

INDIAN PEAKS FOUR SEASON BIRD COUNTS

Spring, Summer 2011

Newsletter

Vol.30 Nos.2&3

Spring Count Summary

The Spring Count saw a record number of birds and a near-record number of species.

Spring Count Summary

Number of Species

2011 – 93

20-Year Average – 83

Last Year - 83

Record High – 95 (1996, 1999 & 2009)

Record Low – 74 (1988)

Number of Individuals

2011 – 58 per count hour

20-Year Average – 42

Last Year – 42 per count hour

Old Record High – 54 (2004)

Record Low – 23 (1983)

Overall, May was cool with lots of snow and rain for much of the count period. The arrival to the high country of some birds appeared delayed. But numbers were exceptional all across the count areas east of the Peak-to-Peak Highway.

The record number of birds observed (on a per count hour basis) is greatly influenced by the fact that there was little participation in the subalpine areas. So, the extra 20 or so hours of counts with low per hour numbers (as is generally the case in the subalpine during spring) are not present, producing an inflated per count hour total. Still, the montane areas produced very good numbers of birds.

Good finds included common goldeneye (1st time on spring count; MP, LMc), common yellowthroat (2nd time; MJM, GY), Brewer's sparrow (2nd time; MJM, GY), Franklin's gull (3rd time; MP, LMc), canyon wren (3rd time; MJM, GY), double-crested cormorant (5th time, all in the last 5 years; JH,

CN-H, MM, SM), and white-faced ibis (7th time; MP, LMc).

Species normally seen that were missed included white-tailed ptarmigan, sharp-shinned hawk, golden eagle, and Lincoln's sparrow.

There were all-time spring count highs for band-tailed pigeon, northern flicker, tree swallow, American crow, and dark-eyed junco, as well as good numbers of Cassin's finch. There were poor numbers of broad-tailed hummingbirds, flycatchers and yellow-rumped warblers.

Breeding Count Summary

Total numbers were slightly above average. But there was a greater than average difference for total individuals seen between the montane (53/count hour) and subalpine (33/count hour); this is similar to last year.

Breeding Count Summary

Number of Species

2011 – 110

20-Year Average – 100

Last Year – 103

Record High – 112 (2001)

Record Low – 88 (1984)

Number of Individuals

2011 – 43 per count hour

20-Year Average – 42

Last Year – 45

Record High – 59 (2004)

Record Low – 31 (1982)

I wonder if some birds (those capable of finding suitable nesting habitat) make a choice to nest at lower elevation when the subalpine has such a late snowpack. Several species were well below average in the subalpine and well above average in the

montane, including ruby-crowned kinglet, hermit thrush, violet-green swallow, and olive-sided flycatcher.

There were a number of first time finds for the breeding count, including black-crowned night-heron in the Ward North area (BK, GM), redhead at Caribou Ranch (CS, PZ), and a late migrating white-throated sparrow in the Sugarloaf area (JR). Other good finds were blue-winged teal (3rd time on Breeding Count; NM, MT), American white pelican (3rd time; MP, LMc), prairie falcon (5th time; DH), Swainson's hawk (3rd time; MP, LMc), common poorwill (2nd time; JR), and black-chinned hummingbird (2nd time; LS, MB).

Species absent or missed included Canada goose, golden eagle, killdeer, and vesper sparrow.

Species with well-above average numbers included northern goshawk, red-tailed hawk, band-tailed pigeon, hairy and American three-toed woodpeckers, pygmy nuthatch, American dipper, and song sparrow.

Species with well-below average numbers included green-winged teal, ring-necked duck, white-tailed ptarmigan, spotted sandpiper, dusky flycatcher, rock wren, golden-crowned kinglet, and Swainson's thrush.

30-Year Get Together

We will be having a get together to celebrate 30 years of the Indian Peaks Bird Counts and plan the next 30 years. It will be held on Saturday, September 17 at 1 PM at the Kathmandu Restaurant in Nederland. They have a nice buffet lunch. Please let me know soon if you plan to attend to I can let them know approximate numbers.

The Future of the Count

Over this past winter we had some e-mail discussion about the future of the count. So far, it looks like the breeding and fall

counts will stay the same (breeding from June 1 – July 15; fall the second and third weeks of September).

There seems to be momentum to roll the winter count into the Great Backyard Bird Count, a national event sponsored by Cornell Lab and Audubon. It is held over a four day period, Friday through Monday, normally around Presidents' Day weekend. This winter it will be held February 17-20. You would conduct your count the same way you do now. Compilation is a variable. The data must be sent in to their web site (<http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>) by March 1st. It would be easiest if each area leader sent in their count. If it comes through me, you will have to send it to me ASAP (and some of you still do it by postal mail).

The final debate is over the spring count. One option is to drop it. The second is to keep it only for the lower elevation areas, as the subalpine areas are more like a second winter count (except during a drought year). We could keep Rollinsville, Nederland, Sugarloaf Road, Ward South, and Ward North, and maybe even South St. Vrain, Caribou Ranch, Arapaho Ranch, Tucker and Eldora. Those participants that lost an area could help cover the active areas.

We'll firm up the format for the winter and spring counts through further discussion, maybe at the 30-year get together.

Looking Ahead

Fall Count

Count Day – September 17
Count Period – September 10-25

Winter Count

Great Backyard Bird Count – February 17-20, 2012

Happy Birding,
Dave Hallock

2011 INDIAN PEAKS SPRING BIRD COUNT

Count day – May 7; Count period – May 1-14. Weather: cooler and wetter than average. Twenty-four participants; 9 (of 25) areas covered. Total party hours: 50.0. Total party miles: 129 (27.5 on foot, 101.5 by car).

Canada Goose.....	12	Downy Woodpecker	12	Thrush species	1
Gadwall	4	Hairy Woodpecker	19	American Robin.....	210
Mallard	53	Am. Three-Toed Wood.....	3	European Starling	3
Blue-winged Teal.....	5	Northern Flicker.....	69	American Pipit.....	62
Northern Shoveler	3	Empidonax species	1	Yellow-rumped Warbler	25
Green-winged Teal	5	Warbling Vireo.....	1	(Audubon's)	(6)
Ring-necked Duck	6	Loggerhead Shrike	2	(Myrtle).....	(3)
Common Goldeneye	1	Gray Jay.....	3	MacGillivray's Warbler.....	1
Common Merganser	3	Steller's Jay.....	94	Common Yellowthroat	1
Dusky Grouse.....	2	Clark's Nutcracker	5	Green-tailed Towhee	9
Pied-billed Grebe	1	Black-billed Magpie	26	Spotted Towhee	2
Western Grebe.....	2	American Crow.....	131	Chipping Sparrow.....	38
Double-crested Cormorant...	3	Common Raven.....	29	Brewer's Sparrow	2
Great Blue Heron.....	3	Horned Lark	16	Vesper Sparrow.....	7
White-faced Ibis.....	5	Tree Swallow	217	Fox Sparrow.....	4
Turkey Vulture	9	Violet=green Swallow	58	Song Sparrow.....	17
Osprey	5	N. Rough-winged Swallow...	3	White-crowned Sparrow.....	7
Cooper's Hawk.....	4	Barn Swallow.....	26	Dark-eyed Junco.....	461
Northern Goshawk	3	Black-capped Chickadee	39	(Slate-colored).....	(2)
Accipiter species	1	Mountain Chickadee.....	194	(Oregon)	(5)
Red-tailed Hawk	11	Red-breasted Nuthatch.....	30	(Pink-sided).....	(1)
Buteo Species	1	White-breasted Nuthatch....	18	(Gray-headed)	(258)
Killdeer	4	Pygmy Nuthatch.....	55	Black-headed Grosbeak.....	7
Spotted Sandpiper	4	Brown Creeper.....	7	Red-winged Blackbird	33
Wilson's Snipe	4	Rock Wren.....	1	Brewer's Blackbird.....	63
Franklin's Gull.....	1	Canyon Wren	1	Common Grackle.....	40
Band-tailed Pigeon.....	80	House Wren	23	Brown-headed Cowbird.....	20
Mourning Dove	16	American Dipper	3	Pine Grosbeak	13
Great Horned Owl.....	2	Golden-crowned Kinglet ...	10	Cassin's Finch.....	41
White-throated Swift	2	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	157	House Finch	15
Broad-tailed Humming.....	40	Western Bluebird	3	Red crossbill.....	12
Belted Kingfisher	1	Mountain Bluebird	49	Pine Siskin.....	73
Williamson's Sapsucker	4	Townsend's Solitaire.....	58	Evening Grosbeak	3
Red-naped Sapsucker.....	21	Hermit Thrush.....	4	House Sparrow.....	14

Totals: 93 species; 2901 individuals; 58 individuals per count hour.

Participants: Linda Andes-Georges, Maureen Blackford, Alex Brown, Diane Brown, Andy Cowell, Todd Deininger, Marty Dick, Libby Ellis, Dave Hallock, Jim Holitza, Bill Kaempfer, Elana Klaver, Steve Koral, Mary Jane Makepeace, Gary Matthews, Lisa McCoy, Merle Miller, Sally Miller, Carol Newman-Holitza, Mark Pscheid, Jeannie Reynolds, Joel Such, Marcel Such, and George Young.

2011 INDIAN PEAKS BREEDING BIRD COUNT

Count day – June 18; Count period – June 1 – July 24; Weather: June was normal while July turned wetter. Thirty-nine observers, 19 (of 25) areas covered. Total party hours: 114.75.

Mallard	54	Downy Woodpecker	8	Hermit Thrush	130
Blue-winged Teal.....	7	Hairy Woodpecker	33	American Robin.....	374
Green-winged Teal	1	Am. Three-toed Wood.	9	European Starling.....	18
Redhead.....	3	Northern Flicker.....	55	American Pipit.....	46
Ring-necked Duck	2	Olive-sided Flycatcher	21	Orange-crowned Warbler.....	2
Common Merganser	3	Western Wood-Pewee.....	17	Virginia's Warbler	6
White-tailed Ptarmigan.....	1	Hammond's Flycatcher.....	12	Yellow Warbler	30
Dusky Grouse.....	4	Dusky Flycatcher.....	31	Yellow-rumped Warbler ...	197
American White Pelican	2	Cordilleran Flycatcher	48	MacGillivray's Warbler.....	19
Double-crested Cormorant...	1	Empidonax species	1	Common Yellowthroat	2
Great Blue Heron.....	7	Warbling Vireo.....	118	Wilson's Warbler.....	96
Black-crowned Night-Heron	1	Gray Jay.....	6	Western Tanager	23
Turkey Vulture	5	Steller's Jay.....	110	Green-tailed Towhee	52
Osprey	3	Clark's Nutcracker	70	Chipping Sparrow.....	42
Bald Eagle	1	Black-billed Magpie	44	Brewer's Sparrow	1
Sharp-shinned Hawk.....	1	American Crow.....	84	Vesper Sparrow.....	2
Cooper's Hawk.....	2	Common Raven.....	58	Savannah Sparrow.....	6
Northern Goshawk	3	Horned Lark	9	Fox Sparrow.....	23
Swainson's Hawk	1	Tree Swallow	165	Song Sparrow.....	53
Red-tailed Hawk.....	15	Violet-green Swallow.....	120	Lincoln's Sparrow	140
Buteo Species.....	1	N. Rough-winged Swallow...	1	White-throated Sparrow	1
Prairie Falcon.....	1	Cliff Swallow	30	White-crowned Sparrow...	280
Sora.....	1	Barn Swallow.....	42	Gray-headed Junco	322
Spotted Sandpiper	5	Black-capped Chickadee ...	23	Black-headed Grosbeak	35
Wilson's Snipe	10	Mountain Chickadee.....	223	Red-winged Blackbird	57
Band-tailed Pigeon.....	91	Red-breasted Nuthatch.....	39	Brewer's Blackbird.....	2
Mourning Dove	23	White-breasted Nuthatch...	17	Common Grackle.....	17
Great Horned Owl.....	1	Pygmy Nuthatch.....	50	Brown-headed Cowbird.....	44
Common Nighthawk.....	2	Brown Creeper.....	11	Brown-capped Rosy-Finch...	7
Common Poorwill.....	1	Rock Wren.....	1	Pine Grosbeak	12
White-throated Swift	7	House Wren.....	61	Cassin's Finch.....	37
Black-chinned Humming.	3	American Dipper	11	House Finch	12
Broad-tailed Humming.	345	Golden-crowned Kinglet ...	13	Red Crossbill	65
Rufous Hummingbird.....	7	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	323	Pine Siskin.....	178
Belted Kingfisher	4	Western Bluebird	7	Lesser Goldfinch.....	1
Williamson's Sapsucker	11	Mountain Bluebird	45	American Goldfinch.....	4
Red-naped Sapsucker.....	10	Townsend's Solitaire.....	26	Evening Grosbeak	4
		Swainson's Thrush.....	2	House Sparrow.....	11

Totals: 110 species; 4916 individuals; 43 individuals per count hour. Participants: Linda Andes-Georges, Bev Baker, Maureen Blackford, Barbara Bolton, Earl Bolton, Alex Brown, Diane Brown, Carol Cogswell, Andy Cowell, TonyClaire Delany, Marty Dick, Libby Ellis, Virginia Evans, Mike Figgs, Jean-Pierre Georges, Dave Hallock, Paula Hansley, Jim Holitza, Steve Jones, Bill Kaempfer, Steve Koral, Nan Lederer, Gary Matthews, Lisa McCoy, Merle Miller, Sally Miller, Naseem Munshi. Carol Newman-Holitza, Mark Pscheid, Jeannie Reynolds, Tim Smart, Susan Spaulding, Connie Steinkamp, Rick Steinkamp, Cara Stiles, Lucy Stroock, Michael Tupper, Tom Wilberding, and Patty Zishka.