

52nd ANNUAL DENVER CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Day, Date, and Time: Saturday, December 17, 2005, 6:30 am to 4:30 pm.

Compiler: Dick Schottler **Feeder Coordinators:** Patty Echelmeyer and Tina Jones

Weather: Cloudy, light snow **Temperature:** 0 to 25 deg. F **Wind:** variable, 0 to 15 mph

Snow Cover: 0 to 12" **Still Water:** Partly open **Moving Water:** Partly open

Observers: 105 (74 in 25 parties, 31 watchers at 29 feeders)

Total Party Hours: 164.5 (89 on foot, 75.5 by car)

Total Party Miles: 722.5 (67.5 on foot, 655 by car)

Hours Spent Watching Feeders: 92.5

Count Totals: 92 species; 37,444 individuals

Participants by Area (Area Leader's names in **bold**):

Area 1. Red Rocks Park (RRP): Bill Brockner, **Bob Brown**, Tom Casadevall, Diana Mullineaux, Don Mullineaux, Mary Sidors

Area 2. Lower Bear Creek (LBC): **Tamie Bulow**, Patty Echelmeyer

Area 2A. Bear Creek Lake Park (BCP): **Kathy Hawkins**

Area 3. Bow Mar/Marston (BMM): Gale Evans, Kay Niyo, Ira Sanders, **Karl Stecher**

Area 4A. Lower South Platte-east (LSP): Ruth Breckon, Tim Brown, **Ed Holub**, Leonard Schlenz

Area 4B. Lower South Platte-west (LSP): **Warren Finch**, Dick Pratt, Robert Shade

Area 5. Highline Ditch (HLD): Betty Oliver, **Harold Oliver**

Area 6. Plum Creek (PCK): **Norm Erthal**

Area 7A. Middle South Platte (MSP): **Randy Lentz**

Area 7B. Middle South Platte (MSP): Nan Campbell, Steve Campbell, Elaine Emeigh, Mel Emeigh, Jill Holden

Hugh Kingery, Urling Kingery, Deb Ostergard

Area 8. Chatfield Reservoir (CHA): Tina Jones, **Joey Kellner**, Charles Lawrence, Andrew Spencer

Area 9. Upper South Platte (USP): Dave Binkley, **Marilyn Binkley**, Jim Duggan, Lyn Graves, Allison Hilf, Toni Rautus, Nina Routh, Paul Slingsby

Area 10. Lower Deer Creek (LDC): Michaelle Griffin, Judy Lane, Glen Meyers, **Lynn Willcockson**

Area 11. Upper Deer Creek (UDC): (Area not counted)

Area 12. Yegge Peak (YPK): **Ann Bonnell**, Else Van Erp

Area 13. Doublehead Mountain (DHM): Amy Davis, **Tim Davis**, Veronica Holt

Area 14. North Turkey Creek (NTC): Larry Modesitt, **Dick Schottler**

Area 15. Indian Hills (IHL): Margie Bailey, Bob Holmes, Jeanette Stram, Lynn Vaseleski, **Sherman Wing**

Area 16. Upper Bear Creek (UBC): **Gene Rutherford**

Area 17. Ken Caryl Ranch (KCR): Susan Chancellor, Kevin Corwin, **Alison Kondler**

Area 18. Garrison Gate (GGT): (Area not counted)

Area 19. Morrison/Willow Brook (MWB): **Jackie King**, Jo Patton

Area 20. Willow Creek (WCK): **Doris Cruze**, Doug Hodous, Paul Thayer, Phoebe Thayer, Dennis Wojcicki

Area 21. Mt. Lindo/Willow Springs (MLW): Mary Burger, Jill Parker, **Karleen Schofield**

Feeder Watchers: Jane Axtell, John Bonnell, Margo Breen, Nan Brehmer, Carol Chapman, Betty Chrisman, Dee DeJong, Carol Duecker, Marcia Ferguson, Marjory Friedman, Betty & Stan Harwood, Tina Jones, Bill Karsell, Mike Kinsey, Lila Kint, Judy Lane, Kurt Lani, Chris & Carol Markley, Dick Masteller, Ann Means, Jake Mola, Lowrey Mumford, Doreen Near, John Presler, Leon Rollen, Millie Sanger, Jacque Schneider, Candy Vallado, Donald Wargo.

2005 DENVER CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT HIGHLIGHTS

by Dick Schottler, Compiler

The 2005 Denver Christmas Bird Count (CBC) that took place on December 17th, the 52nd consecutive year that the Denver Field Ornithologists has conducted a Christmas Count within the same 15-mile diameter Count circle established in 1954 and centered just north of the old Ken Caryl Ranch entrance. The weather on Count day was gray and cold with light snow, calm to moderate winds, and overcast skies. Two foothill areas were not counted this year for lack of volunteer leaders. A third area, Upper South Platte, was only partially counted due to the retirement of Carolyn Cooley from Lockheed-Martin and the compiler's inability to locate another birder-employee to cover the plant area. Even with the less-than-ideal weather, frozen lakes, and incomplete coverage, respectable 37,444 individual birds of 92 species were recorded by 74 field observers and 31 feeder watchers. One new species, Eurasian Collared-Dove, was added to the cumulative Denver CBC list in 2005 - Ed Holub found a pair in area 4A. The total species seen since 1954 thus goes to 193. The only other "rare" bird (seen on less than 10% of the previous Counts) was a Hermit Thrush (3rd record) found by the Kingery's in area 7B. "Uncommon" birds seen this year included Barrow's Goldeneye (area 8), Eared Grebe (area 4A), Black-crowned Night-Heron (area 4B), Brown Thrasher (area 7A), and Common Grackle (area 3).

Record-high individual numbers were established for only three species: Cackling Goose (1107 vs. 491 in 2004), Sharp-shinned Hawk (16; previous high 11 in both 1987 and 2000), and American Robin (the 2489 seen this year more than doubles the previous high of 1198 set in 1987! By comparison, only 62 were counted in 2004). It should be noted that this is only the 2nd year Cackling Geese have been "counted", and reliable field criteria for separating the large race of Cackling Geese from the small race of Canada Geese (both of which regularly winter in Colorado) are still being developed.

Several species were seen in fewer than usual numbers this year probably due, at least in part to the negative conditions mentioned in the first paragraph above. These included Common Merganser (17 is the lowest since 1961; the average for the previous decade is 1003), Black-capped Chickadee (274 is the lowest since 1975 and is only 53% of the previous 10 year average), Pine Siskin (20 is the lowest since 1972), and House Sparrow (485 is lowest since 1969). For the first year since 1954 (the first year of the present Count) not a single Rough-legged Hawk was seen, and Marsh Wren was missed for the first time since 1989.

The ten most numerous species observed on the Count were: 1. Canada Goose (16,693), 2. Ring-billed Gull (3,392), 3. Robin (2,489), 4. Mallard (1,823), 5. Dark-eyed Junco (1,462), 6. Starling (1,316), 7. House Finch (1,197), 8. Cackling Goose (1,011), 9. Crow (944), 10. Rock Pigeon (777). Together, these ten species accounted for 83 percent of the birds counted, with Canada/Cackling Geese alone representing 47 percent of the total. One additional species, Red Crossbill, was observed in the Count circle during Count Week but not on the 17th.

As compiler of the 52nd Denver Christmas Bird Count, I want to thank all of the field observers and feeder watchers for participating. Special thanks go to the Area Leaders whose efforts made this Count a success, to Patty Echelmeyer and Tina Jones for their efforts once again in lining up the feeder watchers and compiling the feeder results. Finally, a much deserved thanks to Scott and Sandy Menough and the staff at their Wild Birds Unlimited store for again hosting our compilation meeting and providing the very welcome refreshments after a cold day in the field. This was the 11th year they have done this for us, and as always, it was a great way to wrap up the Count.