

INDIAN PEAKS FOUR SEASON BIRD COUNTS

Fall 2000, Winter 2001

Newsletter

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Notes from the Desk

With this newsletter, the Indian Peaks Bird Count makes the transition from its 19th to 20th year. We started as an Audubon Christmas Bird Count in the winter of 1981-82. We quickly decided it would be a lot more fun and we would see a lot more birds if we had counts in the other seasons. We missed the spring of 1982, but since the summer of that year have been going strong. We also dropped out of the Audubon CBC format; having the count on one scheduled day often told us more about the weather and less about the birds. So we changed to a count period.

Since then, the count glides along with little effort involved in keeping it going. Our field effort is as strong as ever. As some team leaders leave, others take up the flag and keep marching ahead. Several years ago I tried to end the spring and fall counts, but was overruled by many of you; the reasoning was that you were going to be out anyway.

At the end of this year, we will again look for trends by grouping the yearly data into five-year averages. Are corvids still increasing? Are we losing some of the neo-tropical migrants? Stay tuned.

Fall Count Summary

The count period had seasonal weather with the first week fair and the second week with some rain, cold temperatures and light snow. Strong winds were intermittent throughout the period.

It was a slightly above average count for numbers of birds and species. For the most common species, mountain chickadee, yellow-rumped warbler, white-crowned sparrow and gray-headed junco were above historic average, while American robin and pine siskin were below.

Fall Count Summary

Number of Species - 90

(Average - 86)

Individuals - 38 per Hour

(Average - 34)

Good finds included: ruddy duck (BB, CC, AG); long-eared owl (SJ); Lewis's woodpecker (DH, DB, L&VE); dusky flycatcher (DH); Say's phoebe (DH); warbling vireo (MP, LI, LM); Brewer's sparrow (BK, DW, AC); western meadowlark (DH, DB, L&VE); white-winged crossbill (DH); and blue jay (DH, DB, L&VE).

One wonders if long-eared owls are more common in the mountains than what we may think. Time for a study?

Brewer's sparrows, after being very rare on the counts, have now been seen three of the last four years. A sign of global warming? Or are these the far north subspecies, sometimes referred to as Timberline Sparrow?

Several species were in better than average numbers, including: horned larks (.78/hour, .22/hour average of past nine years); golden-crowned kinglet (.92/hour, .52/hour average); vesper sparrow (.18/hour, .02/hour average); Brewer's blackbird (.50/hour, .16/hour average); evening grosbeak (3 were seen, only 1 seen on last four fall counts).

Our indicator groups had average or better counts. Corvids continue to be up; the fall numbers of the past several counts are double what used to be average during the first five years. Cone seed-eaters had a good showing with the best numbers since the fall of 1998 (2.62/hour; over 2/hour is considered a "good" count). Evening grosbeaks may be making a comeback in the count area. Accipiters were present in average numbers; two northern goshawks were detected.

Several species normally observed which were missed this count included white-tailed ptarmigan, California gull, rock dove and house finch. We probably should not be too concerned about the latter two species.

Winter Count Summary

Winter Count Summary

Number of Species - 39

(Average - 37)

Individuals - 16 per hour

(Average - 18)

From what I can gather, it was a real winter in western Boulder County. The numbers indicate below average for total birds and slightly above average findings for species.

Good finds included rough-legged hawk (8th time; JH, CN-H, M&SM, MP, LI, LMc), northern pygmy-owl (3rd time; DK, CL, EH), belted kingfisher (4th time; MP, LI, LMc), yellow-bellied sapsucker (1st time; LA-G), house finch (4th time; MP, LI, LMc), and house sparrow (8th time; MP, LI, LMc). The yellow-bellied sapsucker was seen by Linda Andes-Georges just a short distance up the Lefthand Reservoir Road (off of the Brainard Lake Road, slightly over 10,000 feet elevation) on a cold morning. She spent a lot of time observing and looking for a red-nape, which never was seen.

Other species and guilds had mixed results. Corvids were at their highest numbers for the winter since 1988, and continued the high totals of recent years. Bohemian waxwings were present, but it was not a bumper year like two years ago. Fifteen evening grosbeaks were seen, compared to zero last year. Steller's jays and mountain chickadees were present at average numbers. American crows and red-breasted nuthatches were above average. Tree-cone seed-eaters were average: while they had high numbers for the breeding and fall counts, they left for the winter. There were low counts for pine grosbeak and red crossbill, while Clark's nutcracker and red-breasted nuthatch were above average.

Indications of a normal (cold with adequate snow) winter included: 0 northern flickers (seen 4 times), 0 American dippers (seen 11 times), and 0 American robins (seen 13 times). No golden-crowned kinglets were seen; they have been missed on only one other winter count. Also missed were three-toed woodpeckers (seen on 17 of the previous 19 counts).

More Species of Red Crossbill?

There is some indication that there may be as many as eight species of red crossbill, and they may be split at some future date. Bill size and shape, and vocalizations are important features for separation. It is felt that we have primarily two types in Colorado; type 5 crossbills are normally found in spruce-fir and lodgepole pine forests, while type 2 are generally found in ponderosa pine. A good reference is a web site developed by Jeff Groth of the American Museum of Natural History at

<http://research.amnh.org/ornithology/crossbills>. He provides vocalizations of their calls as well as life history information. Time for a little school work to keep up with changing taxonomy.

SPECIAL NOTE

This will be the last IPBC newsletter mailed to all participants. From now on it will only be available through a computer, via several sources, unless you notify me by mail or phone that you wish to receive a mailed copy. The internet sources are: 1) a Summary (less information than the full newsletter) sent directly to your email address, plus the attached Full Newsletter (sent as an attachment, Wordperfect version - may not be readable for all of you) - **Send me your email address at eldoradh@rmi.net so I can send this to you;** 2) A Summary will be posted on the BCNA sponsored Nature-Net: in order to subscribe, send a blank message to: nature-net-subscribe@eGroups.com; and 3) a Full Newsletter is printed on the BCNA Web Site (<http://www.bcna.org/>) under Publications and Reports.

I hope this is not a major inconvenience, but it makes sense with the technology most of us have available. Again, if you still want a mailed newsletter, send me a note (2478 Eldora Rd, Nederland, CO 80466) or give me a call 520-474-9475 until mid-April, 303-258-3672 after mid-April). Thanks for your understanding and continued support of the count.

Looking Ahead

Next Counts

Spring Count

Count Day - May 5

Count Period - May 1-14

Summer Count

Count Day - June 9

Count Period - June 1 - July 15

Happy Birding,
Dave Hallock

2000 INDIAN PEAKS FALL BIRD COUNT

Count day - September 16; Count period - September 9 - 24. First week was dominated by seasonal fair weather, second week by a front that brought rain, cold and light snow. Twenty-four observers, 14 (of 25) areas covered. Total party hours: 84.5.

Double-crested Cormorant	6	Hairy Woodpecker	17	European Starling	10
Great Blue Heron	2	Three-toed Woodpecker	1	American Pipit	93
Turkey Vulture	6	Northern Flicker	56	Orange-crowned Warbler	3
Canada Goose	5	Dusky Flycatcher	1	Yellow Warbler	4
Mallard	28	Cordilleran Flycatcher	1	Yellow-rumped Warbler	227
Blue-winged Teal	2	Say's Phoebe	2	Townsend's Warbler	12
Green-winged Teal	1	Warbling Vireo	1	MacGillivray's Warbler	3
American Wigeon	3	Gray Jay	37	Wilson's Warbler	57
Ring-necked Duck	4	Steller's Jay	173	Green-tailed Towhee	9
Common Merganser	10	Blue Jay	1	Chipping Sparrow	121
Ruddy Duck	13	Clark's Nutcracker	54	Brewer's Sparrow	2
Osprey	2	Black-billed Magpie	31	Vesper Sparrow	15
Northern Harrier	3	American Crow	99	Fox Sparrow	6
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4	Common Raven	30	Song Sparrow	9
Cooper's Hawk	3	Horned Lark	66	Lincoln's Sparrow	10
Northern Goshawk	2	Barn Swallow	3	White-crowned Sparrow	124
<i>Accipiter</i> species	1	Black-capped Chickadee	47	Gray-headed Junco	450
Red-tailed Hawk	13	Mountain Chickadee	369	Red-winged Blackbird	12
<i>Buteo</i> species	2	Red-breasted Nuthatch	46	Western Meadowlark	1
Golden Eagle	3	White-breasted Nuthatch	23	Brewer's Blackbird	42
American Kestrel	7	Pygmy Nuthatch	20	Common Grackle	1
Prairie Falcon	1	Brown Creeper	23	Brown-capped Rosy Finch	6
Blue Grouse	9	Rock Wren	4	Pine Grosbeak	30
Band-tailed Pigeon	122	House Wren	3	Cassin's Finch	17
Mourning Dove	4	American Dipper	5	Red Crossbill	87
Long-eared Owl	1	Golden-crowned Kinglet	78	White-winged Crossbill	4
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	3	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	58	Pine Siskin	109
Belted Kingfisher	4	Mountain Bluebird	85	Lesser Goldfinch	3
Lewis's Woodpecker	2	Townsend's Solitaire	23	Evening Grosbeak	3
Red-naped Sapsucker	2	Hermit Thrush	8	House Sparrow	20
Downy Woodpecker	3	American Robin	126		

Total: 90 species; 3252 individuals, 38 individuals per count hour. Participants: Bev Baker, Barbara & Earl Bolton, Diane Brown, Cindy Cornelius, Andy Cowell, Lee & Virginia Evans, Mike Figgs, Audrey Godell, Dave Hallock, Susan Harris, Jim Holitza, Lynne Ihlstrom, Steve Jones, Bill Kaempfer, Nan Lederer, Lisa McCoy, Merle & Sally Miller, Carol Newman-Holitza, Mark Pscheid, Lynn Solomon, David Waltman.

2001 INDIAN PEAKS WINTER BIRD COUNT

Count day - January 13; Count period - December 15 - February 15. Weather was seasonal for winter with periods of cold, wind and snow. Twenty-seven observers; 14 (of 25) areas covered. Total party hours: 76.

Northern Goshawk	1	White-breasted Nuthatch	19
Red-tailed Hawk	1	Pygmy Nuthatch	36
Rough-legged Hawk	2	Brown Creeper	10
Golden Eagle	1	Townsend's Solitaire	6
White-tailed Ptarmigan	13	European Starling	9
Blue Grouse	1	Bohemian Waxwing	41
Northern Pygmy-Owl	1	American Tree Sparrow	5
Belted Kingfisher	1	Dark-eyed Junco	63
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	White-winged	(10)
Sapsucker species	1	Slate-colored	(23)
Downy Woodpecker	3	Oregon	(1)
Hairy Woodpecker	15	Gray Headed	(11)
Northern Shrike	1	Pink Sided	(3)
Gray Jay	20	Red-winged Blackbird	15
Steller's Jay	93	Brown-capped Rosy-Finch	40
Clark's Nutcracker	27	Pine Grosbeak	11
Black-billed Magpie	33	Cassin's Finch	2
American Crow	111	House Finch	4
Common Raven	21	Red Crossbill	7
Black-capped Chickadee	50	Pine Siskin	46
Mountain Chickadee	363	Evening Grosbeak	15
Red-breasted Nuthatch	35	House Sparrow	58

Totals: 39 species plus 4 additional races; 1182 individuals (16 per count hour).

Participants: Linda Andes-Georges, Earl & Barbara Bolton, Ruth Carol Cushman, Marty Dick, Gene Dilworth, Mike Figgs, Joyce Gellhorn, Kathleen Gibson, Paula Hansley, Susan Harris, Elaine Hill, Jim Holitza, Lynne Ihlstrom, Bill Kaempfer, Dawn Kumli, Nan Lederer, Cherie Long, Gary Matthews, Lisa McCoy, Merle & Sally Miller, Naseem Munshi, Carol Newman-Holitza, Mark Pscheid, Michael Tupper, Tom VanZandt.