

CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUSES - 1946

Benito, Man. Dec. 29; cloudy; wind west, light. Area covered: (six miles across country through open fields and wooded bluffs.) Great Horned Owl 1; Magpie 2; Black-capped Chickadee 1; Pine Grosbeak 14; Snow Bunting 61. 5 species, 79 individuals. A. Isfeld.

Burnham, Sask. Jan. 3; (snow-bound). Only birds noted about the yard included Hungarian Partridge, 12; Meadow Lark 1; Redpoll 3. 3 species, 16 individuals. A. Ward.

Dollard, Sask. (Birds seen about the Holmes' yard, or in the near vicinity during Xmas week) Dec. 22-28. Golden Eagle 1; Prairie Falcon 1; Sharp-tailed Grouse 1; Hungarian Partridge 5; Great Horned Owl 1; Snowy Owl; Magpie 4; Black-capped Chickadee 1; English Sparrow 12; Pine Grosbeak 1; Gray-crowned Rosy Finch 2; Hepburn's Rosy Finch 1; Redpoll 15. Total 13 species, 46 individuals. Mr. Holmes also reports a Song Sparrow wintering about the home of his son, in the Whitemud district some 13 miles from Dollard. Chas. F. Holmes.

Hawarden, Sask. (Open Prairie country, no trees except for groves around farms.) Dec. 25, stormy day with strong S.E. wind, 18 inches of snow with drifts up to 6 feet high; Temp., zero degrees. Birds noted while doing chores around farm yard between 9 a.m and 3 p.m. Hungarian Partridge 4; English Sparrow 150 (est); Evening Grosbeak 1; Redpoll 30 (est); Snow Bunting 3. Total 5 species, approximately 188 individuals. One Snowy Owl noted Dec. 29 and Dec. 30. One starling and a Magpie noted Dec. 18. Harold Kvinge.

High Hill, Sask. (About 10 miles north east of Kelvington) Dec. 27; very stormy, temp. 16 degrees. Total hours afield 4; mileage 7 (through heavy bush). Sharp-tailed Grouse 3, Great Horned Owl 1; Black-capped Chickadee 4; Canada Jay 6; Blue Jay 3; Hoary Redpoll 3. Total 6 species, 20 individuals. Pileated Woodpecker seen Dec. 26. Magpies and Ravens commonly seen. Anton Waycheshen.

Ituna, Sask. Birds noted about the home yard, in the village of Ituna) Jan. 1 to Jan 3. Hairy Woodpecker 1; Downy Woodpecker 2; Blue Jay 1; Black-capped Chickadee 8, Hudsonian Chickadee 1 (rarely recorded in the south, even in Winter - Editor) American Robin 1 (seen regularly for over a month); Bohemian Waxwing 113 (est); Evening Grosbeak 6. Total species 8, approximately 133 individuals. A number of small birds feeding on weed seeds - probably Redpolls. Isobel Arndt.

Ituna, Sask. (Within limits of one-acre garden on the outskirts of the village) Dec. 25; Downy Woodpecker 1; Black-capped Chickadee 2; Bohemian Waxwing 100 (est); English Sparrow numerous; Evening Grosbeak 2; Pine Grosbeak 7; Common Redpoll 11. Total 7 species, over 123 individuals. H.M. Rayner.

Naicam, Sask. January 1, 9 a.m to 11 a.m. Clear, N.W. wind at 10 mph, temp. -20 degrees; a walk of 5 miles. Magpie 1; Black-capped Chickadee 1; English Sparrow 2; Evening Grosbeak 2; Pine Grosbeak 8. Total 5 species, 14 individuals. W. Yanchinski.

Nipawin, Sask. (North and south along the east bank of the Saskatchewan River). Dec. 29: 1 p.m to 3.45 p.m. Overcast at start, clearing at 2 p.m; west wind at 10 mph; 8 inches of snow, drifted to 30 in places; Temp. -5 degrees at start, -8 degrees at finish. Two observers afoot. Total hours afield $2\frac{3}{4}$, total mileage 5. Sharp-tailed Grouse 6; Hairy Woodpecker 3; Downy Woodpecker 1; Canada Jay 3; English Sparrow 50 (est); Evening Grosbeak 1; Pine Grosbeak 1; Hoary Redpoll 5; Common Redpoll 98; White-winged Crossbill 7. Total, 15 species, approximately 236 individuals. - Maurice G. Street, David H. Wright.

CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUSES (CONTINUED)

Sandwith, Sask. Dec. 29; weather clear and cold (-10 to -20 degrees). Time 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. walk of 3 miles. Ruffed Grouse 1; Hairy Woodpecker 1; Downy Woodpecker 1; Blue Jay 1; Magpie 7; English Sparrow 25; Black-capped Chickadee 9; Redpoll 25; Snow Bunting 500 (est). Total 9 species, approximately 570 individuals. G. Yaki, Jr.

Saskatoon, Sask. (Birds noted in the city area, between Dec. 23 and Dec. 31) Bohemian Waxwings 32; Pine Grosbeak 2. Total 2 species, 34 individuals. (Unable to make a regular count, but birds noted as scarce). Roy Crawford.

Scott, Sask. Jan. 1, walk of 2 miles through deep snow, 1½ hours bright sunshine; temp. -20 degrees, NW wind at 10 mph. Hungarian Partridge 39 (4 coveys); Magpie 4; English Sparrow 250 (est); Total 3 species, 293 individuals (est). Other species noted during December included: Hawk (unidentified); Black-birds (sp?); Bohemian Waxwings 18; Redpoll 5; a single Canada Jay, the first recorded at Scott, seen several times and still present Dec. 31.

Sheho, Sask. (While going about chores on farm, 6 miles north of Sheho). Dec. 25; overcast, little or no wind; temp. -5 degrees in morning, zero degrees in afternoon. Ruffed Grouse 4; sharp-tailed Grouse 8; Great Horned Owl 2; Hairy Woodpecker 1; Downy Woodpecker 1; Magpie 5; Black-Capped Chickadee 4; English Sparrow, numerous; Evening Grosbeak 4; Pine Grosbeak 14; Common Redpoll 4; Snow Bunting 30 (est). Total 12 species, over 77 individuals. Other species recently include Hungarian Partridge, Canada Jay and Bohemian Waxwing. A Goshawk was noted early in December. The Horned Owls seem especially plentiful this year - some nights I see 4 or 5 perched on the tall trees. Wm. Niven.

Tisdale, Sask. (Feeding station of E.W. Van Blaricom) Dec. 25; very little wind; temp. -10 degrees. Hairy Woodpecker 1; Downy Woodpecker 1; Canada Jay 2; Blue Jay 3; Magpie 3 (in the distance); Black-Capped Chickadee 2; English Sparrow numerous; Common Redpoll 34. Total, 8 species, over 46 individuals. E.W. Van Blaricom, K.C.

Torch River, Sask. (Birds Noted about the Francis' farm, and on almost daily trips to a logging-bush, 2½ miles distant). In each case the maximum number of each species seen in any one day between Dec. 20 and Dec. 31 is recorded. Average temp. -10; lowest temp. -36. Goshawk 1; Sharp-tailed Grouse 18; Ruffed Grouse 2, Great Horned Owl 2; Pileated Woodpecker 2; Hairy Woodpecker 2; American Three-toed Woodpecker 1; Canada Jay 2; Blue Jay 3; Magpie 5; Raven 5; Black-capped Chickadee 2; Hudsonian Chickadee 2; English Sparrow 10; Pine Grosbeak 11; Redpoll 125 (est); Snow Buntings 25 (est). Total species 17; individuals 218 (est) C. Stuart Francis.

Tullis, Sask. (Birds seen at the hamlet of Tullis and around the Roy farm between Dec. 20 and Dec. 26. In each case the maximum number of each species seen in any one day is recorded.) Hungarian Partridge 15; Snowy Owl 2; English Sparrow 100 (est). Total 3 species, 117 individuals. The entire Xmas week was cold and windy, snow is much deeper than in the past 3 or 4 years, most roads are impassable and a census of the usual type was impossible. J. Francis Roy.

Yorkton, Sask. (Area 15 miles in diameter with Yorkton as center. Dec. 26; 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Dull, stormy day; biting S.E. wind at 20 mph or more; twelve inches of snow; temp. -10 degrees at start, -8 degrees at noon, -12 degrees at finish. Very poor visibility due to near-blizzard conditions. 9 observers in 7 groups. Total party hours afield 9 (5 by car and 4 on foot); total party miles 38 (34 by car and 4 on foot). Goshawk 1; Hairy Woodpecker 3; Downy Woodpecker 2; Canada Jay 1; Blue Jay 1; Magpie 1; Black-capped Chickadee 7; White-breasted Nuthatch 2; Bohemian Waxwing 9; English Sparrow 112 (est); Pine Grosbeak 5; Snow Bunting 66 (est). Total 12 species, approximately 210 individuals. Two starlings noted on Dec. 24 and Dec. 30. A flock of 17 Sharp-tailed Grouse noted within the city limits on December 30. - Jim Allen, Vernon S. Barnes, J. Neil Black, Jack Brownlee, W.A. Brownlee, J.R. Foreman, C. Stuart Houston, F. Langstaff, Jim Smith, (Members, Yorkton Natural History Society).

SUMMARY - 1946 CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUSES

The 1946 Christmas census, consisting of 17 counts, produced a sum total of 34 different species and approximately 2340 individuals. This is much less than the 38 species and 5240 individuals recorded in the 23 counts made in the 1945 census. However, probably the greater amount of snow, and generally less favorable conditions, which considerably lessened the time spent afield by most observers, was the chief cause of this decrease in the numbers of individuals recorded. We think most observers will agree with the comments of Mr. J. Francis Roy of Tullis who writes: "I suppose you or any other observer who attempted to take a Christmas census this year, will have met with the same trying conditions that confronted me here, snow half-way to one's neck, and a wind that never seemed to calm down to less than 20 miles per hour".

Winter bird visitors from the north, especially Pine Grosbeaks, were more often recorded this year, and generally better distributed, than in any of the previous 4 Christmas censuses.

Game birds were still noted as scarce, appearing in only slightly over half of the counts. Likewise, birds of prey were also noted as quite scarce by most observers. Magpies, Black-capped Chickadees and Common Redpolls were the species most commonly recorded.

Three more species, or subspecies; Hoary Redpoll, White-winged Crossbill and Hepburn's Rosy Finch, not recorded in any previous count, brings the total number of species, or subspecies, reported in Saskatchewan during the period in which the now five consecutive counts have been made, to 54.

Note: The 1944 Christmas census summary (Vol.3 No. 2, line 2, Page 18) should read 37 species, instead of 35. Mallard and Pheasant inadvertently overlooked.

The fact, that waxwings are very sociable birds and much friendliness is often evident among members of a flock, is well known. Instances of observers having seen a number of waxwings perched in a row on a branch of a Cherry tree, or other fruit bearer, and the nearest bird to the fruit picking a berry, passing it to the next in line, and so on, until finally the last bird receives and devours the fruit, or passes it back, is sometimes reported. So it is of special interest to receive the following observation by H.M. Rayner, Ituna. Mr. Rayner writes: "While watching Bohemian Waxwings on two occasions, Dec. 19 and Dec. 21, we saw one waxwing feeding another. The bird being fed perched in a chokecherry tree, the other carried dried cherries and fed it. There was no discernable difference in size or appearance of the birds. However, we thought that the bird doing the feeding was the parent of the one being fed. If so, families must remain together in migration. Since these birds were part of a flock of around 100 individuals, it is remarkable how they recognize each other".

Pinnated Grouse: Flocks of 12 to 24, noted feeding on spilled grain, on the highway near Grenfell, by Mrs. John Hubbard. (This is indeed welcome news, to receive a report of the true "Prairie Chicken" in such substantial numbers).

Dougle-Crested Cormorant: Reported by David H. Wright in an excellent list of some 95 species, observed at Greenwater Lake Provincial Park, while on holidays, spent there during the months of July in the past several years.

White-fronted Goose: Harold Kvinge, Hawarden, reports that 12 geese of this species, visited the Kvinge pond last fall (1946) and stayed two weeks, becoming quite tame before passing southward.