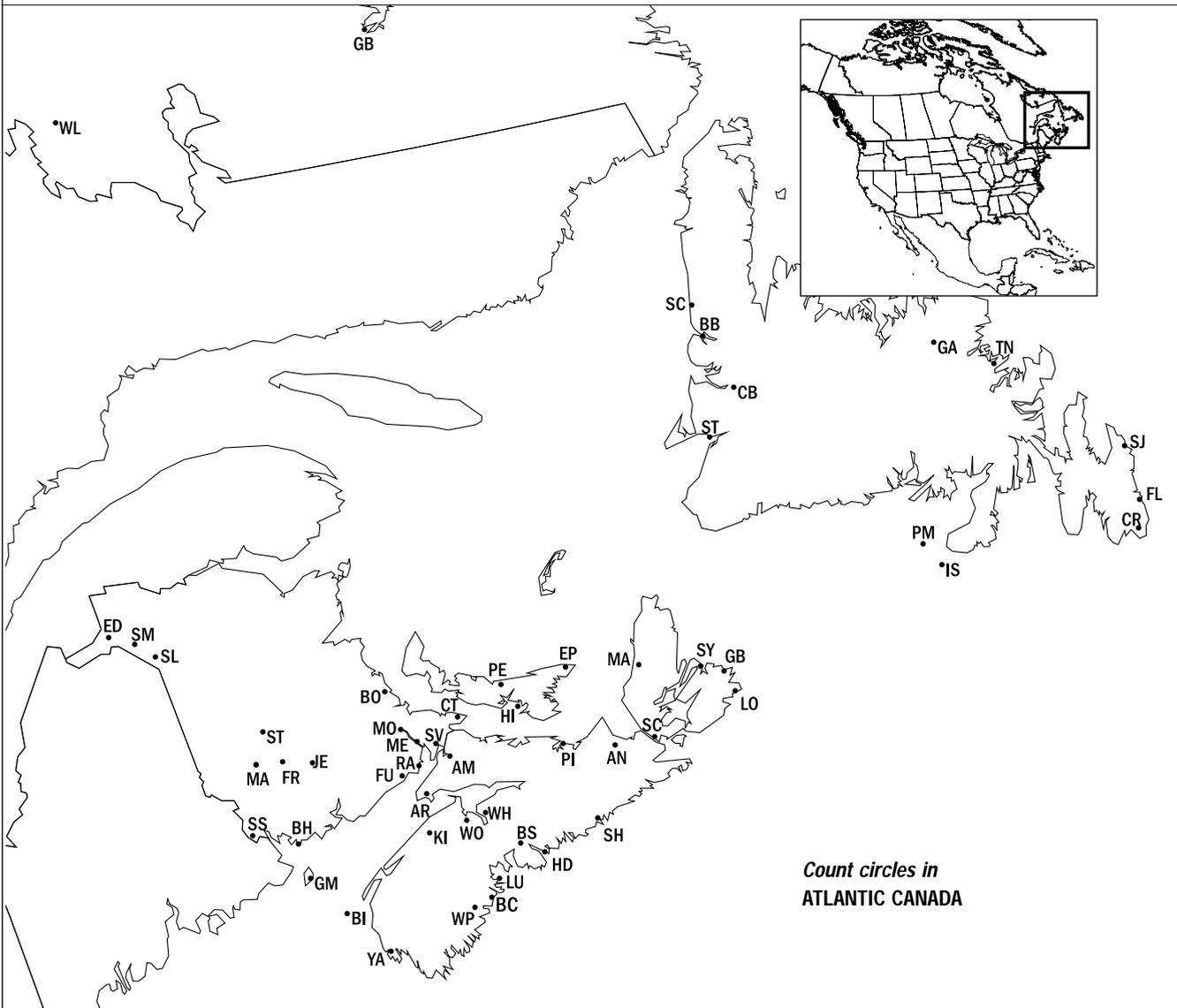


Regional Summaries of the 112th Christmas Bird Count



Count circles in
ATLANTIC CANADA

ATLANTIC CANADA

New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Saint-Pierre et Miquelon

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The weather in the Atlantic for the 112th Christmas Bird Count season—one of the most open and mild count periods in memory—may have us talking for some time. Only one count fell victim to poor conditions, and, despite that loss, a respectable 53 counts took place, improving last year's number by two. Nova Scotia led the charge with 22 counts, adding Truro for the first

time. New Brunswick had 16 counts, Newfoundland and Labrador 11, Prince Edward Island 2, and Saint-Pierre and Miquelon had 2 as well.

Many compilers reported having at least partly open fresh water, and *two-thirds* of the counts had not a trace of snow on the ground. Feeders seemed inactive because of good wild crops, which had people lamenting the scarcity of birds.

Regionally, an outstanding total of 180 species was tallied, not including the 7 found during count period. The results provided several new provincial, regional, and Canadian records.

Several species showed significant changes, making it hard not to draw

conclusions relating to climate change and habitat loss. Conditions allowed Belted Kingfishers to linger this year, providing us with a new all-time regional high of 44 individuals. Turkey Vultures reached a new record level of 59 with a staggering 56 in southern Nova Scotia alone. The 47 American Coots were obviously enticed to stay with ample open fresh water, and Northern Flicker numbers doubled last year's totals at 249. Yellow-breasted Chats broke the previous record with 22. On the other hand, only 102 Harlequin Ducks were seen, the lowest total since the late 1990s. The Boreal Chickadee situation continues to be a concern with less than 500 counted, of



Purple Sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*), St. Paul's-Cow Head, Newfoundland. Photo/Darroch Whitaker

which 209 came from the 11 Newfoundland counts. Maybe worse were just two Spruce Grouse, one each on two counts in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Food sources farther north and west of us were obviously adequate and kept us from seeing many winter finches. We had exceedingly low counts of Pine Grosbeak, Red and White-winged cross-bills, Pine Siskin, and redpolls. That aside, there were four Hoary Redpolls found in Labrador, one at Happy Valley-Goose Bay and three at Wabush-Labrador City. As expected, Newfoundland and Labrador accounted for more than 50 percent of the Common Redpoll number, but there was only a meager total of 803 counted in the region. Evening Grosbeaks are now just a shadow of their once abundant numbers of the 1970s and 80s with just over 500 counted in the entire region. House Sparrows continue their decline here with just 1958, the lowest number in 53 years.



Dovekie (*Alle alle*), St. Paul's-Cow Head, Newfoundland. Photo/Darroch Whitaker

Of the 16 New Brunswick counts, highlights included 121 Brant, a King Eider, a **Broad-winged Hawk**, and a **Grasshopper Sparrow** at Grand Manan; one of only two **Wood Ducks** in the region came from Memramcook; and the only regional record this year of a **Cooper's Hawk** occurred at Fredericton. **Red-bellied Woodpeckers** continue their move into the region, with 33 of the record 68 coming from New Brunswick. A Red-headed Woodpecker was found at Riverside-Albert, and more unusual was a juvenile **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** at Black's Harbour, only the 11th record for the region. The only **Carolina Wren** in the region this year was seen at Fredericton. A **Marsh Wren** at Moncton was one of only two attempting to overwinter in the Atlantic, and Fredericton briefly hosted a **Northern Parula**. Incidentally, the region tallied four **Northern Parulas**, twice the combined total of previously seen birds on CBCs in Canada.

For Nova Scotia, a **Pink-footed Goose** that found its way to Windsor in early October continued to accompany Canada Geese there until two days before count day at West Hants. This is the first for a CBC count period in Canada. A **skua** sp. came close enough to shore to be noticed at Louisbourg and as if that wasn't good enough, a very well-described **Cory's Shearwater** was also observed there making it only the second Canadian and regional CBC record.

Another first for the Atlantic was a **Cattle Egret**, one of two that were lingering near Yarmouth during the period. An **Empidonax** flycatcher had the crew in Antigonish desperately trying to gather details to cement an identification, but the best anyone could do was to narrow it down to either Least or Dusky. An Ovenbird appeared in excellent condition on December 30 during count day at Broad Cove, NS; a Black-and-white Warbler turned up at The Sydneys; and rounding out the more unusual warblers were two **Northern Parulas**, one each at Halifax-Dartmouth and at Yarmouth.



Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*), Grand Manan Island, New Brunswick. Photo/M. Cormier

A **Mountain Bluebird** was beautifully photographed by Cathy and Allan Murrant during the Glace Bay CBC, becoming the second record for the region for this species. Strong southeast winds during the Brier Island count kept passerines out of sight as evidenced by the misses of four Eastern Bluebirds and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet that were found before and after count day. Those winds made for spectacular sea watching at the mouth of the Bay of Fundy, though, where 4795 Black-legged Kittiwakes, 2300 Iceland Gulls, and almost 3600 Razorbills were seen.

In any other year Halifax-Dartmouth's **House Wren**, **Common Gallinule**, and **Eastern Meadowlark** plus Lunenburg's **Indigo Bunting** may have made top billing, but there is no doubt that the most improbable bird encounter this year has to be the next species and a perfect example of "birds are where you find them." It seems, in Canada, there is a coffee shop 15 minutes from anywhere, and when



Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*) (top), Bonne Bay, Newfoundland. Photo/Darroch Whitaker



Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*),
The Sydneys, Nova Scotia.
Photo/ Juana MacLeod

Murray and Cindy Newell needed a break, they made a brief stop at one at Barrington Passage, NS. They couldn't help but notice a small bird just below the drive-thru speaker that they had never seen before. Little did they know that they had just seen the first Canadian CBC record for **Lazuli Bunting!**

Our Atlantic population of Gray Partridge seems to be a memory. Not one was found in Nova Scotia and there was just a single sighting during count week in Hillsborough PEI.

The first **Gyr Falcon** since 2000 occurred at Ile. Saint-Pierre, and even one of those wayward **Northern Parulas**

found its way there. A first for the French Isles was an American Coot plus the only Dickcissel for the entire region.

In Newfoundland, there were two King Eider at Cape Race and observers at St. John's counted 22 **Tufted Ducks**. The **Yellow-legged Gull** that has been loafing around St. John's was seen during count week but, unfortunately, didn't manage to make itself available to birders on count day; however, 13 Lesser Black-backed Gulls did, as well as a lingering **Cape May Warbler**. There were two Common Gulls at Gros Morne as was the region's only American Three-toed Woodpecker.

This was an exceptional count period in the Atlantic. There were more counts, more people involved, and the weather couldn't have been more kind.

QUÉBEC

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The 112th Christmas Bird Count went very well in Québec. A total of 146 species was observed on count day, of which 58 were aquatic species (40 percent of all species), 21 were raptors

(hawks and owls, 14 percent), and 67 were land birds (grouse, woodpecker, and passerine, 46 percent).

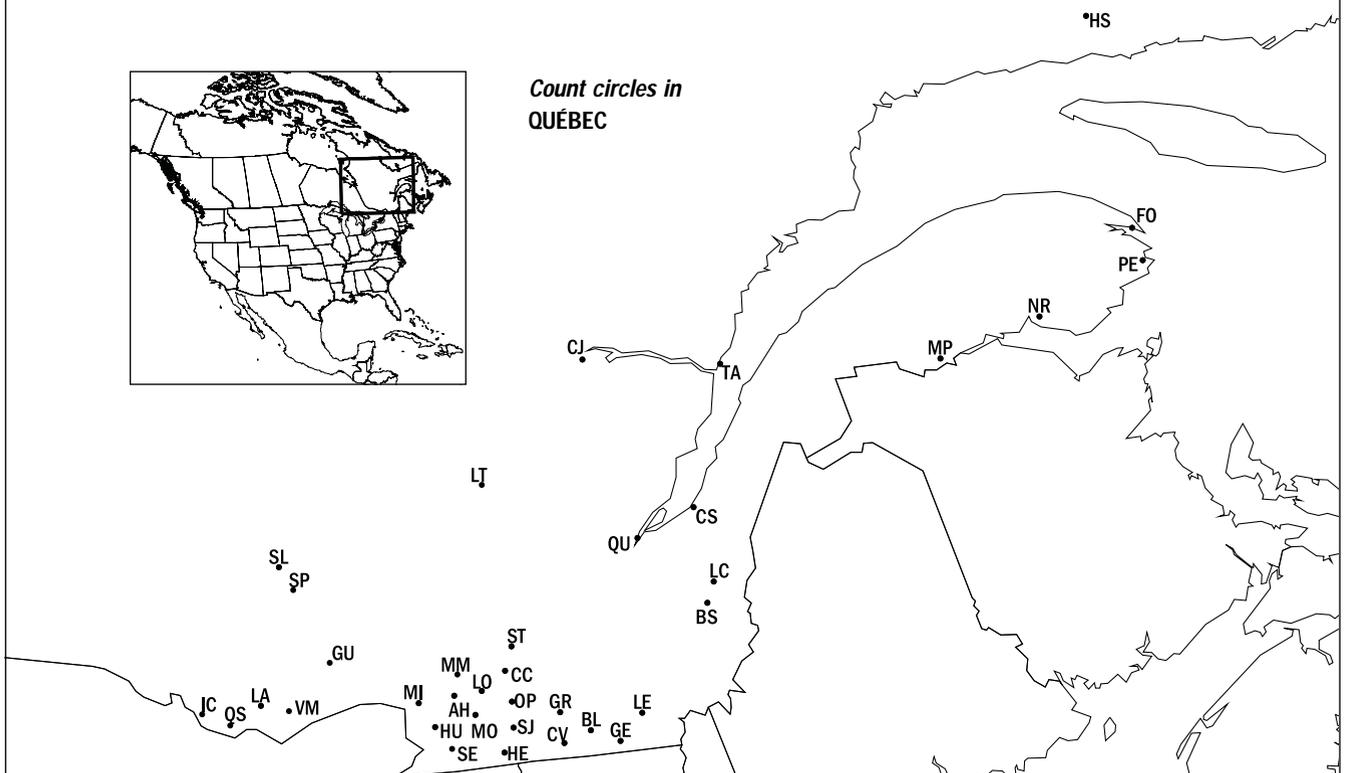
Thirty-seven counts, including the Ottawa-Gatineau count (half in Québec and half in Ontario), were completed between December 15, 2011 and January 2, 2012. A new count was added this year: MRC des Moulins. The most popular day was December 17 with 16 counts, followed by December 18 with 8 counts. In total, there were 1005 participants, of which 837 in the field and 168 at feeders. Québec City had the most observers (113), followed by Ottawa-Gatineau (105).

A total of 341,340 birds was reported, an increase of 55 percent relative to last year. St-Jean-sur-le-Richelieu ranked first with 121,545 birds, thanks to the presence of 61,699 Snow Geese and 43,802 American Crows. Ottawa-Gatineau counters tallied 32,035 birds. Across the province, Montréal ranked first in number of species (75) trailed by Québec City (71). The inter-provincial border count of Ottawa-Gatineau totaled 77 species.

Only one species was reported in all counts: the Black-capped Chickadee. Seven species had a total of more than



Count circles in
QUÉBEC



10,000 individual across the province: Snow Goose (78,635), American Crow (77,639), Canada Goose (53,995), European Starling (38,847), Rock Pigeon (15,509), Black-capped Chickadee (14,500), and Mallard (10,136).

If we look at threatened species, 15 Harlequin Ducks (Forillon 10, Perce 5) and two Horned Grebes (Montréal and St-Timothee) are noticeable. The Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon were observed in relatively large numbers with, respectively, 79 and 13 individuals distributed in 24 and 5 counts. The Golden Eagle was reported for a sixth consecutive year (Chute-St-Philippe 1, Laval-Ahuntsic 1, Mirabel 1, Otterburn Park 1, and Ste-Anne-du-Lac 2). Two Short-eared Owls (Longueuil and Ottawa) and one Rusty Blackbird (Québec) were also seen.

Regarding Québec's rare bird highlights, the following species were observed in one count area only: one Greater White-fronted Goose (Québec City), 65 Northern Shoveler (Laval-Ahuntsic), two Canvasback (Cowansville), one Redhead (St-Jean-sur-le-Richelieu), nine Gray Partridge (Québec City), four Turkey Vultures (Georgeville), one Gyrfalcon (Laval-Ahuntsic), one Wilson's Snipe (Québec City), one Lesser Black-backed Gull (Otterburn Park), one Thick-billed Murre (Perce), one Northern Saw-whet Owl (Otterburn Park), one Belted Kingfisher (Lac Brome), two American Three-toed Woodpeckers (Chute-St-Philippe), one Ruby-crowned Kinglet (Montréal), one Townsend's Solitaire (Chicoutimi-Jonquiere), one Varied Thrush (Chicoutimi-Jonquiere), one Brown Thrasher (Longueuil), one Yellow-rumped Warbler (Montreal), one Pine Warbler (Montreal), one Savannah Sparrow (Longueuil), and 15 Lapland Longspurs (Hudson).

Two species warrant special mention: Canada Goose and Snow Goose. The first reports for those species in Québec counts, respectively, go back to years 1951–52 (52nd CBC) and 1962–63 (63rd). Since that time, both species increased slowly until the turn of the

new millennium when they both passed the line of 10,000 individuals. They are now in an exponential increase phase, as both had more than 50,000 birds reported this year. Obviously, global climate change and corn production in southern Québec are beneficial to them!

ONTARIO

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Volunteers collected data in 114 Christmas Bird Count circles in Ontario. Data for Mountain Chutes and Haileybury (New Liskeard) were not submitted in time to be included in the summary. A new count started in Blind River (ONBL).

A total of 2622 observers participated in the field this season, with an additional 815 individuals at feeders. The observers logged a total of 67,772 party kilometers (42,112 miles) and 7779 party hours. Owling was conducted in 60 count circles this year, with 2347 kilometers (1458 miles) and 227 hours logged. A total of 186 species and 1,765,986 individuals were recorded, a total that approached the 1.9 million range with the additional count data.

Counts on the Great Lakes were most productive. Long Point tallied 111 species, followed by Blenheim (108), Hamilton and Kingston (105), and Niagara Falls and Point Pelee (98). Most counts recorded higher than average numbers of species (averaging between 55 and 65 species). Pickle Lake had the least number of species (9).

Fall weather was much warmer than usual in most part of Ontario, as were the conditions on count days. Waterfowl moved later in the season, and with much more open water the numbers and diversity of that group were greater than normal. The weather on many counts was more typical of November than December.

Some waterfowl records were shattered this year. A new record for Red-breasted

Merganser was set (94,730/30,420 107th count), with one third of the individuals reported from Point Pelee (27,311).

Long-tailed Ducks were also abundant this year, with many inland counts such as Minden reporting them for the first time. The largest concentration was reported in Hamilton (21,954 HC). The total recorded this year (50,713) was a five-year high for Ontario.

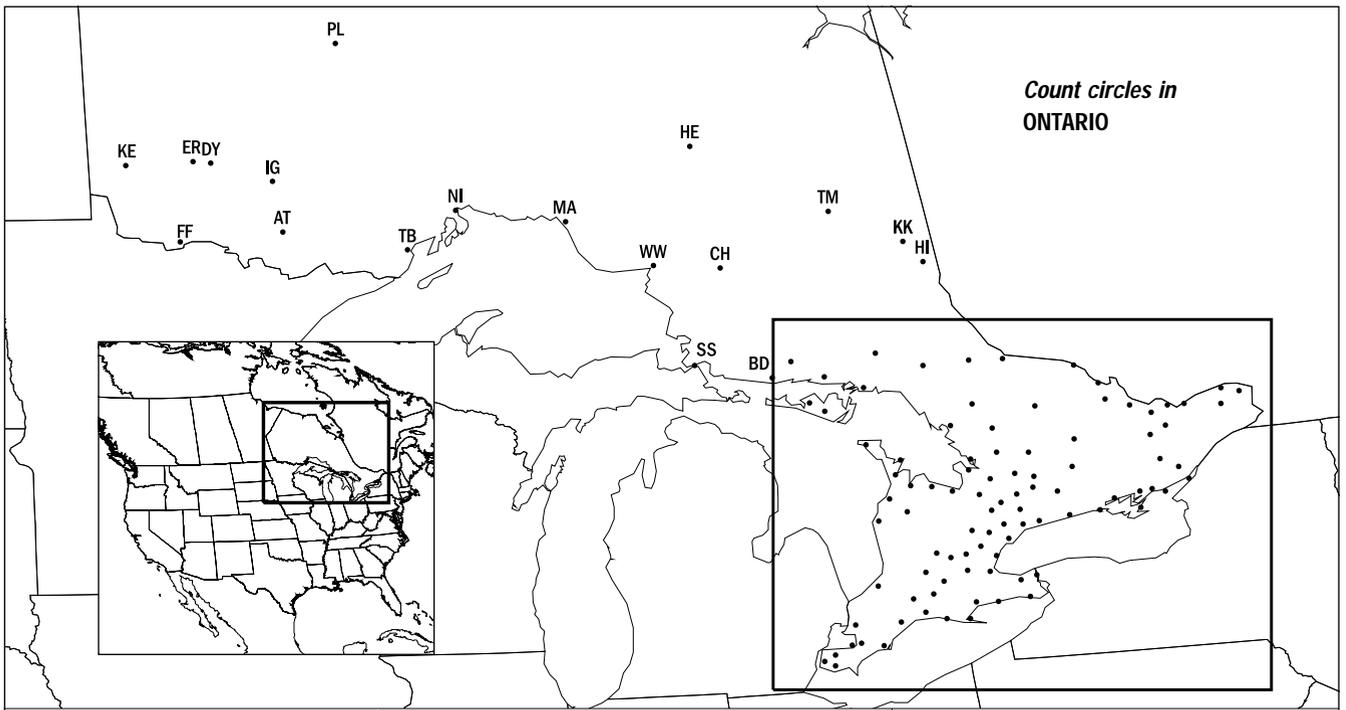
Results indicate a significant movement of Sandhill Cranes during the count period this season. Several large flocks were noted this year in central and southern Ontario, the largest at Point Pelee (101).

Highlights for Ontario counts this year include the well-documented irruption of Snowy Owls in North America this year—94 individuals were reported in 37 count circles, with large concentrations in Kingston (16) and Saugeen Shores (15). Northern Hawk Owl and Great Gray Owl were not irruptive this year. A single Northern Hawk Owl was reported in Timmins (ND), and no Great Gray Owls were reported during the count period, though one did appear in the Cedar Creek count circle a couple days after the count week ended. As predicted, there were no significant irruptions of winter finches and associated species to the south this year.

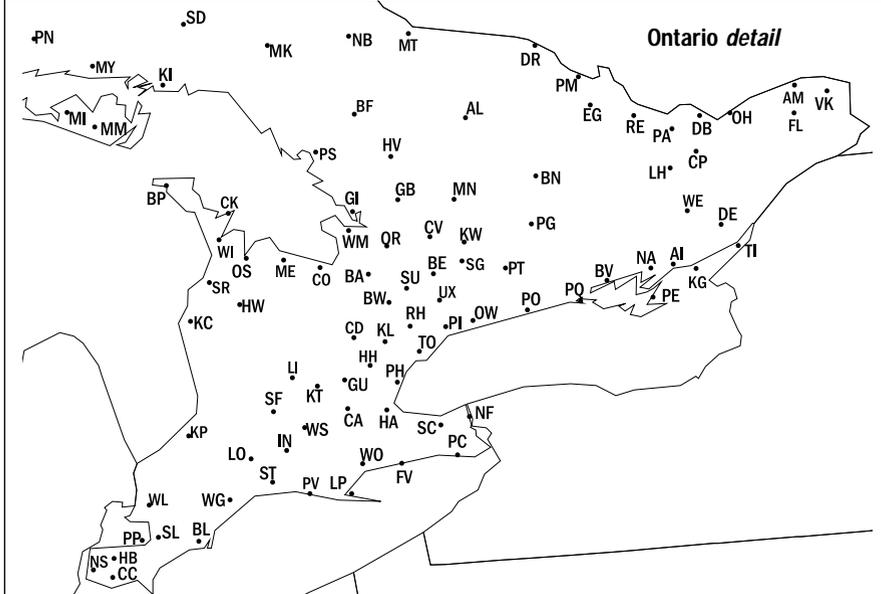
Red-bellied Woodpeckers continue to show a winter range expansion and are thus reported as new species on counts, especially in Eastern Ontario. Bald Eagle



Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*), Eganville, Ontario. Photo/Christian Renault



Count circles in ONTARIO



Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*), Niagara Falls, Ontario-New York. Photo/Willie D'Anna

numbers were high in the northern part of the province; Thunder Bay recorded 179. One compiler suggested that as deer populations are increasing in the north, so are the eagle numbers as they are often seen eating road-kill deer.

Other significant sightings include **Harlequin Duck** (ONME, GD), **Red-throated Loon** (ONNE, HC 86; ONAI; ONPP), **Black Vulture** (ONNE, 4, PH present with Turkey Vultures through the winter), **Franklin's Gull** (ONHA and ONSS, ND), **Thayer's Gull** (ONMN, PH), **Ross's Gull** (ONKP, CW, MD), **Black-legged Kittiwake** (ONPP, 2, GD) **Pomarine Jaeger** (ONOW, ND), **Rufous Hummingbird** (ONEG, PS), **Loggerhead Shrike** (ONPV, ND), **White-eyed Vireo** (ONCC, PH), **Townsend's Solitaire** (ONMM and ONRH, GD), **Yellow Warbler** (ONLP, ND), **Black-throated Gray Warbler** (ONHA, PS, PH), **Palm Warbler** (ONTO, ND), **Wilson's Warbler** (ONHA, PS), **Harris's Sparrow** (ONBP, GD; ONDR, PH), and **Baltimore Oriole** (ONBA, PH; ONTI, CW, ND).

Thanks to all the compilers for their efforts this year as we transitioned into our new data entry system. I can't wait to see what the 113th count period brings.

PRAIRIE PROVINCES AND NORTHERN CANADA

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Exactly 100 counts were held in the region this year, up 4 from last winter: 36 in Alberta (-3 from last year), 35 in Saskatchewan (+3), 21 in Manitoba (+2), 4 in Northwest Territories (=) and 4 in Nunavut (+2). A total of 136 species was reported overall (plus 5 count week), a substantial increase from 118 last winter: 122 in Alberta (+13), 96 in Saskatchewan (+6), 79 in Manitoba (+7), 27 in Northwest Territories (+8) and 8 in Nunavut (+6).

In Alberta, Calgary lead the pack with 61 species recorded. In Saskatchewan, Saskatoon again has the highest count with 48 species (plus 2 count week species, hitting the magical 50 mark for the first time). In Manitoba, Winnipeg held narrowly onto top spot with 46 species. In NWT, Fort Simpson, with 18 species, narrowly pipped both Fort Smith and Hay River to the post by just one species. In Nunavut, Arviat and Chesterfield Inlet tied for top spot with four species each.

Despite long-range forecasts for bitter cold, many counters in the Prairie Provinces may remember this as the winter that wasn't. Mild temperatures and below-average snowfall no doubt contributed to high species totals and

increased effort. Daily minimums on count days in the three Prairie Provinces averaged around minus 6 degrees Celsius, considerably warmer than the past three counts (average of minus 14 degrees Celsius, minus 17 degrees Celsius, and minus 26 degrees Celsius, respectively). Almost unheard of on the prairies, some counters enjoyed above-freezing temperatures with no snow cover and were able to participate, perhaps for the first time ever wearing fewer than three layers of winter clothing. Despite the balmy conditions, many Albertan counters had to cling to their clipboards in Chinook conditions, including winds gusting to 110 kilometers per hour (68 miles per hour) on the Crowsnest count. In Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, however, the average minimum was the same as for the last count at minus 22 degrees Celsius (but still warmer than the two preceding counts (minus 23 degrees Celsius and minus 32 degrees Celsius).

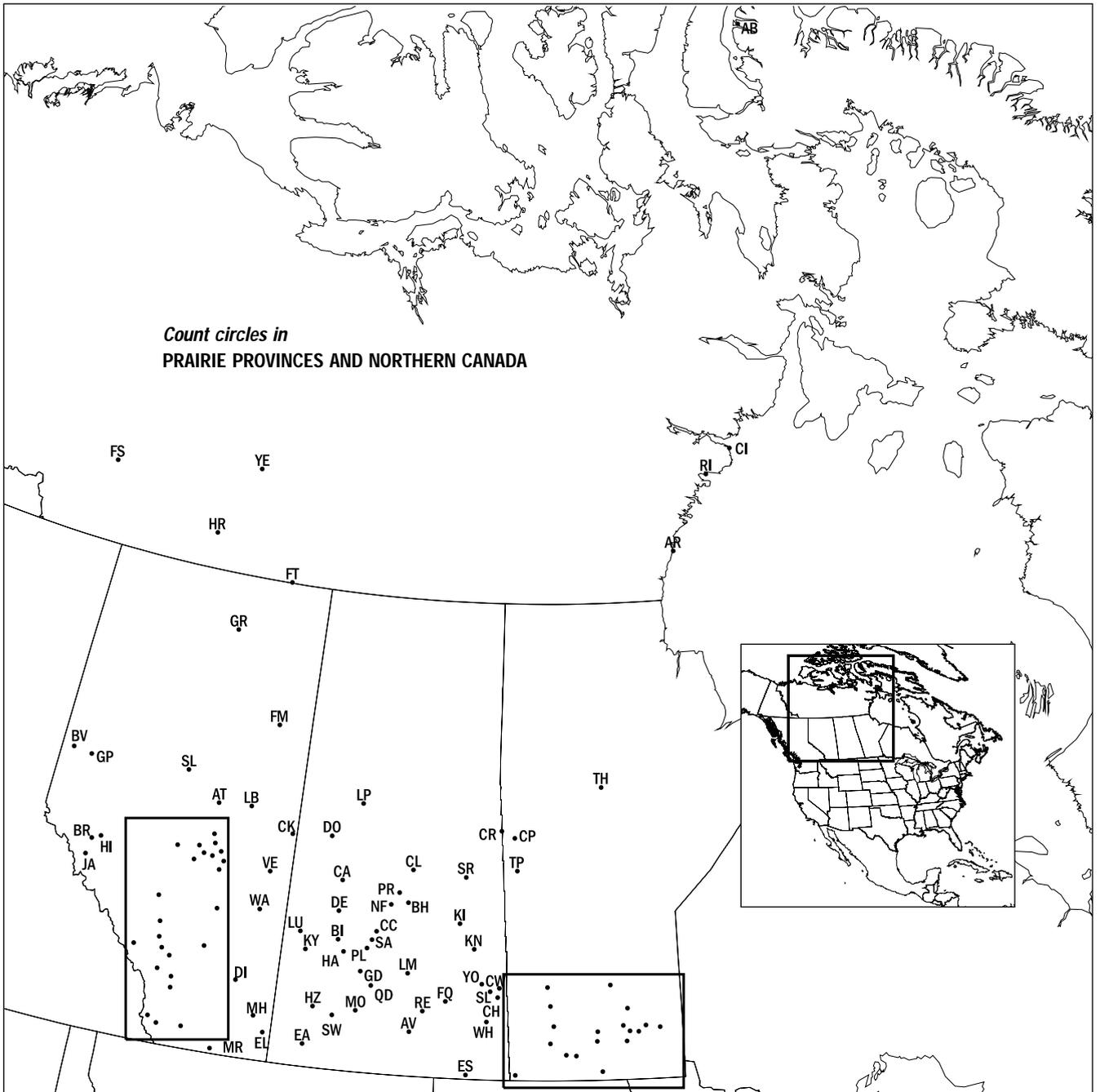
As expected, given the mild conditions, waterfowl numbers were high. Both Alberta and Saskatchewan recorded 18 species of waterfowl, which is especially high in Saskatchewan, while Manitoba recorded five species and Nunavut two species (Common Eider and Long-tailed Duck). Impressive totals of other waterbirds were also recorded, especially in Alberta where the provincial totals included four grebe species, Common Loon, Double-crested Cormorant, four gull species, and others including American Coot, Killdeer, and Wilson's Snipe. Last year's Virginia Rail was followed by a count week bird again at Banff-Canmore. Saskatchewan also record three grebe species, American White Pelican, American Coot, and Herring Gull. Manitoba recorded only five waterfowl species; however, a Canvasback in Winnipeg was exceptional, as was a Herring Gull in Gimli.

Upland gamebird numbers were rather varied this year. Ruffed Grouse and Spruce Grouse rebounded from very low counts last year, the Ruffed Grouse total being 184 (up from 155

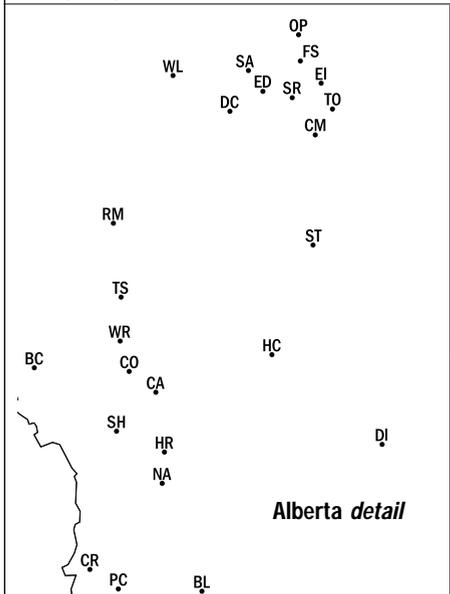
but still slightly lower than the 30-year average) and the Spruce Grouse total of 21 being well above last year's total of 9 and also well above the 30-year average of 13. Sharp-tailed Grouse numbers were much lower than last year (777, down from 1181) but still above the 30-year average (738). The highlight was the addition of Rock Ptarmigan in both Nunavut and Alberta, the latter thanks to a provincial first at the new northern count of Garden City.

Good numbers and a variety of diurnal raptors were reported throughout the prairies. This included a good showing from American Kestrels, which are uncommon in winter on the prairies (count week in Saskatchewan, 2 in Alberta, 4 in Manitoba). In fact, it was a good year for falcons in general with all three Prairie Provinces recording Merlin, Prairie Falcon, and Gyrfalcon (also in NWT) and Alberta recording the region's only Peregrine Falcon. Both small *accipiters* are becoming increasing regular on prairie CBCs and this count was no exception for Sharp-shinned Hawks (MB, 3; SK, 5; AB, 11) and Cooper's Hawks (MB, 2; SK, cw; AB, 11) plus various unidentified *accipiters*. Bald Eagle numbers were high in all three prairie jurisdictions (MB, 33; SK, 83; AB, 115) but nowhere record breaking except at the individual count level. Given the lack of snow cover it is unsurprising that Rough-legged Hawks numbers were reasonably high, especially in the west (MB, 6; SK, 13; AB, 180).

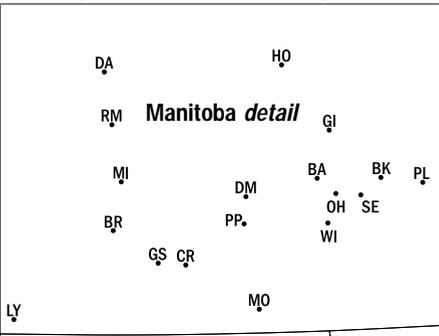
On the whole, the boreal forest owls were detected in low numbers this winter. Many observers took a keen interest in Snowy Owl numbers, however, given the low numbers recorded last year and the major southern irruption that began this fall. Arguably, the biggest numbers of Snowy Owls had already moved south of southern Canada by count period, where they were delighting many U.S. observers. Nonetheless, 167 Snowy Owls were tallied in the three Prairie Provinces (none in the north), a huge increase from last year's total of 35, yet roughly equal to the 30-year average of 0.05 birds per party hour.



**Count circles in
PRAIRIE PROVINCES AND NORTHERN CANADA**



Alberta detail



Manitoba detail

Winter finch numbers were unremarkable. Evening Grosbeak numbers were down (half the 1.2 birds per party hour rate of last year) whereas Pine Grosbeak numbers were high, especially in Alberta

and Saskatchewan. House Finch, Purple Finch, and Northern Cardinal all continued their increasing western trend. Overwintering sparrows were not especially remarkable despite the mild weather, although Manitoba enjoyed a large count of Dark-eyed Juncos and other notable records such as a Chipping Sparrow in Winnipeg and a Harris's Sparrow at Cypress River. Snow Buntings numbers fell drastically to 15,158 from last year's tally of nearly 50,000.

With four counts this year, Nunavut quadrupled their species tally from last

year to eight species, including species of note such as Long-tailed Duck and Black Guillemot. In the Northwest Territories, single count observations of Pileated Woodpecker, Dark-eyed Junco, and Common Grackle were noteworthy.

Single CBC circle and noteworthy counts from the Northwest Territories included a Northern Goshawk (Yellowknife, 1), Gyrfalcon (Yellowknife, 2), Pileated Woodpecker (Fort Smith, 1), Dark-eyed Junco (Hay River, 1), and Common Grackle (Fort Smith, 3).

Alberta saw its very first American Pipit on a CBC count (Calgary, 1) and record or near-record counts of Mallard, Redhead, and some of the province's first well-detailed CBC records of Clay-colored Sparrow (Lac la Biche, 4).

Saskatchewan enjoyed a series of high counts and exceptional records, including Snow Goose (Regina, 1), Cackling Goose (an exceptional count of 50 at Gardiner Dam), Gadwall (Estevan, 3), Northern Pintail (Estevan, 1), Redhead (Estevan, 27), White-winged Scoter (Gardiner Dam, 2), Long-tailed Duck (Squaw Rapids, 1), Barrow's Goldeneye (Squaw Rapids, 1), Hooded Merganser (Estevan, 5), Red-necked Grebe (Gardiner Dam, 2), a white-morph Gyrfalcon at Estevan (count week), Winter Wren (Fort Qu'Appelle, 1), White-crowned Sparrow (Ketchikan, 1), and Northern Cardinal (Yorkton, 1; Prince Albert, count week).

In Manitoba, Eurasian Collared-Dove numbers continued to increase. Both American Crow and Common Raven also continued their recent increasing trend. Records of note included a Canvasback in Winnipeg, a Green-winged Teal in Minnedosa, a Red-shafted Flicker at Pinawa, and a Black-backed Woodpecker in Winnipeg (unusual context). Noteworthy single records included Turkey Vulture (Cypress River, count week), Red-bellied Woodpecker (Winnipeg), three Townsend's Solitaires at Cypress River; Varied Thrush (Winnipeg), Northern Mockingbird (Minnedosa), and Northern Cardinal (Winnipeg).

BRITISH COLUMBIA/YUKON TERRITORY

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With the exception of a few windy days, the Christmas Bird Count season was generally balmy and warm west of the Rockies. The number of counts rose by 2 to 103, with 91 from BC and 12 from the Yukon. New counts came in from 100 Mile House and Slocan Lake, BC, and Carmacks, YT. The species total for BC counts dropped by one to 228 this year, while Yukon counts found 39 species, one more than last year. Traditional leaders Ladner and Victoria tied for the highest species total this year with 140 species. In the Interior, Oliver-Osoyoos led with 107 species. Whitehorse was tops in the Yukon with 27 species, up 2 from last year.

The Fraser Valley continues to host more than half the Trumpeter Swans in the region; a record 8250 were reported overall, with 2057 in Chilliwack alone. Significant concentrations of Surf Scoters were seen on the east side of Georgia Strait, including 12,216 in Lower Howe Sound. White-tailed Ptarmigan were seen two BC counts—four at Mackenzie and one at Whistler, while Willow Ptarmigan were reported from two Yukon counts—12 at Haines Junction and 10 at Old Crow. Wild Turkeys continue to increase, spreading west out of the Kootenays; the newest outpost is a group of six seen in the Similkameen Valley on the Cawston count.

The Juan de Fuca count reported a good list of pelagic species, including 35 Northern Fulmars, five Short-tailed Shearwaters, a Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel, a Brown Pelican, and count week Laysan and Black-footed albatross. Bald Eagles numbers were up somewhat with 9548 seen; highest counts were again at Harrison River (1835) and Ladner (1265). Peregrine Falcon numbers were exactly the same as last year, with 95

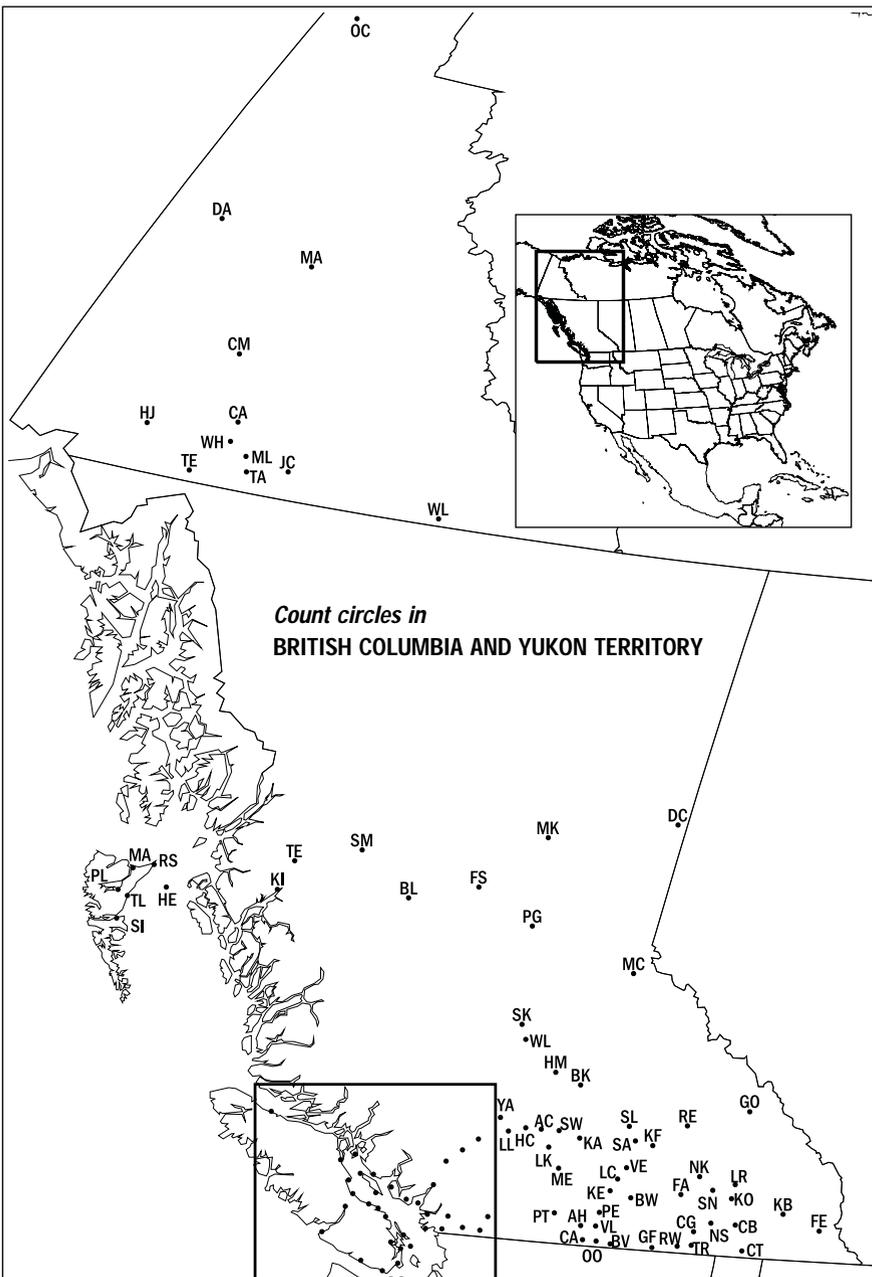
seen on 24 counts; single Prairie Falcons were seen on three Okanagan counts: Bridesville, Oliver-Osoyoos, and Kelowna. Rails were well represented this year, with 106 Virginias seen on 19 counts, including 34 at Nanaimo alone; single Soras were at Pitt Meadows and Victoria.

Thick-billed Murres are very rare in BC waters, so nine at Hecate Strait were extraordinary, but the alcid jackpot came from Sunshine Coast, which had 21,420 Ancient Murrelets and a Tufted Puffin. The Eurasian Collared-Dove explosion continues, with 1580 seen on 51 counts, including 3 at Haines Junction, YT. A total of 47 Snowy Owls were seen on seven counts, the bulk of them (35) on the Fraser River delta at Ladner. Anna's Hummingbirds seem to be staging a dramatic population increase; 2103 were seen on 25 counts, including 1063 at Victoria alone and 4 away from the coast at Penticton. The Costa's Hummingbird reported on the Vancouver count last year stayed all year and was tallied on this year's count as well.

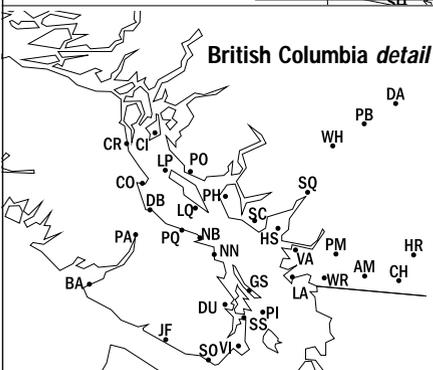
Two Rock Wrens were an interesting find at Lake Country in the north Okanagan Valley. Lake Country also reported a Bewick's Wren at the north end of this species' new Interior range; the only other Interior counts with Bewick's were Penticton (1) and Oliver-Osoyoos (3). Prince George had the high count for Bohemian Waxwing with 3270; this species was relatively uncommon or



Costa's Hummingbird (*Calypte costae*),
Victoria, British Columbia.
Photo/ Michelle Lamberson



Count circles in
BRITISH COLUMBIA AND YUKON TERRITORY



British Columbia detail

absent in the southern interior of BC, where the only significant concentration was at Princeton (1600). Rare warblers included a Common Yellowthroat at Harrison River and a Wilson's at Kelowna, but the rarest was a Black-throated Blue

at Penticton. Other rarities included a Western Tanager at Lillooet, a Clay-colored Sparrow in Vancouver, a Fox Sparrow at McBride, and a Lapland Longspur at Revelstoke. Three sparrows were unexpected in the Yukon: a White-crowned at Carcross and Savannah and Golden-crowned at Whitehorse.

Forest finches showed variable patterns. Red Crossbills were scattered across southern BC, with the only significant concentration a total of 800 at Whistler. As usual, White-winged Crossbills were scarcer; the highest count was 224 at Apex-Hedley. It was a decent year for redpolls, with 6436 Commons seen on 58 counts. Hoaries

were only seen on five counts, including five at Dawson Creek, three at Watson Lake, and one at Princeton. Pine Siskins were common, especially in coastal forests; Whistler reported 4655, almost 10 percent of the regional total of 40,312. Evening Grosbeak numbers were well down from last year with only 1785 seen.

ALASKA

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The 112th Alaska CBC involved a record 1013 participants—752 in the field conducting 38 counts (on par with the five-year running average)—and a tally of 141 species (plus 7 count week) and 132,947 individual birds (both tallies below the five-year running average). Kodiak, after suffering a humiliating upset last year to Ketchikan, regained top honors with 78 species; while Prudhoe Bay again recorded only one (Common Raven) for the 25th straight year, which has to be an international record in perseverance! The most individual birds were counted at Anchorage (18,228; thank goodness for waxwings—see below), which, along with Fairbanks, involved the most counters (150 {a record} and 113, respectively). One new count circle was added, at Copper Center in east-central Alaska.

As for the weather—well, it was “winter” on every count. Not much more can be said than that. And one new species was added to the Alaska CBC list (and I believe also new to the North American counts): A Dusky Thrush was recorded during count week at Anchorage (missed on count day, even though it was present both before and after; better luck next time).

The overall perception is that this season was not particularly noteworthy. Across Alaska a majority of the circles counted fewer total species and individual birds relative to their respective five-year running averages. And despite record participation at the regional level,



Purple Finch (*Carpodacus purpureus*), Ketchikan, Alaska. Photo/Jim Lewis

a majority of the counts involved fewer participants relative to their respective five-year running averages—except for the interior and western Alaska counts, which mostly experienced increases in participation (well done).

The most common species counted in the Alaska Region include Mallard (10,545) and Bohemian Waxwing (9250; 95 percent in Anchorage); while 14 species were represented by only one individual. On a subregional basis, Common Goldeneye and Glaucous-winged Gull were the most numerous species tallied on the southeastern counts, Mallard and Bohemian Waxwing on the southcoastal counts, Brant and Emperor Goose on the southwestern counts, and Common Raven and Common Redpoll on the interior/western/northern counts. And Northern Goshawk, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Shrike, Gray Jay, Black-billed Magpie, Common Raven, Black-capped Chickadee, Snow Bunting, Pine Grosbeak, and Common Redpoll were the most diverse species, being recorded on at least one of the counts in all of the Alaska subregions.

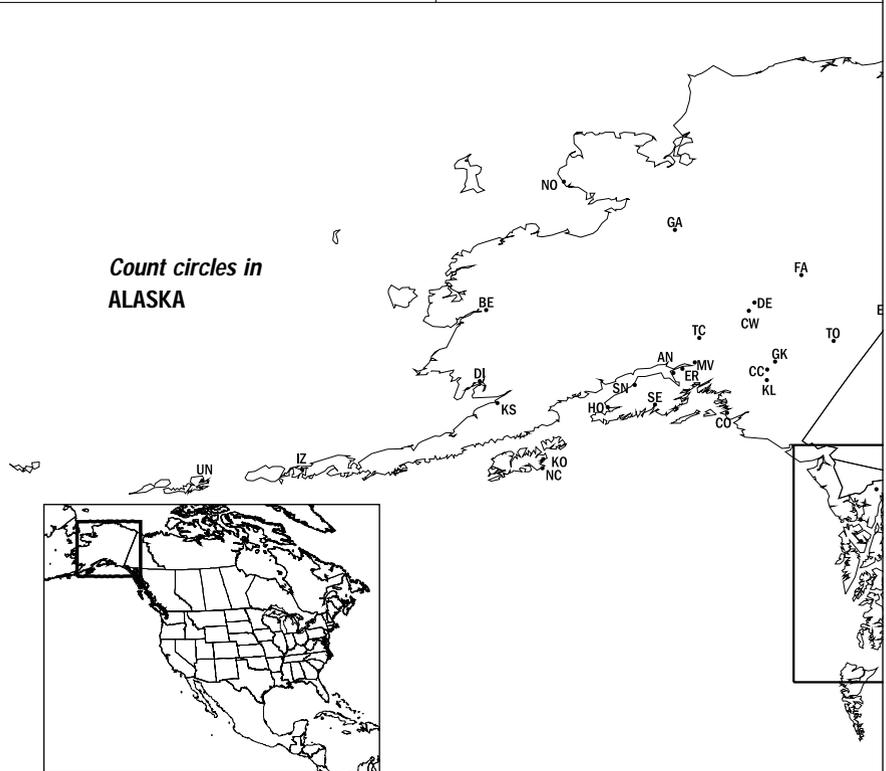
New Alaska region “high counts” were set for 10 species: Canvasback (48, Craig-Klawock), Barrow’s Goldeneye (1914, Wrangell), Pacific Loon (530, Ketchikan), Western Grebe (402, Ketchikan), Laysan Albatross (17, Shemya), Red-winged Blackbird (24, Juneau—take that “Lower-48”), Steller’s Jay (98, Anchorage), Black-capped Chickadee (2080, Anchorage), White-crowned

Sparrow (57, Homer—way cool), and Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch (664, Homer). On a subregional scale, new high counts were also set for Snow Buntings in southcoastal Alaska (300, Matanuska Valley); Common Loon (21), Mew Gull (74), and Dark-eyed Junco (14) all at Unalaska in southwestern Alaska; and Northern Goshawk (6—remarkable), Black-capped Chickadee (84), and Pine Grosbeak (592) all at Bethel in western Alaska.

Other noteworthy finds (at least to me) included only 82 Emperor Geese at Izembek N.W.R. (record low), a Wood Duck at Glacier Bay (I still need that on my Alaska list!), a Greater Yellowlegs at Ketchikan, single Slaty-backed Gulls at Ketchikan and Soldotna, single Anna’s Hummingbirds on three counts (Ketchikan, Mitkof Island, Sitka), a total 26 Eurasian Collared-Doves on eight circles (7 counts in southeastern and 1{Cordova} in southcoastal Alaska), a count week Golden-crowned Kinglet at King Salmon-Naknek (new to the southwestern subregion), a White-throated Sparrow at Kodiak, two Golden-crowned Sparrows and a Brambling at Unalaska, and two White-crowned Sparrows (singles at Copper

Center and Tok) in interior Alaska, and a McKay’s Bunting at Soldotna.

Finally, a word of caution to all would-be researchers thinking of using the historic database to try and make sense of, or a case for (insert “cause”) the winter status and distribution of birds in Alaska. Though there have about 1135 counts completed in Alaska since 1960 (neglecting the handful of earlier



counts), about 40 percent of the 68 total circles were only active for less than 10 years, and almost half of the 15 circles added during the past 20 years were only completed once or twice, implying to this civil engineer that the Alaska CBC data, as a whole, contains more than a few holes and is likely statistically challenging.

I trust everyone is enjoying searching for and scanning the scattered count results on your computer screen or smart phone—I for one miss the printed versions, where you could see *all* the data from each individual count in one snapshot (e.g. species, annotations and editor comments, participants, weather, etc.). Okay, I am a curmudgeon.

NEW ENGLAND

Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts,
New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont

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“Where am I?” is an often challenging and always popular party game. With the game in mind, if we were to invite readers of the 112th Christmas Bird Count summary to guess in what CBC region the following collection of species was recorded—Brown Booby, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Golden Eagle, Marbled Godwit, Great Skua, Northern Hawk Owl, Cassin’s Kingbird, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Wood Thrush, Cape May Warbler, Townsend’s Warbler, and Painted Bunting—what do you suppose the answers would look like? If a second guess is needed, how about Pink-footed Goose, Pacific Loon, Great Shearwater, King Rail, Lesser Yellowlegs, Laughing Gull, Thayer’s Gull, Atlantic Puffin, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Townsend’s Solitaire, Northern Parula, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak? And since Major League Baseball gives a batter three strikes, here’s a third opportunity: Barnacle Goose, Northern Bobwhite, Little Blue Heron, Northern Goshawk, Willet, Little Gull, Forster’s Tern, Pomarine Jaeger, Common Murre,

Western Kingbird, Blue-headed Vireo, and American Redstart.

Not to prolong the agony, this remarkable assortment of species represents *only a fraction* of the mind-blowing 237 species collectively recorded on the 112th New England CBC. In the nearly 30 years that this editor has been editing New England CBCs, this total far and away exceeds the previous all-time high of 225 species recorded in 1999–2000. In addition to the stunning total of 237 species belong a count week Osprey and three recognizable subspecies (i.e., “Audubon’s” Yellow-rumped Warbler, “Ipswich” Savannah Sparrow, and “Oregon” Dark-eyed Junco). Accounting for these remarkable statistics were 3270 observers who participated in 122 New England counts, invested 9704.26 party hours of effort, and traveled 41,911.9 party miles in their quest to locate and tally species for their individual count circles. More than anything, however, the survival of so many vagrants and late-lingering species was undoubtedly due to the fortuitous combination of extraordinarily mild late fall and early winter weather, lots open ground and unfrozen water, and generally favorable conditions on many count days.

As suggested above, count conditions were nearly ideal on many counts this season, with a number of compilers specifically commenting on how lots of open water and snow-free ground seemed to affect their count totals. Accordingly, some passerine species were apparently more dispersed than usual due to the relatively snow-free conditions, and waterfowl were specifically mentioned as being less concentrated because of all the open water.

In keeping with an Olympic Year, special accolades go to the state counts achieving the highest CBC totals. In southern New England the Gold Medal went to Mid-Cape Cod (137) in Massachusetts, with Silver and Bronze belonging, respectively, to New Haven (128) in Connecticut and Newport County-Westport (127) in Rhode Island. In northern New England top honors



Orange-crowned Warbler (*Oreothlypis celata*), Groton-Oxbow N.W.R., Massachusetts. Photo/Tom Murray

belonged to Coastal New Hampshire (117) in New Hampshire, followed by Greater Portland (97) in Maine and Ferrisburg (81) in Vermont. Not surprisingly some of the count and species totals were the highest in many years.

With such an embarrassment of riches to choose from this year, selecting the most outstanding CBC records of the season posed a significant challenge. On the short list have to be **Pink-footed Goose** at Worcester, **Brown Booby** at Mid-Cape Cod, **Cassin’s Kingbird** at Newburyport, **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** at Hartford, and **Wood Thrush** at Woodbury-Roxbury. Considering the rarity of these species I am pleased to report that all were extremely well documented.

Species that in most years would receive top honors as most “Off the Wall” candidates include **Barnacle Goose** at Newburyport; **Great Shearwater** at Cape Ann and Cape Cod; **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** at Stratford-Milford; **Willet** (2) and **Lesser Yellowlegs** at Cape Cod; **Great Skua** (2) at Nantucket; **Parasitic Jaeger** at Old Lyme; **Ash-throated Flycatcher** at Greater Boston, Cape Cod, and New Bedford; **Cape May Warbler** at Barkhamsted; **Townsend’s Warbler** at Newburyport; **American Redstart** at Brattleboro; **Indigo Bunting** at Northampton; and **Painted Bunting** at Cape Cod. What is especially fascinating about this mix of species is their diverse point of origin. The Palearctic is represented by Pink-footed Goose and