

January 3, 2010

Hi Birders,

35 Field Counters racked up 451.05 miles and, with the help of 13 Feeder Counters, totaled 73.75 hours of counting time in the 31st annual Matanuska Valley Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC), held on Sunday, December 20, 2009. Counters on foot covered 21.75 miles and 12 miles were racked up by sleddog team. In the morning, most trees were heavily covered in snow or coated with hoarfrost making birds difficult to see, but by afternoon, winds up to 30 mph had cleared many of the trees.

With some exceptions, counts for most species were lower than expected. 28 species were seen on Count Day and one species new to our Count, Northern Saw-whet Owl, was seen during Count Week. One noncountable exotic species was seen, a female Peafowl, found on Lazy Mountain. There wasn't much open water in our Count Circle and waterfowl were concentrated at the Cottonwood Creek outflow of Wasilla Lake, at a small cove on the north side of Wasilla Lake, and at the outflow coming from the Palmer Sewage Treatment facility into the Matanuska River. New high counts were established for Common and Barrow's Goldeneye, Bald Eagle, Common Raven, and Red-breasted Nuthatch. As in past Counts, ravens were not counted past noon to avoid double-counting, as that species daily commutes to and from the surrounding mountains. A Song Sparrow, assumed to be the same one that was counted last year, returned to Charlie Feaster's feeder in the Butte, making it the only Song Sparrow recorded in the Upper Cook Inlet for the second year in a row. Bohemian Waxwings were very scarce with only 60 seen.

**Thanks to all who helped in this Count, and a special thanks (again) to Maggie and Dan Crowson, who graciously hosted our post-Count wrap-up and potluck meeting - annual tall story session. Happy New Year to Everyone,
Bob Winckler, Compiler, Matanuska Valley CBC**

**MAT-SU BIRDERS
2009 MATANUSKA VALLEY
AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT
FINAL TALLY**

Mallard	450	
Common Goldeneye	2	New high - previous - 1
Barrow's Goldeneye	6	New high - previous - 1
Common Merganser	2	
Peafowl (female)	1	Exotic/Not countable
Ruffed Grouse	1	
Spruce Grouse	1	
Bald Eagle	Adult - 57	38 seen at Palmer Landfill
	Imm - 14	12 seen at Palmer Landfill
	Total	71 New high - previous - 55
Gyr Falcon	1	
Rock Pigeon	137	
Northern Hawk Owl	2	
Short-eared Owl	1	
Northern Saw-whet Owl	CW	First record for species
Downy Woodpecker	25	
Hairy Woodpecker	23	
Northern Shrike	3	
Gray Jay	5	
Black-billed Magpie	137	
Common Raven	979	New high - previous - 807
Black-capped Chickadee	639	
Boreal Chickadee	3	
Red-breasted Nuthatch	52	New high - previous - 47
American Dipper	7	
European Starling	106	72 seen at Palmer Landfill
Bohemian Waxwing	60	
Song Sparrow	1	
White-crowned Sparrow	3	
Dark-eyed Junco	5	
Pine Grosbeak	15	
Common Redpoll	68	
SPECIES SEEN COUNT DAY	28	
BIRDS SEEN ON COUNT DAY	2,805	
SPECIES SEEN COUNT WEEK	1	