

January 11, 2009

Hi Birders,

Despite temperatures as low as minus 10 degrees, 42 Field Counters and 13 Feeder Counters racked up 589.30 miles and 134.75 hours in the 30th annual Matanuska Valley Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) on Sunday, December 14th! 22.6 miles were on foot and 8 miles by cross-country skis. The low temperatures suppressed much of the anticipated bird activity and with trees heavily covered in snow or coated with hoarfrost, birds were difficult to see.

With some exceptions, counts for most species were lower than expected. Bohemian Waxwings were scarce in areas where they normally appear in large numbers. The mostly frozen Little Su River considerably reduced both the Mallard and American Dipper counts. Only 476 Mallards were found, down from a high of 1,231 and the American Dipper count of 48 was well down from the 2006 high of 80. But new highs were set for five species, Bald Eagle (55), Hairy Woodpecker (29), Common Raven (807), Dark-eyed Junco (68), and White-winged Crossbill (12). Two species new to the Matanuska Valley Count were observed, a Townsend's Solitaire found hanging around ornamental fruit trees at a home on Lazy Mountain, and a Song Sparrow hiding out in an unused chicken coop near a bird feeder at a home in the Butte. The Song Sparrow has been seen daily from prior to Count Day through January 11, 2009.

Only one exotic (introduced) species (Ring-necked Pheasant) was found and, at 150 birds, the European Starling count was well below the 1996 high of 275.

A big thanks to all who helped in this Count, and especially to Maggie and Dan Crowson, who again graciously hosted our post-Count wrap-up and potluck meeting/tall story session.

Happy Holidays to all of you,
Bob Winckler, Compiler, Matanuska Valley CBC

**MAT-SU BIRDERS
2008 MATANUSKA VALLEY
AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT
FINAL TALLY**

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
Mallard	476	
Common Merganser	1	
Ring-necked Pheasant	1	Exotic species, not countable
Ruffed Grouse	3	
Bald Eagle	55	New high - previous: 38
Northern Goshawk	1	
Merlin	1	
Rock Pigeon	225	
Great Horned Owl	-	Seen during Count Week
Downy Woodpecker	30	
Hairy Woodpecker	29	New high - previous: 26
American Three-toed Woodpecker	1	
Northern Shrike	4	
Gray Jay	13	
Black-billed Magpie	227	
Common Raven	807	New high - previous: 749
Black-capped Chickadee	772	Includes 5 @ feeders w/def. beaks
Boreal Chickadee	7	
Red-breasted Nuthatch	47	Equals previous high: 2006
Brown Creeper	2	
American Dipper	48	
Townsend's Solitaire	1	New species
American Robin	-	Seen during Count Week
European Starling	150	
Bohemian Waxwing	912	
American Tree Sparrow	4	
White-crowned Sparrow	2	
Song Sparrow	1	New species
Dark-eyed Junco	68	New high - previous: 42
Pine Grosbeak	365	
White-winged Crossbills	12	New high - previous: 10
Common Redpoll	939	

TOTAL BIRDS -- 5,203

TOTAL CONFIRMED SPECIES SEEN COUNT DAY -- 29