

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

Chuck Aid. January 25, 2020 :

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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.

The Evergreen East team – headed by Marilyn Rhodes and Bob Santa-angelo

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.



Tundra Swans (c) Mick Thompson

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).



Gray-headed subspecies of Dark-eyed Junco (c) Bill Schmoker

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 VanErp, 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.

Chuck Aid, Bird Monitoring Director

Bird species observed during the 2019 Evergreen-Idaho Springs Christmas Bird Count, the average number seen from 1969 to 2018, and the high count and year recorded for each species. Bolded entries are high counts recorded in 2019.

Common Name	50-year mean Number for		50-year High Count	High Count Year
	1969-2018	2019		
Cackling Goose	<1		2	08
Canada Goose	8		70	90
Trumpeter Swan	<1	2	<b>2</b>	<b>19</b>
Wood Duck	<1		2	93/07
Gadwall	<1		1	10
American Wigeon	<1		2	96
Mallard	63	12	248	12
Northern Pintail	<1		1	96/98
Green-winged Teal	<1		1	81
Common Goldeneye	<1	1	<b>1</b>	<b>18/19</b>
Chukar	<1		1	80
Dusky Grouse	<1		12	94
Wild Turkey	41	119	<b>119</b>	<b>19</b>
Rock Pigeon	74	96	212	81
Eurasian Collared-Dove	6	4	83	15
Mourning Dove	<1		3	16
Wilson's Snipe	1		4	78/91/00
Great Blue Heron	<1		1	88/90
Black-crowned Night Heron	<1		1	09
Bald Eagle	1	2	5	10
Northern Harrier	<1		2	04
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1		3	several
Cooper's Hawk	<1		2	44/092
Northern Goshawk	1		3	72/87/11
Red-tailed Hawk	16	31	47	17
Rough-legged Hawk	1		2	98

Ferruginous Hawk	<1		11	85
Golden Eagle	3	2	8	89/15
Great Horned Owl	1	8	<b>8</b>	<b>19</b>
Northern Pygmy-Owl	1		4	95/18
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
Downy Woodpecker	30	40	51	08
Hairy Woodpecker	48	72	94	18
Am. Three-toed Woodpecker	<1	1	3	79/89
Northern (Red-shafted) Flicker	17	46	<b>46</b>	<b>19</b>
American Kestrel	1		4	87/12
Merlin	<1		2	10
Prairie Falcon	<1		1	82
Loggerhead Shrike	<1		1	several
Northern Shrike	4	6	13	86
Canada Jay	13	5	53	77
Pinyon Jay	4		200	72
Steller's Jay	272	379	446	00
Blue Jay	<1			95/00
Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay	4	8	18	11
Clark's Nutcracker	28	15	108	78
Black-billed Magpie	204	248	413	17
American Crow	715	1,056	1,786	15
Common Raven	119	183	200	72/18
Horned Lark	<1		15	86
Black-capped Chickadee	80	120	187	18
Mountain Chickadee	503	651	886	18
Hybrid Chickadee	<1		1	13
Juniper Titmouse	<1		1	82
Bushtit	1		17	15
Red-breasted Nuthatch	50	239	<b>239</b>	<b>19</b>
White-breasted Nuthatch	74	90	149	18
Pygmy Nuthatch	451	578	1,046	12
Brown Creeper	14	15	43	18
Canyon Wren	1		5	81
Winter Wren	<1		2	75
American Dipper	18	10	37	87
Golden-crowned Kinglet	4		33	18
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<1		2	83/91
Mountain Bluebird	<1		2	92
Townsend's Solitaire	69	175	202	82

American Robin	129	317	1,500	72
Gray Catbird	<1		1	18
Brown Thrasher	<1		1	Several
Northern Mockingbird	<1		1	78
European Starling	125	98	301	00
Bohemian Waxwing	37		580	80
Cedar Waxwing	7		163	87
House Sparrow	95	60	377	00
Evening Grosbeak	126	304	420	95
Pine Grosbeak	15	71	103	14
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch	117	33	429	84
Black Rosy-Finch	7	2	70	04
Brown-capped Rosy-Finch	15	37	140	04
Unknown Rosy-Finch	12			
House Finch	183	465	546	19
Cassin's Finch	157	162	519	14
Common Redpoll	3		30	70
Hoary Redpoll	<1		1	12
Red Crossbill	60	434	643	82
White-winged Crossbill	<1		16	70
Pine Siskin	212	431	723	08
American Goldfinch	15	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)	592	1,303	2,171	16
Dark-eyed (Gray-headed) Junco	176	708	<b>708</b>	<b>19</b>
Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco	88	62	276	79
Dark-eyed (Pink-sided) Junco	26	57	253	16
Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco	84	76	293	75
Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco	52	16	232	73
Dark-eyed (Cassiar) Junco	<1	4	7	16
White-crowned Sparrow	<1		1	Several
Golden-crowned Sparrow	<1		1	93
Harris's Sparrow	<1		2	80
White-throated Sparrow	<1		1	84/06/18
Song Sparrow	5	15	<b>15</b>	<b>11/19</b>
Spotted Towhee	<1	2	4	75
Red-winged Blackbird	55	513	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	49	58	18