

INDIAN PEAKS BIRD COUNTS

Summer 2025

Newsletter

Vol.44 No.1

Breeding Count Summary

The first thing that strikes me is the outstanding effort being put into the count. The 160.07 hours is the second highest for the Breeding Count, which comes on the heels of the 166.4 hours last year. We are having no trouble finding participants and covering the area

We had a record number of species for the Breeding Count - 113 (previous record was 112 reached in 2001, 2021 and 2022). The highlight was the first **Northern Parula**, seen in the Sugarloaf area. It was also a Brewer's Sparrow year in the krummholz and a few of their lower elevation friends, Sage Thrasher and Western Meadowlark, followed.

Breeding Count Summary
<u>Number of Species</u>
2025 - 113
40-Year Average - 103
Last Year - 109
Prev. Record High - 112 (2001, 2021 and 2022)
Record Low - 88 (1984)
<u>Number of Individuals</u>
2024 - 5,383
40-Year Average - 5,144
Last Year - 5,223
Record High - 7,996 (2004)
Record Low - 3,141 (1986)
<u>Number of Individuals - Per Count Hour</u>
2024 - 34 per count hour
40-Year Average - 42
Last Year - 31
Record High - 59 (2004)
Record Low - 30 (2022)

There were other **good finds** on this count:

Wild Turkey - 10th time seen, all since 2008 and 8 of last 9 counts. Was seen in 5 count areas, including a subalpine area (Arapaho Ranch,

Rollinsville, Ward South, Sugarloaf and Caribou). Numbers continue to increase and range continues to expand.

Pied-billed Grebe - 8th time (Rollinsville).

Eurasian-collared Dove - 12th time seen, all since 2008 and 10 of the last 12 counts (Sugarloaf). But their numbers continue to stay very low.

Common Poorwill - 6th time seen, including last 4 years (Sugarloaf).

Black-chinned Hummingbird - 6th time, all since 2008 (Rollinsville).

American White Pelican - 6th time seen (Rollinsville).

Bald Eagle - 12th time seen, all since 2000 (Arapaho Ranch, Rollinsville, Nederland, South St. Vrain).

Say's Phoebe - 9th time, all since 2001 (Nederland).

Blue Jay - 17th time (Ward North),

Sage Thrasher - 9th time, all since 2001 (Sugarloaf).

Cedar Waxwing - 4rd time, all since 2009 (Nederland).

White-winged Crossbill - 9th time (Rollinsville) (note - I am starting to see more White-winged Crossbill reports on eBird, a number of these due to the Merlin app)

Brewer's Sparrow - 17th time seen, mostly in krummholz (Ward North, Nederland, Mtn. Research Station, Niwot Ridge, Caribou, Arapaho Pass: not seen on the first 16 of 18 counts, seen on 16 of the last 26 counts). I didn't think they would appear this year due to late snowpack in krummholz. Other big years for them (>10 seen) were 2002, 2006 and 2012.

Western Meadowlark - 12th time (Niwot Ridge).

There were several **species missed** that we normally see on the count:

No **Green-winged Teals** were observed. There has been a 78% decrease of average count between the first and second 20 years; they were seen on all of the first 20 counts but only 13 of the second 20 counts. Absent 7 of last 9 years.

No **Ring-necked Ducks** were observed. They

have not been seen on 4 of the last 8 counts - but they had been seen every count before back to 1982. They have seen a 57% decrease of average count between the first and second 20 years.

Golden Eagle has been seen on 30 of the previous counts but was missed this year.

Killdeer has been absent on 18 counts, including 14 of the last 15 years.

Common Nighthawk - seen on 39 of previous counts.

Evening Grosbeak continues to be hard to find. They have declined by 91% when comparing average numbers of the first 20 years with the second 20 years of the count. They were found on 18 of the first 20 counts but only 13 of the second 20 counts.

Brewer's Blackbirds -This is only the 2nd time missed. However there has been a 78% decrease in their average count between the first and second 20 years. The same declining trend can be said for several other "agricultural" species, including European Starling, Common Grackle and Brown-Headed Cowbird; most cattle grazing and horse liveries are gone from the landscape.

American Goldfinch has been seen on 30 of the previous counts, though always low numbers.

This year continued a rebound in total numbers of birds from three years ago. The 5,383 birds observed is the highest since 2020. and slightly above the 40-year average. However, on a per-count-hour basis it was a very poor count.

We had **above average counts** for several species. The 50 **Spotted Sandpipers** is an all-time high. **Rock Wrens** had their highest count since 2006. **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** had their highest count since 2009. **American Robins** had their highest count since 2004. **Warbling Vireos** had their highest count since 2006.

Double-crested Cormorants were first

seen on the count in 1996. They have become a regular member of our local summer avian community, being seen on 23 of the last 24 counts. We have no evidence of them nesting in the count circle.

The top 10 numeric species on this year's count were **American Robin** (519), **Broad-tailed Hummingbird** (443), **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** (338), **Dark-eyed Junco** (325), **Mountain Chickadee** (254), **Yellow-rumped Warbler** (209), **White-crowned Sparrow** (203), **Warbling Vireo** (200), **Pine Siskin** (171) and **Lincoln's Sparrow** (169).

There were some **notable poor counts** for several species:

Only 11 **Horned Larks** were observed. There has been a 50% decrease in their average count between the first and second 20 years.

The 76 **Wilson's Warbler** continues a trend of only double digit counts that began in 2018. From 1987-2006 all counts were over 100 and most were between 200-300.

This was not a **Red Crossbill** year.

Looking Ahead

As always, thanks for your continued participation. The effort was outstanding. We are getting new participants to help cover the alpine areas and some of our old-timers (but young at heart) are taking on more areas.

<p>2026 Breeding Count Count Period - June 1 - July 15</p>

Happy Birding,
Dave Hallock

2025 INDIAN PEAKS BREEDING BIRD COUNT

Count period : June 1 – July 15; Weather: The count period saw below average precipitation and above average temperatures. Thirty-three observers, 21 (of 25) areas covered. Total party hours: 160.07 (144.6 on foot; 15.5 by car). Total party miles: 214.7 (80.3 by car; 134.35 on foot).

Canada Goose.....36	Western Wood-Pewee..... 26	American Robin 519
Blue-winged Teal2	Hammond’s Flycatcher 14	Sage Thrasher..... 1
Mallard35	Dusky Flycatcher 36	Cedar Waxwing..... 2
Common Merganser7	Western Flycatcher 85	House Sparrow 2
Wild Turkey.....18	Empidonax species..... 2	American Pipit 44
White-tailed Ptarmigan.....12	Say's Phoebe 1	Pine Grosbeak 22
Dusky Grouse2	Plumbeous Vireo..... 1	Brown-capped Rosy-Finch... 4
Pied-billed Grebe2	W. Warbling Vireo..... 200	House Finch 13
Band-tailed Pigeon10	Canada Jay 19	Cassin's Finch..... 24
Eurasian-collared Dove2	Steller’s Jay..... 83	Red Crossbill 22
Mourning Dove12	Blue Jay..... 1	White-winged Crossbill..... 2
Common Poorwill.....1	Clark’s Nutcracker 81	Pine Siskin..... 171
White-throated Swift 1	Black-billed Magpie..... 78	Lesser Goldfinch 2
Black-chinned Humming.....2	American Crow 69	Chipping Sparrow 74
Broad-tailed Humming..... 443	Common Raven 56	Brewer's Sparrow 17
Rufous Hummingbird6	Black-capped Chickadee.... 45	Fox Sparrow 15
Sora..... 1	Mountain Chickadee 254	Dark-eyed Junco..... 325
Wilson's Snipe 16	Horned Lark..... 11	White-crowned Sparrow .. 203
Spotted Sandpiper.....50	Tree Swallow 103	Vesper Sparrow 8
Double-crested Cormorant.. 13	Violet-green Swallow 139	Savannah Sparrow..... 3
American White Pelican1	N. Rough-winged Swallow .. 4	Song Sparrow 34
Great Blue Heron.....14	Barn Swallow..... 32	Lincoln's Sparrow..... 169
Turkey Vulture12	Cliff Swallow 21	Green-tailed Towhee 87
Osprey5	Golden-crowned Kinglet.... 27	Spotted Towhee..... 2
Bald Eagle8	Ruby-crowned Kinglet..... 338	Western Meadowlark 1
Sharp-shinned Hawk.....3	Cedar Waxwing 2	Red-winged Blackbird..... 32
Cooper's Hawk.....2	Red-breasted Nuthatch..... 56	Brown-headed Cowbird 19
American Goshawk3	White-breasted Nuthatch.... 27	Common Grackle 17
Red-tailed Hawk 11	Pygmy Nuthatch 36	Orange-crowned Warbler..... 1
Buteo species 1	Brown Creeper 10	Virginia’s Warbler..... 7
Great Horned Owl4	Rock Wren 21	MacGillivray's Warbler..... 47
Belted Kingfisher.....4	House Wren 93	Northern Parula 1
Williamson’s Sapsucker6	European Starling..... 1	Yellow Warbler 26
Red-naped Sapsucker24	Western Bluebird 2	Yellow-rumped Warbler... 209
Am. 3-toed Woodpecker..... 11	American Dipper..... 4	Wilson’s Warbler 76
Downy Woodpecker10	Mountain Bluebird 37	Western Tanager 48
Hairy Woodpecker.....46	Townsend’s Solitaire 22	Black-headed Grosbeak..... 42
Northern Flicker82	Swainson’s Thrush..... 18	
Olive-sided Flycatcher..... 12	Hermit Thrush..... 115	

Totals: 113 species; 5383 individuals; 34 individuals per count hour. Participants: Linda Andes-Georges, Bev Baker, Maureen Blackford, Connie Sayre Brandau, Alex Brown, Diane Brown, Gillian Brown, Pat Cullen, Catherine Collier, Brian Collins, Mike Figgs, Audrey Godell, Sarah Goodman, Dave Hallock, Paula Hansley, Jim Holitza, Kathryn Kay, Nan Lederer, Holden Maxfield, Lisa McCoy, Carron Meaney, Timo Mitzen, Bonney Sayre Moody, Naseem Munshi, Carol Newman-Holitza, Mark Pscheid, Jeannie Reynolds, Matt Reynolds, Peter Ruprecht, Susan Spaulding, Cara Stiles, Mike Tupper, and Jeff Yegian.