

A SUMMARY OF SASKATCHEWAN CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS: 1942-1986

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Recent comprehensive reviews of Christmas Bird Counts in Saskatchewan were published in 1971² and 1979³; these papers summarized information from 946 counts published during the 1942 to 1976 period. Since then 637 additional counts have been taken. Given the difficulty of keeping track of this volume of information, we felt it was time to compile and present an abbreviated summary of all 45 years of counts (1942 to 1986).

Information on frequency, abundance and high counts for the 146 recognized species that were recorded during this period are presented in Table 1.

In compiling this information the same procedures set out in the previous reviews were followed. Where duplicate counts existed with the same name in the same year, we used only one of the two or three counts (that with the highest "count day" species total); observations reported on the other count(s) were treated as "count period" records. Because of this procedure, the actual number of counts used was 1534. The column "Total No. Counts" gives the number of counts on which the species was reported on count day or as an additional species reported only during count period; hence it represents presence or absence. The column "Total No. Count Day individuals" is the sum of all individuals reported on count day only. (Because birds seen during the count period were not included here, the number of counts sometimes exceeds the number of individuals.)

Where only one or two high counts exist for a species, this information is presented for locality and year. Where there are numerous localities with the same high count, the most northerly or southerly record is listed, depending on the normal range of the species. Dates represent the year in which Christmas was recorded. Hence a record for January 1, 1980 would be listed as "79."

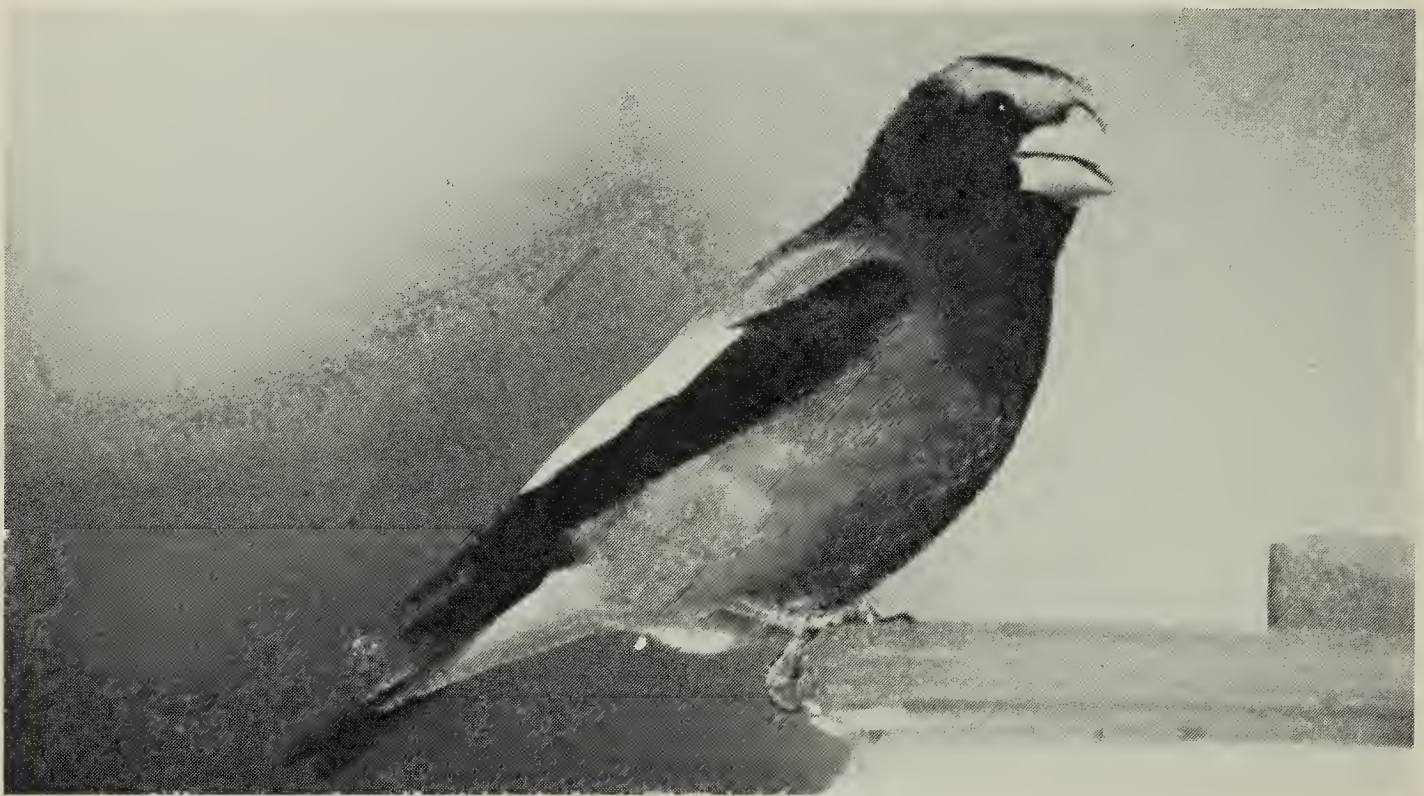
For the purposes of this summary we grouped together Common and unidentified redpolls. Most observers assume that unidentified redpolls are Common Redpolls and report them as such.

While this list of species is impressive, most are extremely rare on Christmas Bird Counts in Saskatchewan. In fact four species made up 78% of the one and one quarter million individuals seen during these 45 years: in decreasing order of abundance these were House Sparrow (31%), Snow Bunting (28%), Bohemian Waxwing (10%) and Common Redpoll (9%). Fifty-eight species have been recorded fewer than 10 times and 27 of these have been represented by a single individual.

When comparing abundance and frequency among various species keep in mind the differences in detectability between many species. For example Northern Flicker and Brown Creeper are recorded with similar frequency; however, one might assume that because flickers are more raucous and visible, counters will actually record a greater proportion of those present in the count area.

The Christmas Bird Count in Saskatchewan has the potential to evaluate bird populations historically and geographically. While much of any Christmas Bird Count analysis must remain qualitative, because of the methods by which the information has been gathered, we encourage those seeking more detailed information on winter bird distribution in the province to explore new uses for this large volume of raw information.

- ¹ RENAUD, W.E. and G.J. WAPPLE. 1977. A review of Saskatchewan Christmas bird counts: 1942-76 (Part 1). *Blue Jay* 35(4):224-239.
- ² RENAUD, W.E. and G.J. WAPPLE. 1978. Errata and addenda - Saskatchewan Christmas bird counts: A 35-year review (Part 1). *Blue Jay* 36(2):121.
- ³ RENAUD, W.E. and G.J. WAPPLE. 1979. A preliminary study of vegetation zone and winter bird distribution in Saskatchewan. *Blue Jay* 37(3):202-208.



Evening Grosbeak

Lorne Scott

Table 1. SUMMARY OF FREQUENCY, ABUNDANCE AND HIGH COUNTS ON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS IN SASKATCHEWAN, 1942 TO 1986. Species recorded during count period but not on count days are in brackets followed by the notation "CP."

<i>Species</i>	<i>Total No. Counts</i>	<i>Total No. Count Day Individuals</i>	<i>Highest Count (Location & Year)</i>
Common Loon	3	3	1 (Gardiner Dam 82-84)
Pied-billed Grebe	8	9	2 (Regina 55, 73)
Horned Grebe	5	5	1 (Regina 77)
Red-necked Grebe	1	1	1 (Regina 68)
Eared Grebe	5	6	2 (Regina 62)
Western Grebe	3	3	1 (Gardiner Dam 79; Regina 56, 69)
American White Pelican	4	5	2 (Regina 59)

Table 1. (continued)

<i>Species</i>	<i>Total No. Counts</i>	<i>Total No. Count Day Individuals</i>	<i>Highest Count (Location & Year)</i>
Double-crested Cormorant	1	1	1 (Squaw Rapids 81)
American Bittern	1	1	1 (Yorkton 53)
Great Blue Heron	1	1	1 (Ft. Walsh 85)
Tundra Swan	21	80	8 (Regina 65)
Trumpeter Swan	2	2	1 (Regina 65; Squaw Rapids 85)
Mute Swan	18	107	12 (Regina 58)
Greater White-fronted Goose	1	1	1 (Saskatoon 74)
Snow Goose	3	3	1 (Regina 74, 84; Saskatoon 79)
Ross' Goose	2	2	1 (Regina 62, 74)
Canada Goose	50	16 486	1 639 (Regina 75)
Green-winged Teal	4	3	2 (Saskatoon 74)
American Black Duck	1	1	1 (Regina 73)
Mallard	208	20 974	1 225 (Gardiner Dam 82)
Northern Pintail	27	43	4 (Saskatoon 79)
Blue-winged Teal	6	4	2 (Regina 62)
Northern Shoveler	5	6	2 (Regina 75)
Gadwall	17	18	2 (Regina 61, 65)
American Wigeon	13	18	7 (Regina 63)
Canvasback	20	26	4 (Regina 70)
Redhead	17	35	8 (Regina 69)
Greater Scaup	1	1	1 (Regina 74)
Lesser Scaup	48	249	15 (Regina 71)
Oldsquaw	1	0	1 (CP Ft. Qu'Appelle 68)]
White-winged Scoter	2	3	2 (Cold River 74); 1 (Gardiner Dam 81)
Common Goldeneye	128	3 620	250 (Squaw Rapids 85)
Bufflehead	5	4	2 (Regina 73)
Hooded Merganser	5	9	3 (Estevan 60)
Red-breasted Merganser	8	11	2 (Regina 56; Saskatoon 73; Gardiner Dam 86; Squaw Rapids 81)
Common Merganser	51	385	154 (Gardiner Dam 86)
Ruddy Duck	15	42	7 (Regina 62)
Turkey Vulture	1	1	1 (Ft. Walsh 84)
Bald Eagle	100	266	52 (Squaw Rapids 81)
Northern Harrier	10	7	1 (N to Harris, Hawarden)
Sharp-shinned Hawk	11	9	1 (N to Birch Hills)
Cooper's Hawk	6	2	1 (N to Battleford)
Northern Goshawk	225	248	16 (Squaw Rapids 80)
Swainson's Hawk	1	1	1 (Webb-Swift Current 78)
Red-tailed Hawk	7	6	2 (Squaw Rapids 80)
Rough-legged Hawk	67	56	10 (Govenlock 86)
Golden Eagle	243	250	12 (Govenlock 86; Ft. Walsh 86)
American Kestrel	5	2	2 (N to Lumsden)
Merlin	184	239	9 (Saskatoon 85 + 86)
Peregrine Falcon	11	5	1 (N to Squaw Rapids-Carrot River)
Gyr Falcon	27	22	3 (Squaw Rapids 82)
Prairie Falcon	86	58	4 (Govenlock 86)
Gray Partridge	841	19 937	53 (Saskatoon 70)

Table 1. (continued)

<i>Species</i>	<i>Total No. Counts</i>	<i>Total No. Count Day Individuals</i>	<i>Highest Count (Location & Year)</i>
Chukar	4	44	30 (Lumsden 58)
Ring-necked Pheasant	292	1 885	55 (Woodrow 59)
Spruce Grouse	32	78	29 (Nipawin 48)
Willow Ptarmigan	17	81	32 (Stony Rapids 71)
Ruffed Grouse	542	1 205	17 (Battleford 60)
Sage Grouse	25	248	106 (Govenlock 79)
Sharp-tailed Grouse	982	17 512	386 (Harris 72)
Wild Turkey	6	24	14 (Ft. Walsh 86)
American Coot	24	71	11 (Regina 63)
Killdeer	1	1	1 (Govenlock 82)
Common Snipe	7	9	3 (Ft. Walsh 81)
Ring-billed Gull	2	1	1 (Saskatoon 58; CP Regina 69)
[Herring Gull	1	0	1 (Cp Regina 56)]
Iceland Gull	1	1	1 (Squaw Rapids 79)
Glaucous Gull	7	9	3 (Gardiner Dam 79)
Rock Dove	678	64 552	3 173 (Saskatoon 86)
Mourning Dove	13	10	3 (Round Lake 75)
Eastern Screech-owl	1	1	1 (Yorkton 85) [Also 1 Screech-owl sp. Ft. Walsh 84]
Great Horned Owl	729	1 223	17 (Raymore 81)
Snowy Owl	594	979	25 (Regina 79)
Northern Hawk-owl	29	23	2 (Masefield 60; Battleford - North Battleford 77; Squaw Rapids - Sipanok Channel 79; CP Round Lake 85)
Barred Owl	11	5	1 (S to Regina)
Great Gray Owl	21	19	2 (Nipawin 73; Squaw Rapids 82; Prince Albert National Pk. 77)
Long-eared Owl	13	9	2 (Shaunavon 60)
Short-eared Owl	129	240	23 (Regina 69)
Boreal Owl	15	13	1 (S to Indian Head)
Northern Saw-whet Owl	24	11	1 (N to Maidstone Bridge)
Belted Kingfisher	1	1	1 (Ft. Walsh 83)
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	1	1 (Saskatoon 78)
Downy Woodpecker	890	2 203	25 (Saskatoon 86)
Hairy Woodpecker	815	1 952	25 (Saskatoon 86)
Three-toed Woodpecker	75	117	8 (Somme 77)
Black-backed Woodpecker	50	55	6 (Squaw Rapids 85)
Northern Flicker	70	108	9 (Regina 81)
Pileated Woodpecker	113	87	3 (Squaw Rapids 79 & 86; Somme 83)
Horned Lark	422	15 215	3 043 (Govenlock 85)
Gray Jay	287	929	67 (Besnard Lake 74)
Blue Jay	550	2 197	66 (Togo 77)
Black-billed Magpie	1 427	36 106	452 (Saskatoon 86)
American Crow	40	79	33 (Prince Albert 57)
Common Raven	414	6 097	195 (Besnard Lake 74)
Black-capped Chickadee	1 209	17 720	270 (Saskatoon 86)
Mountain Chickadee	1	1	1 (Piapot 66)
Boreal Chickadee	180	835	45 (Waskesiu 82)
Red-breasted Nuthatch	144	792	88 (Ft. Walsh 82)

Table 1. (continued)

<i>Species</i>	<i>Total No. Counts</i>	<i>Total No. Count Day Individuals</i>	<i>Highest Count (Location & Year)</i>
White-breasted Nuthatch	212	419	15 (Round Lake 84)
Brown Creeper	65	92	7 (Prince Albert 78)
Golden-crowned Kinglet	74	419	45 (Big Gully Creek 74)
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	1	1 (Biggar 72)
Mountain Bluebird	5	4	2 (Saskatoon 86)
Townsend's Solitaire	15	16	3 (Regina 85)
American Robin	148	625	197 (Saskatoon 78)
Varied Thrush	4	2	1 (N to Saskatoon)
Northern Mockingbird	1	1	1 (Regina 67)
Brown Thrasher	2	2	1 (Saskatoon 60; CP Regina 68)
Bohemian Waxwing	756	124 095	12 442 (Saskatoon 75)
Cedar Waxwing	81	1 119	90 (Saskatoon 75)
Northern Shrike	282	253	6 (Saskatoon 63; Pike Lake 69)
Loggerhead Shrike	2	2	1 (Ft. Walsh 81; Regina 82)
European Starling	359	6 815	1 000 (Saskatoon 83)
Yellow-rumped Warbler	2	2	1 [Saskatoon 54 (Myrtle):
			Ft. Walsh 78 (Aud)]
Northern Cardinal	3	3	1 (Craven 60; Saskatoon 80 & 81)
Rufous-sided Towhee	1	1	1 (Moose Jaw 63)
American Tree Sparrow	72	295	43 (Ft. Walsh 79)
Chipping Sparrow	1	1	1 (Indian Head 81)
Field Sparrow]	1	0	1 (CP Saskatoon 85)
Vesper Sparrow	1	1	1 (Saltcoats 52)
Fox Sparrow	2	1	1 (CP Val Marie 67; Moose Jaw 85)
Song Sparrow	14	10	1 (N to Pike Lake)
White-throated Sparrow	14	16	3 (Saskatoon 81)
White-crowned Sparrow	3	2	1 (Saskatoon 74; Fort Walsh 80; CP Broadview 86)
Harris' Sparrow	17	15	3 (Govenlock 86)
Dark-eyed Junco	139	290	50 (Yorkton 53)
McCown's Longspur	1	1	1 (Govenlock 82)
Lapland Longspur	30	574	200 (Caron 71)
Snow Bunting	1 137	350 422	33 935 (Raymore 82)
Red-winged Blackbird	50	130	30 (Estevan 62)
Western Meadowlark	20	13	3 (Skull Creek 71)
Rusty Blackbird	109	428	83 (Ft. Walsh 86)
Brewer's Blackbird	36	67	23 (Wolseley 63)
Common Grackle	20	18	3 (Regina 67)
Brown-headed Cowbird]	1	0	11 (CP Masefield 59)
Rosy Finch	27	1 139	488 (Ft. Walsh 83)
Pine Grosbeak	718	11 996	422 (Saskatoon 69)
Purple Finch	23	48	14 (Saskatoon 69)
Red Crossbill	64	1 038	235 (Nipawin 48)
White-winged Crossbill	110	2 032	230 (Emma Lake 75)
Common Redpoll	849	109 986	3 651 (Nipawin 52)
Hoary Redpoll	197	1 335	62 (Cumberland House 69)
Pine Siskin	31	368	70 (Saskatoon 81)
American Goldfinch	2	2	1 (Saskatoon 79; Regina 81)
Evening Grosbeak	519	12 363	515 (Kamsack 85)
House Sparrow	1 314	388 128	6 204 (Saskatoon 79)