

## Evergreen – Idaho Springs Christmas Bird Count

Table 1 shows the most recent year's count and average from 1969 to 2020. Text describing the counts from 2007 to 2020 follow the table.

Bird species observed during the 2020 Evergreen-Idaho Springs Christmas Bird Count, the average number seen from 1969 to 2019, and the high count and year recorded for each species. Bolded entries are high counts recorded in 2020.

Common Name	Number per Year		High Count	
	1969-2019	2020	number	Year
Cackling Goose	<1		2	08
Canada Goose	8		70	90
Trumpeter Swan	<1		2	19
Wood Duck	<1		1	93/07
Gadwall	<1		1	10
American Wigeon	<1		2	96
Mallard	62	15	248	12
Northern Pintail	<1		1	96/98
Green-winged Teal	<1		1	81
Common Goldeneye	<1		1	18/19
Wild Turkey	43	41	119	19
Dusky Grouse	<1		12	94
Chukar	<1		1	80
Rock Pigeon	75	51	212	81
Eurasian Collared-Dove	6		81	15
Mourning Dove	<1		3	16
Wilson's Snipe	1	1	4	78/91/00
Great Blue Heron	<1		1	88/90
Black-crowned Night Heron	<1		1	09
Golden Eagle	3	2	8	89/15
Northern Harrier	<1		2	04
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	4	9	05
Cooper's Hawk	<1	2	2	09/18
Northern Goshawk	1		3	72/87/11
Bald Eagle	1	2	6	08
Red-tailed Hawk	16	41	47	17
Rough-legged Hawk	1		11	98
Ferruginous Hawk	<1		2	85
Great Horned Owl	1	2	8	19
Northern Pygmy-Owl	1	6	<b>6</b>	<b>20</b>

Common Name	Number per Year			High Count	
	1969-2019	2020		number	Year
Long-eared Owl	<1			1	74/82
Northern Saw-whet Owl	<1			1	70
Belted Kingfisher	2	2		6	04
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	<1			1	80
Am. Three-toed Woodpecker	<1			3	79/89
Downy Woodpecker	31	102		<b>102</b>	<b>20</b>
Hairy Woodpecker	48	160		<b>160</b>	<b>20</b>
Northern (Red-shafted) Flicker	18	48		<b>48</b>	<b>20</b>
American Kestrel	1	2		4	87/12
Merlin	<1			2	10
Prairie Falcon	<1			1	82
Loggerhead Shrike	<1			1	several
Northern Shrike	4	3		13	86
Canada Jay	13	7		53	77
Pinyon Jay	4			200	72
Steller's Jay	274	385		446	00
Blue Jay	<1			1	95/00
Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay	4	5		18	11
Clark's Nutcracker	28	21		108	78
Black-billed Magpie	205	341		413	17
American Crow	722	1,806		<b>1,806</b>	<b>20</b>
Common Raven	120	257		<b>257</b>	<b>20</b>
Horned Lark	<1			4	86
Black-capped Chickadee	81	127		187	18
Mountain Chickadee	506	1,028		<b>1,028</b>	<b>20</b>
Hybrid Chickadee	<1			2	13
Juniper Titmouse	<1			1	82
Bushtit	1			17	15
Red-breasted Nuthatch	54	80		239	19
White-breasted Nuthatch	74	257		<b>257</b>	<b>20</b>
Pygmy Nuthatch	453	2,182		<b>2,182</b>	<b>20</b>
Brown Creeper	14	35		43	18
Canyon Wren	1			5	81
Winter Wren	<1			2	75
American Dipper	18	8		37	87
Golden-crowned Kinglet	4	2		33	18
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<1			2	83/91

Common Name	Number per Year			High Count	
	1969-2019	2020		number	Year
Mountain Bluebird	<1			2	92
Townsend's Solitaire	71	80		202	82
American Robin	133	7		1,500	72
Gray Catbird	<1			1	18
Brown Thrasher	<1			1	Several
Northern Mockingbird	<1			1	78
European Starling	125	50		301	00
Bohemian Waxwing	36			580	80
Cedar Waxwing	7			163	87
House Sparrow	94	107		377	00
Evening Grosbeak	129	55		420	95
Pine Grosbeak	16	61		103	14
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch	116	6		429	84
Black Rosy-Finch	6	1		70	04
Brown-capped Rosy-Finch	15	42		140	04
Unknown Rosy-Finch	12				
House Finch	189	291		546	05
Cassin's Finch	157	326		519	14
Common Redpoll	3			30	70
Hoary Redpoll	<1			1	12
Red Crossbill	67	24		643	82
White-winged Crossbill	<1			16	70
Pine Siskin	216	606		723	08
American Goldfinch	16			176	00
Cassin's Sparrow	<1			1	71
Chipping Sparrow	<1			1	12
Clay-colored Sparrow	<1			1	83
Fox Sparrow	<1			1	Several
American Tree Sparrow	2			37	84
Dark-eyed Junco (All subspecies)	606	462		2,171	16
Dark-eyed (Gray-headed) Junco	186	196		708	19
Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco	87	33		276	79
Dark-eyed (Pink-sided) Junco	27	40		253	16
Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco	83	27		293	75
Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco	51	10		232	73
Dark-eyed (Cassiar) Junco	<1	1		7	16
White-crowned Sparrow	<1			1	Several
Golden-crowned Sparrow	<1			1	93

	Number per Year			High Count	
Common Name	1969-2019	2020		number	Year
Harris's Sparrow	<1			2	80
White-throated Sparrow	<1			1	84/06/18
Song Sparrow	5	7		15	11/19
Spotted Towhee	<1			4	75
Red-winged Blackbird	64	116		586	91
Brown-headed Cowbird	<1			1	09
Brewer's Blackbird	<1			15	12
Common Grackle	<1			3	93
Great-tailed Grackle	<1			1	07
Yellow-rumped Warbler	<1			13	15
<b>Number of Species</b>	47	48		58	18

## 2020 Christmas Bird Count – Feeder-Counters and Wind!

Chuck Aid

With the dawn of this year's Evergreen-Idaho Springs Christmas Bird Count (CBC) the main event impacting those of us in the field was the wind gusts over 60 mph that, at least initially, hindered our ability to find any birds. However, by the end of the day our 74 field workers in 33 separate groups (which is about our average) had managed to amass a total of 6,868 birds – a thousand more than we've been getting in recent years. So, kudos to the field workers that managed to brave the winds and find some birds! Once again, our Squaw Pass team lead the charge with fourteen participants in seven groups, hiking 14.7 miles and logging 23 party-hours.

We had a significantly different count this year, due primarily to our number of Feeder-Counters. Our average number of folks participating in the past has been around 23. This year, due in part to COVID, we had 51, and these folks managed to record 2,329 birds, an increase of 250% over the number of birds our Feeder-Counters have historically observed, on average. So, if you do the math, and add the feeder birds to the 6,868 birds recorded in the field, you'll see that we had a total of 9,197 birds. This is an all time high for our CBC, being about 3,500 birds above our average. So, kudos to our Feeder-Counters for their huge contribution!

So, how do our results for 2020 fit in with what we've seen in recent years? For starters we missed a few species that would have been nice additions, including Canada Goose, any duck other than a Mallard, Dusky Grouse, Northern Goshawk, Bushtit, Canyon Wren, American Goldfinch, and American Tree Sparrow. We also had no eruptive species this year such as Bohemian Waxwing, Common Redpoll, or White-winged Crossbill; and we had just a handful of Red Crossbills. Furthermore, we added no new species to our cumulative list, getting 48 species this year, which is near average. Finally, Red-breasted Nuthatches numbers were substantially down, and Dark-eyed Junco numbers were really down with only 22% of what we tallied just a few years ago. We really missed out on those subspecies that breed to the north of us and generally spend their winters here.

Now, on to our multiple success stories, for this was an historic count for us! To begin with we recorded two of the three accipiter species and tied our high count for Cooper's Hawk (2). Though not record-setting, we had a good number of Red-tailed Hawks (41). We had an all-time high count of six Northern Pygmy-Owls. New high numbers were recorded for three woodpecker species. Our previous high for Downy Woodpecker was 51; this year we had 102. Our previous high for Hairy Woodpecker was 94; this year we had 160. And we moved our Northern Flicker high count from 46 to 48. All time high numbers were also recorded for American Crows (1,806) and Common Ravens (257). Finally, we set an all time high for White-breasted Nuthatch (257).

Remember to keep this year's numbers in perspective. Yes, we ended up seeing more birds overall, but the increase in participants means we had an increase in party-hours, from roughly 220 party-hours historically to 339 this year. Taking that into account we get to see that our birds detected per party-hour actually decreased this year from around 32 to 27 birds per party-hour.

You may recall that we are in a friendly competition with over 2500 other CBCs across the Western Hemisphere with regard to our numbers of Mountain Chickadees and Pygmy Nuthatches. We have been Mountain Chickadee world champs for over a decade, and we've been Pygmy Nuthatch world champs a few times in that same period. DRUM ROLL, PLEASE – We are currently very well placed to be champs for both species this time around. Our highest previous count for Mountain Chickadees was 886; this year we had 1,028! Generally, a count over 500 puts us in the running. As for Pygmy Nuthatch, our highest previous count was 1,046; this year we had an incredible 2,182! We won't get the final analysis of this year's CBCs from National Audubon until next December, but I'll eat my hat if we don't come out on top for both of these species.

In getting things organized for this year, special thanks go out to those folks who stepped up to be new area leaders for us. David and Mitchell Bailey did an incredible job as first-timers with Brook Forest West (e.g., 1 Bald Eagle, 2 Northern Pygmy-Owls, 1 Northern Shrike, 16 Brown Creepers, 20 Pine Grosbeaks, etc.) You get the idea! These guys are the best! Also, Rob Raker and Brad Andres helped to make sure that Genesee got covered. Keri Bowling, a former Evergreen resident, did an exemplary job taking on the leadership of Upper Bear Creek, and Larry White took on Vance Creek – succumbing to the possibility of both good skiing and great birds. Many thanks to you all! Finally, additional thanks go to all of our regular area leaders who shepherded their crews through the day: Bill and JoAnn Hackos, Else and Tom VanErp, Mark Meremonte, Marilyn Rhodes, David Wald, Ed Furlong, Chris Goulart and Mary Fran O'Connor, Heather Johnson, and Dwight Souder. And a special thanks to our Feeder Coordinator, Barbara Jean Gard.

The one sad part of the day was that we didn't get to come together in person for the evening potluck and Tally Rally. However, thanks to Ed Furlong and Brad Andres we did manage to hold a very successful and well-attended virtual Tally Rally. Brad, as usual, did a stellar job of providing perspective on the day's results.

## **2019 Christmas Bird Count – A Chilly Day, and a New Species!**

Chuck Aid

Despite the chilly weather with temperatures mainly in the teens we had great participation for the 2019 Christmas Bird Count. There were 34 feeder-counters (tying our all-time high), 79 field observers (just two short of our all-time high), and, between our feeder counters and field observers, we logged 245 total party-hours (tying our all-time high). In addition, we had a good number of new folks participating, and a few even without gray hair. The Squaw Pass team led the charge with 16 observers in 7 different groups (parties) logging 28 party-hours.

So, how do our results for 2019 fit in with what we've seen in recent years? Well, 2015 was a huge year for us with 7,643 birds and 57 species, well above our average. This was followed by the two dry years of 2016 and 2017, in which we saw 6301 and 6063 birds, respectively, and each year we had only 49 species. Then, in 2018 we went really crazy and found 58 species, an

all-time high with almost 7,000 individual birds. And then, this year we were back to 49 species again, but very close to our all-time high for individual birds with 8,480.

So, what didn't we see? We struck out on Canada Geese and Wilson's Snipe. We almost got skunked on the accipiters finding only one Cooper's Hawk and not seeing any Sharpies or Goshawks. Then, we also missed out on Kestrels, Bushtits, both kinglets, Canyon Wrens, both waxwings, and Tree Sparrows.

However, we had some real successes with a number of species. For starters, the Elk Management crew was thrilled to have two Trumpeter Swans fly over, a new species for the count! We also did well with Wild Turkeys (119 – a new high), a single Common Goldeneye (1), Red-tailed Hawks (31), Great Horned Owls (8 – a new high), and all of the woodpecker species: Downy (40), Hairy (72), Flicker (46 – a new high), and Three-toed (1). Numbers for Steller's Jays (379) and Common Ravens (183) were relatively high. Mountain Chickadee numbers were still relatively high (651), but a bit of a drop from last year. Interestingly, our Pygmy Nuthatch numbers (578) were almost half of what they were in 2018, and we are likely to have only a one-year reign as the world champs for that species. Of further interest, and in contrast to the Pygmies, we had a new high number of Red-breasted Nuthatches (239). Other good numbers were had for Townsend's Solitaire (175), Evening Grosbeak (175), House Finch (465), Pine Siskin (431), Song Sparrow (15 – a new high), and Red-winged Blackbird (513).

One final high number (708) was obtained for the Gray-headed subspecies of the Dark-eyed Junco – this is the lone subspecies that breeds here in the Evergreen area and is here year-round. Some of you may recall that 2016 was the Year of the Juncos as far as our Christmas Bird Count was concerned. That year we tallied 2171 Juncos with 587 of them being Gray-headed, and the rest of them being a potpourri of the other Junco subspecies that migrate down from the north to spend their winters here. Well, this year those other subspecies have shown up only marginally, but that vacuum appears to have been amply filled by our resident Gray-headed Juncos.

One final bird note: in the wake of the recent drought the coniferous trees currently have an abundant cone crop, which may help explain the presence of so many Evening Grosbeaks, Pine Grosbeaks, Red Crossbills, Cassin's Finches, and Pine Siskins.

Once again, we ended our day of bird counting with a glorious evening of good fellowship, great food, and LIVELY data compilation at our Tally Rally. Truly a wonderful end to the day! Many thanks go to all the area leaders who shepherded their crews through the day: Bill and JoAnn Hackos, Else and Tom Van Erp, Tim and Marilyn Stechert, Dave and Elaine Mongeau, Mark Meremonte, Marilyn Rhodes, David Wald, Wendy Wibbens, Brad Andres, Ed Furlong, Keri Bowling, Chris Goulart, Heather Johnson, Dwight Souder, Larry White, Chris Pfaff, Ann Bonnell, Cynthia Madsen, and Dave Hill. Additional thanks go to Barbara Jean Gard for coordinating our feeder-counters, to Rachel and Dave Hutchison for hosting the Tally Rally, to Rachel Hutchison and Kathy Madison for making the chili, to Megan Fuse for organizing the potluck, to all those who contributed to the potluck, and to Brad Andres and David Wald for compiling our data.

## **Christmas Bird Count 2018 – Colorado High Counts for the Nation**

Chuck Aid

I know that last year's Christmas Bird Count seems like ages ago, but we have just received some interesting data from National Audubon that I thought might interest you.

Colorado was tops in the nation for last year's CBC for sixteen species and subspecies. Scaled

Quail – Pueblo Reservoir – 250

Dusky Grouse – Steamboat Springs – 4

Red-tailed Hawk (Harlan's subspecies) – Boulder – 13

Western Screech Owl – Grand Junction – 60

Gyr Falcon – Loveland – 1

Thick-billed Kingbird – Grand Junction – 1

White-breasted Nuthatch – Denver – 158

Townsend's Solitaire – Penrose – 631

Dark-eyed Junco (Cassiar subspecies) – Ft. Collins – 6

Dark-eyed Junco (Pink-sided subspecies) – Denver – 179

Dark-eyed Junco (White-winged subspecies) – Denver – 10

Dark-eyed Junco (Gray-headed subspecies) – Denver – 431

Steller's Jay – Evergreen-Idaho Springs – 434

Pygmy Nuthatch – Evergreen-Idaho Springs – 1,042

Cassin's Finch – Evergreen-Idaho Springs – 130

Mountain Chickadee – Evergreen-Idaho Springs – 886

Not only did our Evergreen-Idaho Springs CBC account for four of these high counts for the nation, but we have now been the Mountain Chickadee champs for eleven years in a row! Many thanks to all of you who helped last year! That's quite an accomplishment!

## **2018 Christmas Bird Count – Another No Snow Year, and Yet.....!!**

Chuck Aid

As we try and decipher trends, after fifty years of conducting the Evergreen-Idaho Springs Christmas Bird Count (CBC), it continues to be a most puzzling endeavor. Following in the footsteps of the prior two CBCs, we were confronted this year with yet another relatively dry and snowless period leading up to the count. But, for whatever reason, and I'm running short of hypotheses, this year was markedly different.

For starters, we had 78 people in the field and 26 feeder-counters. Having this many folks allowed us to put in a total of 231 party-hours. These are not record-setting numbers, but they are pretty darn good. That's a lot of folks contributing to the collective effort, and for whom we were extremely grateful.

So, just to remind you, 2015 was a huge year for us with 7,643 birds and 57 species, well above our average. This was followed by the two dry years of 2016 and 2017, in which we saw 6301 and 6063 birds, respectively, and each year we had only 49 species. As this year's count



approached it appeared that we might be headed toward another one of these slower years. But, low and behold, the final tally was pretty interesting!

And then, on top of getting all these species, we had all time high numbers for several birds: Common Goldeneye (1), Cooper's Hawk (2), Great Horned Owl (7), Northern Pygmy-Owl (4), Hairy Woodpecker (94), Common Raven (200), Black-capped Chickadee (187), Mountain Chickadee (886), Red-breasted Nuthatch (164), White-breasted Nuthatch (149), Brown Creeper (43), Golden-crowned Kinglet (33), Gray Catbird (1), and White-throated Sparrow (1). In addition, special mention needs to be made of the 1042 Pygmy Nuthatches we recorded this year. Our all-time high for these guys is 1046, so it's nice to be back close to that number again. For the last ten years we have been the world champs for Mountain Chickadees, and up until a few years ago we were the champs for Pygmy Nuthatches as well. With this year's results, we are VERY WELL positioned to be world champs for both species once again.

As for the birds, we tallied 58 species, which was an all-time high, and we ended up with 6,920 individual birds. Part of why we had so many species this year is that we picked up two new birds never seen before on our count: Common Goldeneye and Gray Catbird. Then, we also managed to get several other species that only make it into our area peripherally from lower in the foothills or out on the eastern plains: American Kestrel, Northern Shrike, Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay (formerly Western Scrub-Jay), Bushtit, Canyon Wren, American Goldfinch, American Tree Sparrow, and White-throated Sparrow. And then we also did relatively well with the higher elevation species that we are never quite sure of getting: American Three-toed Woodpecker, Canada Jay (formerly Gray Jay), Clark's Nutcracker, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Pine Grosbeak, Brown-capped Rosy-Finch, and Cassin's Finch. Finally, we managed to pick up a couple of local rarities like Dusky Grouse (formerly Blue Grouse), Wild Turkey, Wilson's Snipe, Bald Eagle, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Goshawk, Northern Pygmy-Owl, and Belted Kingfisher.

What did we miss this year? Well, we had notably low numbers for Canada Goose (1) and American Robin (13), and our only Rosy-Finches were 2 Brown-capped (we had no Gray-crowned or Black Rosy-Finches).

## **2017 Christmas Bird Count – The No-Snow Year**

Chuck Aid

The 2017 Christmas Bird Count (CBC), on Dec. 16, was a bit of a mixed bag. For starters, we had fewer people in the field, down to 56 from an all-time high last year of 80. Nevertheless, even with fewer people in the field, we set an all-time high of 152 total field party hours. Incidentally, the average for our total field party hours over our 49-year history is 103. On another positive note, this year we had an all-time high of 34 feeder-counters helping us to achieve 245 total party hours (field and feeders) – another all-time high. Two years ago, we had only 12 feeder-counters, and last year we had 23, so we are headed in the right direction in that regard.

As for the birds, for the second year in a row we tallied 49 species, a definite contrast to the 57 species we were so euphoric about on the 2015 CBC. The last two autumns have been

comparatively dry – perhaps contributing to less diversity. However, we did manage to get good numbers on the birds that were there. We had 6063 individuals, with high numbers for Red-tailed Hawk (47), Hairy Woodpecker (81), and Black-billed Magpie (413). We also had very good numbers for Mountain Chickadee (729) and Pygmy Nuthatch (823). We appear to be well set for maintaining our global dominance as the Mountain Chickadee Champs of the World, as well as being excellently prepared to regain our global dominance for Pygmy Nuthatches. Wahoo! Unfortunately, we have to wait until next November to find out, because it takes National Audubon awhile to determine these things.

There are a few species whose numbers dropped this year. In 2016, over a third of the birds we recorded were Dark-eyed Juncos, with 2,171 individuals, and we had great numbers for all the various Junco subspecies. This year our grand total was down to 671, again perhaps due to the lack of snow. After all, they are also known as “Snowbirds.” Species that we failed to find this

year, included: Great Blue Heron, American Kestrel, Horned Lark, Cedar Waxwing, Bohemian Waxwing, Common Redpoll, and Spotted Towhee. Finally, two years ago we had 639 Rosy-Finches with good numbers for all three species. Last year we had a total of 53, and this year we had 38. It definitely takes some snowy weather to bring them down out of the high country, and we have not had that the last two years.

Thanks to all section leaders, participants, and Barbara Jean Gard for coordinating the feeder-counters. A huge thanks, once again, to the Walds for hosting the Tally Rally, to JoAnn Hackos for making the meat chili, to Lisa and David Wald for providing the veggie chili, to Megan Fuse for organizing the dinner, to all of you for contributing to the potluck, and to Brad Andres and David Wald for compiling our data.

## **2016 Christmas Bird Count: The Year of the Junco**

Chuck Aid

The 2016 Christmas Bird Count, on Dec. 18, was a new milestone as we had our highest number of field observers ever - 80; we had 23 feeder watchers (over twice as many as the previous year); and we had our best effort in the field with 147 field party-hours recorded. While this great outpouring of effort did result in a good number of individual birds at 6301, it did not translate into good species diversity, and for the second time in the last twelve years we had less than 50 species, recording just 49. In contrast, last year we set a record high with 57 species, and we had 7,643 individual birds.

Two factors may have contributed to the difference between last year and this. First, we had a dry fall this year, with less snow cover than usual, so the birds may not have been as concentrated in the areas where we've seen them in the past. Even before the count, many people remarked to me that they were seeing fewer birds than in previous falls, both in their yards and at their feeders. And then, of course, the day of the count was very cold—starting out at 9oF—and it was quite windy all day.

Overall, we had below average numbers for most of the species recorded, though we did have good numbers for our three common woodpeckers: 46 downy woodpeckers, 70 hairy woodpeckers, and 34 northern (red-shafted) flickers. However, the real story of the day was our grand total of 2171 dark-eyed juncos – 34% of the total birds seen during the count were of this one species. We set new highs for gray-headed – 587, Oregon – 258, white-winged – 91, Cassiar – 7, and for those that we could not identify to subspecies, we had 781. That's a lot of juncos! As many of you know, we have been leading the world for the last few years in numbers of mountain chickadees, last year getting 712. However, our number was down to 459 for this count, so we will just have to wait and see how the results from other count circles compare. We have also periodically led the world in numbers of pygmy nuthatches, though last year we fell about 60 short of retaining that honor. Our count this year was pretty good at 765, so we have a shot at being tops again.

Thanks to all section leaders, participants, and Barbara Jean Gard for coordinating the feeder-watchers. A huge thanks, once again, to the Walds for hosting the Tally Rally, to JoAnn Hackos for making the meat chili, to Lisa Wald for providing the veggie chili, to Peg Linn for organizing the dinner, to all of you for contributing to the potluck, and to Brad Andres for compiling our data.

### **CBC Participants Find Record 57 Species, One New (2015)**

Chuck Aid

The 2015 Christmas Bird Count, which took place on Dec. 20, should long be remembered by all of us for its sunny morning, hardly any wind and good numbers of birds. We have certainly had our years when we have had to contend with adverse conditions. This was not one of those, as we ended the day with a total of 7,643 birds. Last year, with all the snow, we had only 5,805. We had a record-high 57 species, and had above-average numbers for about two-thirds of those. We also added one new species with 13 Yellow-rumped Warblers reported from Idaho Springs West.

We have now tallied 104 species on the count since it began in 1969. A bit of recent history: Gadwall was our 100th species in 2010, and Chipping Sparrow, Hoary Redpoll and Brewer's Blackbird have been added in the intervening years. We also had high counts this year for

Sharp-shinned Hawk, Golden Eagle, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Northern Flicker, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Bushtit, White-breasted Nuthatch and Brown Creeper. Also, we were only one short of matching our previous high for Red-tailed Hawk, and three short of matching our previous highs for Hairy Woodpecker, Golden-crowned Kinglet and Song Sparrow. The adjacent table provides our numbers from 2015, the average for the previous 46 years, and the high count for each species and the year it was recorded.

A few other interesting aspects to this count were that we had Bushtits for only the second time, our Brown Creeper count was 361 percent above average, and we had another year filled with Pine Grosbeaks (414 percent above average). In case you missed it, we led the world last year in Mountain Chickadees and Pygmy Nuthatches. This year we had much higher numbers for both

species and are well placed to retain our global dominance. Participation in 2015 was exceptional with 71 field observers who spent 133 hours afield, and an additional 12 feeder watchers.

Thanks to all section leaders, participants and Barbara Jean Gard for coordinating the feeder watchers. A huge thanks, once again, to the Walds for hosting the Tally Rally, to Bill and JoAnn Hackos for making the meat chili, to Lisa Wald for providing the veggie chili, and to Marge Peterson for organizing the dinner. Also, thanks to all of you for contributing to the potluck, and to Aaron Wald and Brad Andres for helping compile our data.

## **Wintery Weather Brings Record Numbers of Finches on the Christmas Bird Count (2014)**

Chuck Aid

This year's Christmas Bird Count, on December 14, 2014, will be remembered for its icy roads, cold temperatures, low cloud ceiling, and newly fallen snow blanketing the area. While, initially, the day seemed like one in which it was going to be difficult to find many birds at all, our hearty volunteers were not deterred, and by the end of the day had found 52 species, our average over the past six years (two additional species, the Brown-capped Rosy-Finch and Common Redpoll were seen during count week). However, the weather did keep our overall number of individuals down, with only 5,805, just a 1% increase over our total from the windiest Christmas Count Ever in 2013. Ultimately, though, this intense, winter weather played a meaningful role in our resulting tally. The 2014 numbers and average counts for past years are provided in the accompanying table.

So, what were the highlights? For starters we had only 1 Golden Eagle – a difficult day for soaring aloft. However, we matched, or beat, previous high numbers for several species, including 3 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 5 Great Horned Owls, and 1 White-crowned Sparrow. Of particular interest is that we had 81 White-winged Juncos (35% above average), and, overall, we had 923 Dark-eyed Juncos (40% above average). However, of even greater interest, we had 103 Pine Grosbeaks (858% above average) and 519 Cassin's Finches (335% above average). Thank you winter weather!

As always, we pay particular attention to our numbers of Mountain Chickadees and Pygmy Nuthatches, 530 and 585 respectively, as we have previously led the nation for these species. Our numbers were higher than average this year, but these may not be high enough to reclaim our prior elite status.

Participation in 2014 was with 63 field observers, who spent 122.5 hours afield, and an additional 14 feed-watchers.

Thanks to all section leaders, participants, and Barbara Jean Gard for coordinating the feeder-watchers. A huge thanks, once again, to the Walds for hosting the Tally Rally, to Bill and JoAnn Hackos for making the meat-eaters' chili, to Lisa Wald for providing the veggy chili, to Marge Peterson for organizing the dinner, and to all of you for contributing to the potluck.

## **The 2013 Evergreen-Idaho Springs Christmas Count**

Brad A. Andres

On December 15, 2013, observers braved gusty winds to undertake the 45th Evergreen-Idaho Springs Christmas Bird Count. This was definitely the windiest Evergreen count I have ever participated in! As a result of the windy conditions and the deep freeze we experienced in early December, both the number of species observed and the total number of the individuals was down from counts in the last few years. Our tally of 46 species was well below the average of 52 species we recorded in the last five years preceding 2013. Similarly, our total count of 5,729 individuals was down 17% from 2012. We did not get any new species or high counts of regularly occurring species.

In 2012, our counts of Mountain Chickadees and Pygmy Nuthatches were the highest in North America, but our high count status for Mountain Chickadees might be in jeopardy this year! The deep freeze and ice dam breaking on Clear Creek likely pushed Dippers down slope. We recorded only a measly five dippers compared to an average of 19 birds. There were a few highlights including a single Northern Goshawk, two Rough-legged Hawks, 376 Steller's Jays, 879 Pygmy Nuthatches, and 139 Cassin's Finches.

Participation in 2013 was above average, with 61 field observers and 23 feeder-watchers. The conditions, however, lead to shorter field forays for a total of 112 party-hours. The species and numbers we counted in 2013 are presented indicated in the accompanying table as are the averages from 1969 to 2012. Let's hope for better weather next year.

Thanks to all section leaders and participants, Barbara Jean Gard for coordinating the feeder-watchers. Thanks also to the Walds for hosting the tally rally, Bill and JoAnn Hackos for making the meat-eaters chili, Bob Santangelo for providing the veggy chili, Marge Petersen for organizing the dinner, and all of you for contributing to the potluck.

## **The 2012 Evergreen-Idaho Springs Christmas Count**

Brad A. Andres

On December 16, 2012, observers took to the field and watched their feeders to find as many bird species as they could during the 44th occasion of the Evergreen-Idaho Springs Christmas Bird Count. Although it seemed a bit slow, we came up with a total of 51 species, which is above the count average of 47 species and continues our tendency of seeing 50 or more species since 2005. Warm weather in late fall may have kept some species higher in the mountains, and a light snow pack may have kept birds away from house feeders.

Redpolls have invaded Colorado this year, and a few were upslope in our forests. With the redpolls was our first record of Hoary Redpoll found in Clear Creek. We also added Brewer's Blackbirds in Brook Forest and a Chipping Sparrow in Bergen Park as new species for the count. Our 2012 count also produced or tied high counts of Mallards, American Kestrels, Eurasian Collared-Doves, Great Horned Owls, Black-billed Magpies, and Pygmy Nuthatches. As in the

last couple years, it seems our counts of Pygmy Nuthatches and Mountain Chickadees will be the highest on the continent.

Participation in 2012 was above average, with 70 field observers and 16 feeder-watchers contributing about 214 party-hours of effort. All observers counted 6,895 individual birds. The species and numbers we counted in 2012 are indicated in the accompanying table as are the averages from 1969 to 2011.

Thanks to all section leaders and participants, the Walds for hosting the tally rally; Sylvia Robertson, Janet Warner, and Marge Petersen for making the meat-eaters chili; Bob Santangelo

for making the veggy chili; Marge for organizing the dinner; all of you for contributing to the potluck; Barbara Jean Gard for coordinating the feeder-watchers; Aaron Wald for recording the section counts, and John and Diane Sears (Evergreen Wild Bird Store) for distributing leader's packets and hosting several teams on Sunday morning. See ya next year.

### **The 2011 Evergreen-Idaho Springs Christmas Count**

Brad A. Andres

We held the 43rd Evergreen-Idaho Springs Christmas Bird Count on December 18, 2011. Most section leaders thought the day was on the slow side, and our overall count of 50 species bears this out. Although the warm weather made birding pleasant, the lack of recent snow kept some of the winter finches up in the high country.

Although we didn't add any new species to the count, we produced, or tied, a few high counts, including the: Sharp-shinned Hawk, Northern Goshawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Hairy Woodpecker, Western Scrub Jay, Song Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird and House Finch. The accompanying table provides numbers from 2011, the average for the previous 42 years, and the high count of the species and the year it was made.

Participation in 2011 was about average, with 52 field observers and 17 feeder-watchers contributing more than 201 party-hours of effort. These observers counted 6,241 individual birds, which is down about 9% from last year.

For those who did not see last year's American Birds summary, the 2010 Evergreen-Idaho Springs count had the North American high count for Pygmy Nuthatches and Mountain Chickadees. For Christmas Bird Counts conducted in Colorado in 2010, and in addition to the two species mentioned above, we had the highest state count for Hairy Woodpeckers; the second highest state count for Gray-headed Juncos, White-winged Juncos, and Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches; and the third highest state count for Northern Goshawk and Steller's Jays.

Thanks to all section leaders and participants, the Walds for hosting the tally rally, Lori Hogan for making the chili, Marge Petersen for organizing the dinner, Bob Santangelo for making the veggy chili, Barbara Jean Gard for coordinating the feeder-watchers, Emily Wald for recording

the section counts, and John and Diane Sears (Evergreen Wild Bird Store) for distributing leader's packets and hosting several teams on Sunday morning.

## **The 2010 Evergreen-Idaho Springs Christmas Count**

Brad A. Andres

We held the 42nd Evergreen-Idaho Springs Christmas Bird Count on December 19, 2010. Although the day seemed rather slow to field observers, we ended up tying last year's record of 55 species. We also found the 100th species recorded on the count — a single male Gadwall tucked in with mallards along Bear Creek in Kittredge.

Besides adding the Gadwall to our Christmas count list, we also produced high counts of Bald Eagles, Eurasian Collared-Doves (which continue to increase), Mourning Doves, Hairy Woodpeckers, Black-billed Magpies, and White-breasted Nuthatches. Counts of a number of finches, including Red Crossbills, American Goldfinches, Cassin's Finches, and Evening Grosbeaks, were noticeably lower this year. The accompanying table provides numbers from 2010, the average for the previous 41 years, and the high count of the species and the year it was made.

Participation in 2010 was about average, with 51 field observers and 21 feeder-watchers contributing more than 173 party-hours of effort. These observers counted 6,837 individual birds. The information we are collecting on common foothills birds is useful for determining the status of our nation's birds (see <[www.stateofthebirds.org](http://www.stateofthebirds.org)> for an application of Christmas Bird Count data).

For those who did not see last year's American Birds summary, the 2009 Evergreen-Idaho Springs count had the North American high count for Pygmy Nuthatches and Cassin's Finches and the second highest count for Mountain Chickadees. Our high count of 956 Pygmy Nuthatches this year will likely put us in the running for top honors in 2010. For Christmas Bird Counts conducted in Colorado in 2009 and in addition to the three species mentioned above, we had the highest state count for Northern Goshawks, Hairy Woodpeckers, Fox Sparrows (only one), Gray-headed Juncos, White-winged Juncos, Pine Siskins, and Evening Grosbeaks; the second highest state count for American Three-toed Woodpeckers, Steller's Jays, Golden-crowned Kinglets, and Pine Grosbeaks; and the third highest state count for Black-billed Magpies and Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches.

Thanks to all section leaders and participants, the Walds for hosting the tally rally, Lori Hogan for making the chili, Marge Petersen for organizing the dinner, Bob Santangelo for making the veggy chili, Barbara Jean Gard for coordinating the feeder-watchers, Emily Wald for recording the section counts, and John and Diane Sears (Evergreen Wild Bird Store) for distributing leader's packets and hosting several teams on Sunday morning.

## **The 2009 Evergreen-Idaho Springs Christmas Count**

Brad A. Andres

We held the 41th Evergreen-Idaho Springs Christmas Bird Count on December 20, 2009, and it turned out to be a banner day! We set a record high count of 55 species and added three new species for the count – one Black-crowned Night-Heron in Genessee, 15 Bushtits in Idaho Springs West, and one Brown-headed Cowbird at a feeder in Kerr Gulch. With these additions, we have now tallied 99 species on the count since it began in 1969.

Besides adding new species, we also produced high counts of Cooper's Hawks, Eurasian Collared-Doves (first recorded last year), Great Horned Owls, Hairy Woodpeckers, Northern Flickers, White-breasted Nuthatches, and Pygmy Nuthatches. The accompanying table provides numbers from 2009, the average for the previous 40 years, and the high count of the species and the year it was made.

Participation in 2009 was about average, with 54 field observers and 17 feeder-watchers contributing almost 140 party-hours of effort. The nice weather this year allowed for great winter birding conditions, and we recorded 7,526 individual birds.

In case you missed last year's American Birds summary, the 2008 Evergreen-Idaho Springs count had the North American high count for Mountain Chickadees (450 individuals), and we will likely retain this honor in 2009. For Christmas Bird Counts conducted in Colorado in 2008, we had the highest count for Hairy Woodpecker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Pygmy Nuthatch (second in North America), and Brown Creeper; the second highest count for White-breasted Nuthatch and Pine Grosbeak; and tied the third highest count for Northern Goshawk, Downy Woodpecker, and Steller's Jay. As you can see, most of these species are common foothills residents and should be good indicators of forest change around Evergreen.

Thanks to all section leaders and participants, the Mannings for hosting the tally rally, Lori Hogan for making the chili and organizing the dinner, Bob Santangelo for making the veggy chili, Sylvia Robertson and Marge Peterson for getting plates and utensils, Barbara Jean Gard for organizing the feeder-watchers, Kathanne Lynch for providing the 2008 Colorado summary, Emily Wald for recording the section counts, and John and Diane Sears (Evergreen Wild Bird Store) for distributing leader's packets and hosting several teams.

## **The 2008 Evergreen-Idaho Springs Christmas Count**

Brad A. Andres

We held the 40th Evergreen-Idaho Springs Christmas Bird Count on December 21, 2008. The first count was made on Christmas Day, 1969 and has been conducted every December since. Over the years, we have recorded 96 total species and have averaged 46 species in any given year. In 2008, 50 field observers and 27 feeder-watchers participated in the count, and we found an above-average 51 species. This was despite early morning temperatures that dipped below 0o



F. At least the wind remained relatively calm. In only 6 of the 40 years have we recorded more than 50 species on the count. Hearty field observers and feed-watchers tallied 5,328 individual birds, which was just 300 fewer birds than last year.

This year's count produced two new count species --- two Cackling Geese over the Squaw Pass section and three Eurasian Collared-Doves in Kittredge. The dove is an exotic species to North America and has been rapidly expanding in Colorado in recent years. In addition to these two new species, we also had new high counts for Great Horned Owl (4), Downy Woodpecker (51), Dark-eyed Junco (all forms; 699), and Pine Siskin (723). Unfortunately, we missed American Three-toed Woodpecker, Western Scrub-Jay, and any rosy-finch. In case you missed last year's American Birds summary, the Evergreen-Idaho Springs count had the North American high count for Mountain Chickadees (571). A summary of the numbers of all species observed in 2008, and the average for past years, is provided in the table below.

Thanks to all section leaders and participants, the Phillips' for hosting the tally rally, Lori Hogan for making the chili and organizing the dinner, Barbara Jean Gard for organizing the feeder-watchers, Emily Wald for recording the section counts, and John and Diane Sears (Evergreen Wild Bird Store) for distributing leader's packets and hosting the Evergreen Lake team.

### **The 2007 Evergreen-Idaho Springs Christmas Count**

Brad A. Andres

We held the 38th Evergreen-Idaho Springs Christmas Bird Count on December 16, 2007, which attracted 52 field observers and 19 feeder-watchers. Although we had some gusty winds in the morning, the day was clear with high temperatures in the 40s. Observers and feed watchers did better than average, tallying 50 species and a total of 5,628 individual birds. Bob Santangelo and his team found a new species for the count in Hiwan --- a male Great-tailed Grackle. Rarely tallied species that we recorded in 2007 included a single Merlin and the injured female Wood Duck that had been hanging around Evergreen Lake since last summer. Observers and feeder-watchers also produced the highest count we have ever recorded for Pine Grosbeaks (51 individuals) and Dark-eyed Juncos (669 birds). A summary of the numbers of all species we observed, in comparison to past years, is provided in the table below. Thanks to all who participated, the Phillips' for hosting the tally rally, Lori Hogan for making the chile, Barbara Jean Gard for organizing the feeder-watchers, and Tom Van Erp for serving as compiler for the last several years.