little or no wind; fresh snow cover of 4-5 in.; river about 80% open. Thirteen observers in one party; party miles 56 (2.8 on foot, 53.2 by car). Wendy Ayers, Margaret Bliese, John C.W. Bliese (compiler), George W. Brown, Glen Haselbarth, Kenneth Kimball, Beverly Kimball, Harold Nagel, Glennie Nagel, Norma Radford, Delphine Sanks, Ward Schrack, Norma Schrack. They could have added 500 or more Robins to the count if they had worked other portions of Kearney. The Robins are taking advantage of this year's good hackberry crop. The count was sponsored by the Big Bend Audubon Society.

Lincoln, 23 December, count circle centered on South Coddington and A Sts., to include Pioneers Park, about 8 miles of Wilderness Park, Lagoon Park, Yankee Lake and Conestoga Lake areas, eastern half of Pawnee Lake, and Wyuka Cemetery; elevation 1000 to 1300 ft.; habitat coverage: deciduous woods 38%, weedy draws 20%, harvested corn and milo fields 20%, coniferous woods 10%, lakes and streams 10%, mixed woods and cemeteries 2%; 12:05 AM to 6:30 PM; AM, heavy overcast, fog, light drizzle, PM overcast; 30°-39° F.; wind calm to 29 mph. from NNW; no snow cover; creeks open, lakes partly frozen; wild food crop good. Twenty-six observers. 25 in 12 parties, 1 at feeder; total party hours 80 (61 on foot, 19 by car), plus 4 at feeder and 9.25 owling, total party 444.25 (69.25 on foot, 375 by car). Bill Achord, Deon Bahr, John Baer, Paul Bedell, Naomi Brill, Lewis Cartee, Cindy Cochrane, David Cochrane, Daryl Giblin, Margaret Giblin, Everett Gross, Mildred Gross, Ralph Harrington (compiler), Craig Herzinger, Mike Kaspari, Tim Knott, Pete Maslowski, Rosalind Morris, John Ott, Mabel Ott, Cynthia Pemberton, Sarah Richardson, Hazel Scheiber, Frances Taylor, Angela Williams, Donald Williams. Robins, Mourning Doves, and Cedar Waxwings were more abundant this year, while Meadowlarks, Horned Larks, and winter finches and winter sparrows were scarce.

North Platte, 29 December, count circle centered at the Court House; elevation 2809 ft.; 8:15 AM to 5:30 PM; overcast with occasional light snow; 31° F. Twelve observers in 4 parties; total party hours, 32; total party miles 267 (7 on foot, 260 by car). Marie and Harold Cunningham, Irma Grille, Eva Kieborz, Pat McEvoy, Beryl Main, Margaret Morton, Esther Newhouse, Carol Sommerhalder, Jim Wilson, Wilma (compiler) and Howard Wyman.

Omaha, 15 December, count circle centered at Offutt Base Lake, to include Fontenelle Forest, Lake Manawa (Iowa) State Park, Plattsmouth Waterfowl Refuge, and portions of the Platte and Missouri rivers; elevation 970 to 1245 ft.; habitat coverage: woodlands 53%, cultivated fields 25%, grassy fields and meadows 6%, rivers and lakes 7%, roadside weedy ditches 6%, residential 1%, parks and cemeteries 1.75%, dump .25%; 4:00 AM to 5:00 PM; clear all day; 34° to 51° F.; wind southerly 11-15 mph.; no snow cover; lakes and ponds frozen, streams and rivers open; wild food crop excellent. Forty-seven observers in 12 parties, 1 at feeder; total party hours 96.5 (66.25 on foot, 30.25 by car), plus 2 hours at feeder and 7 owling; total party miles 463 (63 on foot, 400 by car). Steve Bellinghiere, Russ Benedict, Tanya Bray, Duane Bright, Hal Chase, Dorothy Chisholm, R.G. Cortelyou, James Glather, Donna Gnadt, Ruth Gochenour, Marjorie Graf, Ruth Green, Janet Greer, Alan Grenon, Mary Harberg, Carr Heaney, Mike Heaney, Fr. Thomas Hoffman, Bryan Howell, Clyde and Emma Johnson, Jim and Sandy Kovanda, Gary

Lindauer, Debi Link, Marian Meier, Dave Menke, Wanda Neaderhiser, Cathy Nelson, Babs and Loren Padelford, Neal Ratzlaff, Jean Richter, Linda Riner, Harold and Marilyn Rock, Elva Sheard, Sam Strutman, John and Marlene Weber, Chet Thomas, John Thomas, Kate Thompson, John Upchurch, Melba Wigg (compiler), Rick Wright. The count was sponsored by the Audubon Society of Omaha.

Scottsbluff, 15 December, count circle centered on the bridge across the North Platte River at South Broadway, to include Scottsbluff and Gering; elevation 3880 ft.; 7:00 AM to 3:45 PM; from 43° to 59° and down to 24°F.; AM, wind NW 15-25 mph., gusts to 40 mph., PM NE 15-25 mph.; snow cover 2 to 4 inches; partly cloudy all day. Eleven observers in 4 parties, 2 at feeders; total party hours, 35 (4 on foot, 31 by car) plus 14 at feeders; total party miles 222 (8 on foot, 214 by car). Mrs. Harry Banghart, Lydia E. Bolz, Mrs. J.J. Brashear, Mrs. Walter Harvey, Jr., Mrs. Lee Kenitz, Mrs. Wallace Marking, Mrs. Louis Nerud, Grant Newbold, Rodney L. Smith, Roy J. and Maud (compiler) Witschy.