

2020 Christmas Bird Count – Feeder-Counters and Wind!

Chuck Aid. January 3, 2021 :

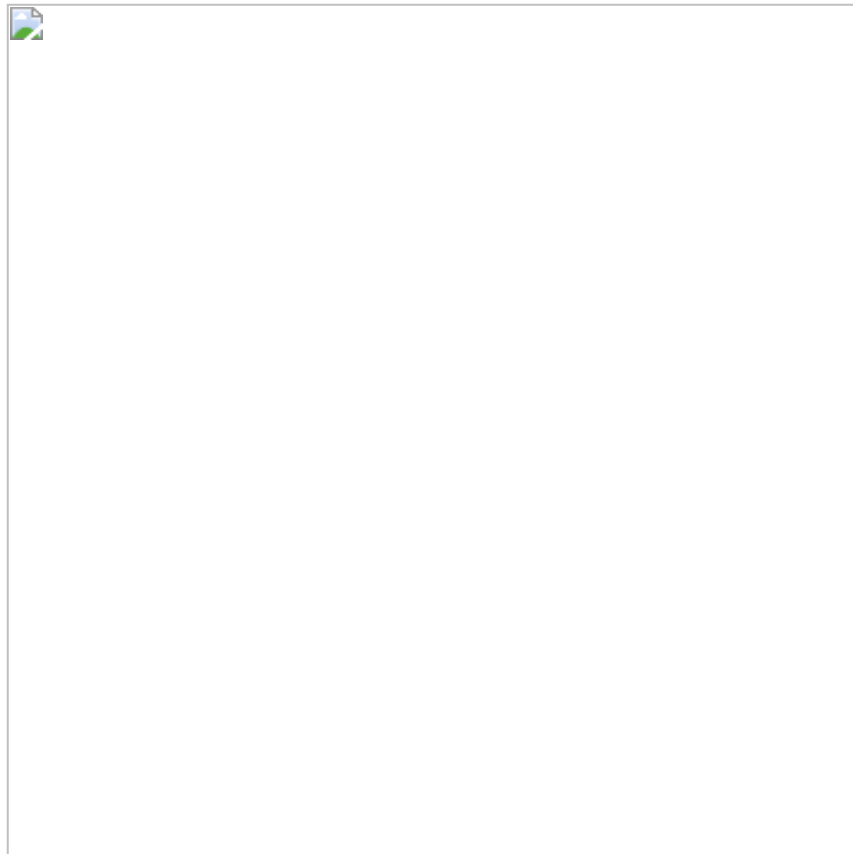


Brown Creeper (c) Bill Schmoker

With the dawn of this year's Evergreen-Idaho Springs Christmas Bird Count (CBC) the main event impacting those of us in the field was the wind gusts over 60 mph that, at least initially, hindered our ability to find any birds. However, by the end of the day our 74 field workers in 33 separate groups (which is about our average) had managed to amass a total of 6,868 birds – a thousand more than we've been getting in recent years. So, kudos to the field workers that managed to brave the winds and find some birds! Once again, our Squaw Pass team lead the charge with fourteen participants in seven groups, hiking 14.7 miles and logging 23 party-hours.



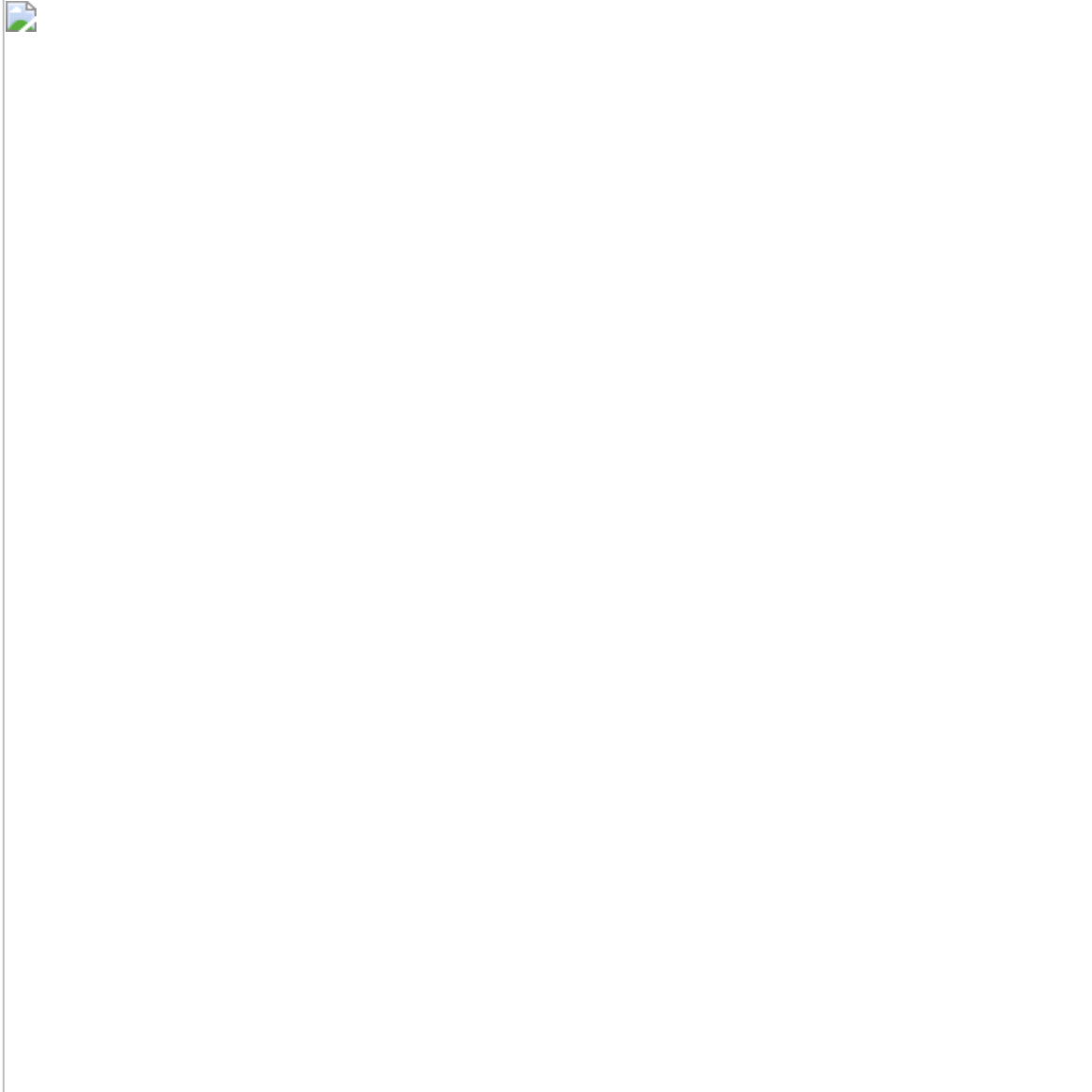
Evergreen East Team – Marilyn Rhodes, Bob Santangelo, Michelle Puplava (c) Michelle Puplava



Cassin's Finch (c) Michelle Puplava

We had a significantly different count this year, due primarily to our number of Feeder- Counters. Our average number of folks participating in the past has been around 23. This year, due in part to COVID, we

had 51, and these folks managed to record 2,329 birds, an increase of 250% over the number of birds our Feeder-Counters have historically observed, on average. So, if you do the math, and add the feeder birds to the 6,868 birds recorded in the field, you'll see that we had a total of 9,197 birds. This is an all time high for our CBC, being about 3,500 birds above our average. So, kudos to our Feeder-Counters for their huge contribution!



Wilson's Snipe (c) Michelle Pupilava

So, how do our results for 2020 fit in with what we've seen in recent years? For starters we missed a few species that would have been nice additions, including Canada Goose, any duck other than a Mallard, Dusky Grouse, Northern Goshawk, Bushtit, Canyon Wren, American Goldfinch, and American Tree Sparrow. We also had no eruptive species this year such as Bohemian Waxwing, Common Redpoll, or White-winged Crossbill; and we had just a handful of Red Crossbills. Furthermore, we added no new species to our cumulative list, getting 48 species this year, which is near average. Finally, Red-breasted Nuthatches numbers were substantially down, and Dark-eyed Junco numbers were really down with only

22% of what we tallied just a few years ago. We really missed out on those subspecies that breed to the north of us and generally spend their winters here.

Northern
Pygmy-
Owl
(c)
Dan
Stringer

Now, on to our multiple success stories, for this was an historic count for us! To begin with we recorded two of the three accipiter species and tied our high count for Cooper's Hawk (2). Though not record-setting, we had a good number of Red-tailed Hawks (41). We had an all-time high count of six Northern Pygmy-Owls. New high numbers were recorded for three woodpecker species. Our previous high for Downy Woodpecker was 51; this year we had 102. Our previous high for Hairy Woodpecker was 94; this year we had 160. And we moved our Northern Flicker high count from 46 to 48. All time high numbers were also recorded for American Crows (1,806) and Common Ravens (257). Finally, we set an all time high for White-breasted Nuthatch (257).

Mountain
Chickadee
(c)
Bill
Schmoker

Remember to keep this year's numbers in perspective. Yes, we ended up seeing more birds overall, but the increase in participants means we had an increase in party-hours, from roughly 220 party-hours historically to 339 this year. Taking that into account we get to see that our birds detected per party-hour actually decreased this year from around 32 to 27 birds per party-hour.



Pygmy Nuthatch (c) Bill Schmoker

You may recall that we are in a friendly competition with over 2500 other CBCs across the Western Hemisphere with regard to our numbers of Mountain Chickadees and Pygmy Nuthatches. We have been Mountain Chickadee world champs for over a decade, and we've been Pygmy Nuthatch world champs a few times in that same period. DRUM ROLL, PLEASE – We are currently very well placed to be champs for both species this time around. Our highest previous count for Mountain Chickadees was 886; this year we had 1,028! Generally, a count over 500 puts us in the running. As for Pygmy Nuthatch, our highest previous count was 1,046; this year we had an incredible 2,182! We won't get the final analysis of this year's CBCs from National Audubon until next December, but I'll eat my hat if we don't come out on top for both of these species.

Northern
Shrike
(c)
Mick
Thompson

In getting things organized for this year, special thanks go out to those folks who stepped up to be new area leaders for us. David and Mitchell Bailey did an incredible job as first-timers with Brook Forest West (e.g., 1 Bald Eagle, 2 Northern Pygmy-Owls, 1 Northern Shrike, 16 Brown Creepers, 20 Pine Grosbeaks, etc.) You get the idea! These guys are the best! Also, Rob Raker and Brad Andres helped to make sure that Genesee got covered. Keri Bowling, a former Evergreen resident, did an exemplary job taking on the leadership of Upper Bear Creek, and Larry White took on Vance Creek – succumbing to the possibility of both good skiing and great birds. Many thanks to you all! Finally, additional thanks go to all of our regular area leaders who shepherded their crews through the day: Bill and JoAnn Hackos, Else and Tom VanErp, Mark Meremonte, Marilyn Rhodes, David Wald, Ed Furlong, Chris Goulart and Mary Fran O'Connor, Heather Johnson, and Dwight Souder. And a special thanks to our Feeder Coordinator, Barbara Jean Gard.

The one sad part of the day was that we didn't get to come together in person for the evening potluck and Tally Rally. However, thanks to Ed Furlong and Brad Andres we did manage to hold a very successful and well-attended virtual Tally Rally. Brad, as usual, did a stellar job of providing perspective on the day's results.

Chuck Aid, Bird Monitoring Director

Pine Grosbeaks (c) Betsy Butler

Results Table. Bird species observed during the 2020 Evergreen-Idaho Springs Christmas Bird Count, the average number seen from 1969 to 2019, and the high count and year recorded for each species. Bolded entries are high counts recorded in 2020.

Common Name	1969-2019 Mean	2020 Count	High Count Number	High Count Year
Cackling Goose	<1		2	08
Canada Goose	8		70	90
Trumpeter Swan	<1		2	19
Wood Duck	<1		1	93/07
Gadwall	<1		1	10
American Wigeon	<1		2	96
Mallard	62	15	248	12
Northern Pintail	<1		1	96/98
Green-winged Teal	<1		1	81
Common Goldeneye	<1		1	18/19
Wild Turkey	43	41	119	19
Dusky Grouse	<1		12	94
Chukar	<1		1	80
Rock Pigeon	75	51	212	81
Eurasian Collared-Dove	6		81	15
Mourning Dove	<1		3	16
Wilson's Snipe	1	1	4	78/91/00
Great Blue Heron	<1		1	88/90
Black-crowned Night Heron	<1		1	09
Golden Eagle	3	2	8	89/15
Northern Harrier	<1		2	04
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	4	9	05
Cooper's Hawk	<1	2	2	09/18/ 20
Northern Goshawk	1		3	72/87/11
Bald Eagle	1	2	6	08
Red-tailed Hawk	16	41	47	17
Rough-legged Hawk	1		11	98
Ferruginous Hawk	<1		2	85
Great Horned Owl	1	2	8	19

Common Name	1969- 2019 Mean	2020 Count	High Count Number	High Count Year
Northern Pygmy-Owl	1	6	6	20
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
Am. Three-toed Woodpecker	<1		3	79/89
Downy Woodpecker	31	102	102	20
Hairy Woodpecker	48	160	160	20
Northern (Red-shafted) Flicker	18	48	48	20
American Kestrel	1	2	4	87/12
Merlin	<1		2	10
Prairie Falcon	<1		1	82
Loggerhead Shrike	<1		1	several
Northern Shrike	4	3	13	86
Canada Jay	13	7	53	77
Pinyon Jay	4		200	72
Steller's Jay	274	385	446	00
Blue Jay	<1		1	95/00
Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay	4	5	18	11
Clark's Nutcracker	28	21	108	78
Black-billed Magpie	205	341	413	17
American Crow	722	1,806	1,806	20
Common Raven	120	257	257	20
Horned Lark	<1		4	86
Black-capped Chickadee	81	127	187	18
Mountain Chickadee	506	1,028	1,028	20
Hybrid Chickadee	<1		2	13
Juniper Titmouse	<1		1	82
Bushtit	1		17	15
Red-breasted Nuthatch	54	80	239	19
White-breasted Nuthatch	74	257	257	20
Pygmy Nuthatch	453	2,182	2,182	20
Brown Creeper	14	35	43	18
Canyon Wren	1		5	81
Winter Wren	<1		2	75
American Dipper	18	8	37	87
Golden-crowned Kinglet	4	2	33	18
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<1		2	83/91
Mountain Bluebird	<1		2	92
Townsend's Solitaire	71	80	202	82

Common Name	1969- 2019 Mean	2020 Count	High Count Number	High Count Year
American Robin	133	7	1,500	72
Gray Catbird	<1		1	18
Brown Thrasher	<1		1	Several
Northern Mockingbird	<1		1	78
European Starling	125	50	301	00
Bohemian Waxwing	36		580	80
Cedar Waxwing	7		163	87
House Sparrow	94	107	377	00
Evening Grosbeak	129	55	420	95
Pine Grosbeak	16	61	103	14
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch	116	6	429	84
Black Rosy-Finch	6	1	70	04
Brown-capped Rosy-Finch	15	42	140	04
Unknown Rosy-Finch	12			
House Finch	189	291	546	05
Cassin's Finch	157	326	519	14
Common Redpoll	3		30	70
Hoary Redpoll	<1		1	12
Red Crossbill	67	24	643	82
White-winged Crossbill	<1		16	70
Pine Siskin	216	606	723	08
American Goldfinch	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)	606	462	2,171	16
Dark-eyed (Gray-headed) Junco	186	196	708	19
Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco	87	33	276	79
Dark-eyed (Pink-sided) Junco	27	40	253	16
Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco	83	27	293	75
Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco	51	10	232	73
Dark-eyed (Cassiar) Junco	<1	1	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	7	15	11/19
Spotted Towhee	<1		4	75

Common Name	1969- 2019 Mean	2020 Count	High Count Number	High Count Year
Red-winged Blackbird	64	116	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
Number of Species	47	48	58	18