

INDIAN PEAKS BIRD COUNTS

Fall 2020

Newsletter

Vol.39 No. 3

Fall Count Summary

Numerically, it was one of the poorest Fall Counts we have had - on a per count hour basis it was the worst. If you went out before the cold weather and snow of September 8-10 you saw decent numbers of migrants. But the storm seemed to move birds out of the area and things got quiet.

My best birding day was right after the bulk of the snow dropped. I walked through Eldora and there were large numbers of birds along the roads that were snow free, including over 100 White-crowned Sparrows and many Gray-headed Juncos. And the tundra came down to Eldora as there were Horned Larks and one lone Brown-capped Rosy-Finch.

Fall Count Summary

Number of Species

2020 - 93

Last Fall - 94

30-year Average - 83

Record High - 99 (1992)

Record Low - 67 (2018)

Number of Individuals

2020 - 24/count hour

Last Fall - 31/count hour

30-year Average - 34/count hour

Record High - 48/count hour (1991)

Record Low - 24/count hour (2020)

The high numbers of cone seed eating birds seen over the past several counts also came to an end. Comparing numbers to last fall, Clark's Nutcrackers went from 174 down to 33, Red-breasted Nuthatches went from 225 to 53, and Red Crossbills declined from 134 to 33.

Apparently, the storm of September 8-10 also contributed to high mortality of birds. The avian mortality was described in

an article on the internet. Colorado and New Mexico were the concentration area for this event, with the cold front being one factor, while some felt that the smoke from the many fires in the West may have also contributed. In Eldora, we found 15 dead birds, mostly sparrows and warblers, right after the storm.

There were a number of good finds on the count. A Red-shouldered Hawk was seen in the Sugarloaf Area, a first for ANY season on the counts. Another first-time find for the Fall Count was Savannah Sparrow (Arapaho Ranch). Other good finds included Blue-winged Teal (8th time; South St. Vrain), Bald Eagle (8th time; Eldora and South St. Vrain), Swainson's Hawk (4th time; Caribou), Rufous Hummingbird (5th time; Sugarloaf), Western Wood-Pewee (5th time; Sugarloaf), Clay-colored Sparrow (7th time; Caribou), Blue Jay (8th time; Eldora), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (3rd time; Tucker), and Red-eyed Vireo (2nd time; Eldora).

Species generally seen during the fall that were absent or missed were White-tailed Ptarmigan, Sharp-shinned Hawk, American Goldfinch, Fox Sparrow, and MacGillivray's Warbler.

There were better than average numbers for Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Hairy Woodpecker, Horned Lark, Canada Jay, Steller's Jay, Brown-capped Rosy-Finch (the storm brought them down in elevation), and Cassin's Finch. Additionally, we had a record high for Pygmy Nuthatch.

Species having poor counts were Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, American Robin, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Dark-eyed Junco.

We had an excellent count effort, as we put in 101.75 hours of field time by 31

participants! We lost some participants due to COVID concerns. Thanks to all of you for making it out. The beautiful, though smoky, weather certainly helped.

Winter Count

You can do the count anytime between December 15, 2020 and February 15, 2021. Those that want to do their count to coincide with the President's Day weekend (February 12-15) and the Great Backyard Bird Count have that option.

Future Counts

The Winter Count will begin year 40 of the Indian Peaks Bird Counts. This will be the last Winter Count, as well as the last Fall Count in September of 2021.

I would like to keep the Breeding (Summer) count going beyond the 40th year. We are getting new participants. And some of us older participants are shifting from the high elevation count areas to lower elevations. I am optimistic that we can keep the breeding count going.

By the way, the checklist order of birds drives me crazy. EBird uses the international list, which is slightly different from AOU. I have been using the latest AOU version. All of the compilation spreadsheets for the count are in the 1982 AOU order!

Happy Birding,

Dave Hallock

2020 INDIAN PEAKS FALL BIRD COUNT

Count day – September 12; Count period – September 5-20. Thirty-one participants. Fifteen (of 25) areas covered. Total party hours: 101.75.

Canada Goose.....15	American Kestrel..... 2	Hermit Thrush..... 9
Blue-winged Teal.....2	Prairie Falcon..... 1	American Robin..... 93
Mallard.....46	Western Wood-Pewee..... 2	American Pipit..... 24
duck species.....2	Empidonax species..... 1	Evening Grosbeak..... 1
Common Merganser.....2	Say's Phoebe..... 4	Pine Grosbeak..... 20
Wild Turkey.....5	Warbling Vireo..... 1	Brown-capped Rosy-Finch. 24
Dusky Grouse.....1	Red-eyed Vireo..... 1	House Finch..... 15
Band-tailed Pigeon.....4	Canada Jay..... 33	Cassin's Finch.....37
Mourning Dove.....1	Steller's Jay..... 115	Red Crossbill.....33
Rufous Hummingbird.....1	Blue Jay..... 1	Pine Siskin.....69
Broad-tailed Humm.....28	Clark's Nutcracker..... 33	Lesser Goldfinch..... 8
Wilson's Snipe.....1	Black-billed Magpie..... 29	Chipping Sparrow..... 28
Double-crested Cormorant...2	American Crow..... 90	Clay-colored Sparrow..... 1
Great Blue Heron.....2	Common Raven..... 41	Dark-eyed Junco..... 237
Turkey Vulture.....1	Horned Lark..... 34	Slate-colored..... (1)
Osprey.....1	Tree Swallow..... 2	Oregon..... (2)
Bald Eagle.....2	Violet-green Swallow..... 3	Gray-headed..... (196)
Northern Harrier.....1	Barn Swallow..... 10	White-crowned Sparrow .. 163
Cooper's Hawk.....8	Cliff Swallow..... 4	Vesper Sparrow..... 14
Northern Goshawk.....2	Black-capped Chickadee.... 39	Savannah Sparrow..... 2
Red-shouldered Hawk.....1	Mountain Chickadee..... 336	Song Sparrow..... 15
Swainson's Hawk.....1	Red-breasted Nuthatch..... 53	Lincoln's Sparrow..... 15
Red-tailed Hawk.....22	White-breasted Nuthatch.... 39	Green-tailed Towhee..... 20
Buteo species.....1	Pygmy Nuthatch..... 161	Spotted Towhee..... 1
Golden Eagle.....1	Brown Creeper..... 24	Red-winged Blackbird..... 10
Great Horned Owl.....4	Rock Wren..... 4	Orange-crowned Warbler.... 2
Belted Kingfisher.....3	House Wren..... 16	Virginia's Warbler..... 2
Williamson's Sapsucker.....1	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher..... 1	Yellow Warbler..... 3
Red-naped Sapsucker.....2	American Dipper..... 4	Yellow-rumped Warbler.... 69
Am. Three-toed Wood.....3	Golden-crowned Kinglet.... 13	Townsend's Warbler..... 5
Downy Woodpecker.....5	Ruby-crowned Kinglet..... 18	Wilson's Warbler..... 42
Hairy Woodpecker.....33	Western Bluebird..... 3	warbler species..... 3
Northern Flicker.....41	Mountain Bluebird..... 20	Black-headed Grosbeak..... 1
	Townsend's Solitaire..... 27	Passerine species..... 34

Totals: 93 species plus 2 races; 2,424 individuals; 24 individuals per count hour.

Participants: Linda Andes-Georges, Bev Baker, Maureen Blackford, Alex Brown, Diane Brown, Gillian Brown, Virginia Evans, Jean-Pierre Georges, Audrey Godell, Dave Hallock, Paula Hansley, Jim Holitza, Steve Jones, Elena Klaver, Greg Massey, Eric Maxfield, Holden Maxfield, Lisa McCoy, Carron Meaney, Loren Merrill, Naseem Munshi, Carol Newman-Holitza, Chris Petrizzo, Jeannie Reynolds, Matt Reynolds, Peter Ruprecht, Cara Stiles, Lucy Stroock, Mike Tupper, Susan Wagner, and Marty Wolf.