
Belted Kingfishers had their best count in five seasons. After an exceptional count last year, Red-headed Woodpecker numbers fell well below their 10-year average. Pileated Woodpeckers set a new high. Northern Shrikes were at near record numbers. Probably due to a lack of snow cover, Horned Larks were hard to find. Red-breasted Nuthatches were uncommon also. Brown Creepers and Winter Wrens were in very good numbers. Ruby-crowned Kinglets were on four counts. It was an average year for thrushes. Mockingbirds were at Green Island and Burlington. Brown Thrashers were at Dallas County and Burlington. No catbirds were found.

Spotted Towhees were at Sioux City, DeSoto N.W.R., and Shenandoah. Eastern Towhees were at Decorah and Davenport. American Tree Sparrows were abundant. Savannah Sparrows were at record numbers. Lapland Longspurs were below average, while Snow Buntings were their lowest in a decade. Red-winged Blackbirds rebounded from a 20-year low to their best in five. No Brewer’s Blackbirds were reported. Pine Siskin and American Goldfinch numbers were up slightly. A lone Common Redpoll was at Davenport. Eurasian Tree Sparrows were again at record numbers and continue their expansion. New to the Cedar Rapids count, 29 were found there this season.

MISSOURI

Randy L. Korotev
800 Oakbrook Lane
Saint Louis, MO 63132-4807
rlkorotev@artsci.wustl.edu

Missouri recorded 24 CBCs this season, down three from recent years. The average temperature was 40 degrees Fahrenheit (range: 22 to 60) and there was no snow anywhere. In total, 152 species were observed.
The 112th CBC in Arkansas was a nice year for counting—only 4 percent of the counts had winds exceeding 15 miles per hour, 13 percent had light rain, and 13 percent had partly frozen water. Temperatures ranged from the 20s to 70s. Two major local influences were extreme drought on 9 percent of the counts and extreme flooding on 9 percent of the counts. The generally pleasant conditions resulted in the number of species, miles, and hours remaining near normal, with parties and observers setting 59-year highs. Number of individuals (878,024) was 94 percent below average because of reduced blackbird numbers.

All told, 23 counts were submitted; 11 counts had more than 90 species, including Holla Bend N.W.R. with the species high of 119. Mississippi River State Park was run for the first year, sampling the unique habitat of Crowley's Ridge. Two counts, Bayou DeView and Mountain Home, set new species highs of 113 and 73, respectively. Bayou DeView had the most new or unusual species (11) and Holla Bend N.W.R. and Wapanocca tied with the most new high counts (9). The numbers for the following bird highlights are normalized by party hours. In broad groups, geese were 685 percent above average (because of Snow Geese) and semi-hardy waterbirds 189 percent. Blackbirds were -98 percent below average (third year in a row) and frugivores were -97 percent below average.

Of note this season for individual species, no regularly occurring species were “missed.” Setting new 59-year highs were Greater White-fronted Goose, Snow Goose, Gadwall, Northern Shoveler, Pied-billed Grebe, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Eurasian Collared-Dove, and Eastern Phoebe. Other highs included Gadwall (708 percent), Northern Shoveler (863 percent), Northern Pintail (611 percent), Ring-necked Duck (502 percent), Pied-billed Grebe (345 percent), Killdeer (296 percent), Spotted Sandpiper (426 percent), Eurasian Collared-Dove (115 percent), and Eastern Phoebe (230 percent).

Meanwhile, 59-year lows were set by Northern Bobwhite. Other lows included Mallard (-58 percent), Wild Turkey (-66 percent), Northern Bobwhite (-95 percent), Loggerhead Shrike (-76 percent), Bewick’s Wren (-74 percent), American Robin (-92 percent), European Starling (-97 percent), Harris’s Sparrow (-87 percent), Red-winged Blackbird (-99 percent), Rusty Blackbird (-98 percent), Common Grackle (-99 percent), Brown-headed Cowbird (-97 percent), Purple Finch (-87 percent), Pine Siskin (-91 percent), and House Sparrow (-77 percent).

Species found only on one count included Long-tailed Duck (Arkadelphia); American Black Duck, Solitary, Semipalmated, Western and Stilt sandpipers, and Dunlin (Bayou DeView); Cackling Goose and White-winged Scoter (Conway); Inca Dove (Fayetteville); Red-necked Grebe, “Krider’s” Red-tailed Hawk, Golden Eagle, and “Red-shafted” Flicker (Holla Bend N.W.R.); Forster’s Tern (Jonesboro); Western Grebe, American Bittern, Red-cockaded Woodpecker and White-eyed Vireo (Lake Georgia Pacific-Felsenthal N.W.R.); Mute Swan and Rufous Hummingbird (Little Rock) Peregrine Falcon and “Oregon” Junco (Lonoke); Red-breasted Merganser and Sora (Pine Bluff); and Black-crowned Night-Heron, White Ibis, and Great-tailed Grackle (Texarkana). And the bird-of-the-year was the first Arkansas CBC record of an adult Blue Grosbeak at Wapanocca N.W.R.

And it can never be said frequently enough—all the compilers and volunteers deserve a big “thank you” for your hard work!

LOUISIANA

Erik I. Johnson
National Audubon Society
6160 Perkins Road, Suite 130
Baton Rouge, LA 70808
ejohnson@audubon.org

During the 112th CBC, 409 observers and 57 feederwatchers spent 1741 party hours covering 24 counts in Louisiana. A total of 262 species and an additional 2 count week species were found—the largest list since before the 2005 hurricanes (“Katrina” and “Rita”) despite worsening recent droughts. This winter will be forever remembered as the winter of the Green-tailed Towhee; across nine counts 15 individuals were found, which is not bad considering there have been fewer than 10 records ever for the Bayou State.

The Sabine count again tallied the largest species count in the state with 171 species and is still climbing toward pre-Hurricane Rita/Ike levels. A new count this year, White Lake, pulled in a respectable 158 species and turned up Louisiana’s first Prairie Falcon. Lacassine N.W.R.-Thornwell had the highest inland count with 162 species, while Baton Rouge and Crowley tied for the highest non-tidewater counts with...
Several raptors had abundances at least 1.5 times more than the recent 10-year average: Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, and American Kestrel. Loggerhead Shrike, a species that has declined by 66 percent since 1992, had its best showing in 10 years. It was also a banner winter year for some winter hummingbirds like Rufous with 158 counted, Calliope and Broad-tailed with eight each, and Allen’s Hummingbird with six. The only Anna’s Hummingbird was found in Baton Rouge. In contrast, many waterfowl counts were less than half of the previous 10-year party hour average, possibly related to recent droughts. Even so, eight Fulvous Whistling-Ducks, one Cinnamon Teal, and two White-winged Scoters were found. Last winter, Rusty Blackbirds were seemingly everywhere, but their numbers this year were back to recent lows.

A Scott’s Oriole visiting a Baton Rouge homeowner’s hummingbird feeder, a Western Grebe found on the Shreveport count, and a Rough-legged Hawk found during the Natchitoches count were among the most exceptional vagrants. Other highlights that kept participants entertained included a Parasitic Jaeger, three Swainson’s Hawks, two Burrowing Owls, and three Western Tanagers. Six Say’s Phoebes adds to only 11 total previous records, nine of these since 2000, suggesting a pattern of increasing vagrancy to Louisiana. Vermilion Flycatchers were also well represented with 30 individuals found, just shy of the previous high count of 31 in 2002. Only 13 warbler species were found this winter, but included a Black-throated Gray Warbler at Sweet Lake-Cameron Prairie N.W.R. In contrast, sparrows were well represented, with eight Clay-colored Sparrows and 10 Smith’s Longspurs among the highlights.

Wintering hold-over shorebirds were also notable with a well-documented Semipalmated Sandpiper during the Sabine count representing one of few confirmed winter records for the U.S. A count week Pectoral Sandpiper from Reserve and seven Wilson’s Phalaropes from two counts are also quite unusual. After being absent the last three of four winters, 21 Red Knots were found at Grand Isle, but this is a far cry from counts exceeding 200 birds in the 1980s.

Thanks to all who participated in counts and submitted data. Your hard work provides valuable insights into population trends for many species that would otherwise go unmonitored.
species reported statewide were Common Raven at Denbigh, Wood Duck at Fargo-Moorhead, Eastern Towhee at Grand Forks-East Grand Forks, and Pine Grosbeak at Icelandic S.P. The only Gyrfalcons were spotted at Arrowwood N.W.R., Garrison Dam, Lostwood, and Upper Souris N.W.R. Bohemian Waxwings flocks were few and far-between, and were only found at Garrison Dam, Icelandic S.P., and Jamestown. Purple Finches were scattered around the state and seen on 12 counts, and redpolls were moderately well-represented, though Hoaries were only found at Denbigh, Des Lacs N.W.R., Lostwood, and at Upper Souris N.W.R.

South Dakota observers submitted 17 counts this past season, and the 85 species reported on count day at Pierre established a new CBC species count high for the state! Rapid City birders scored a far-distant second place in the high species count race this year with 57 species. Ten of the 17 counts reported Snowy Owls with both Lake Andes and Sand Lake N.W.R. tallying nine birds each on count day! (Whatever the correct collective noun, nine birds surely is large enough to qualify as a parliament of Snowy Owls, I would think!). Northern Saw-whets were reported from Bison, Brookings, and Pierre, and among the record number of species reported from Pierre were 21 waterfowl species and the state's only Gyrfalcon this year. Rapid City's Harlequin Duck, found on Canyon Lake, was a real treat and new for that count; the female bird cooperated and was observed several days. Speaking of waterfowl, Yankton reported a swan sp. and a small flock of seven Long-tailed Ducks. This was not an especially eventful year for irruptive passerine species, however; the only Bohemian Waxwing (one bird) was reported from Shadehill, and the only Evening Grosbeaks were seen at Sturgis. Red Crossbills were observed at Brookings, Piedmont, and Sturgis, while Brookings and Sioux Falls birders located White-wingededs. Purple Finches were only found on four counts this year. Finally, some of the western/montane specialty species were reported as follows: Piedmont birders found Gray and Pinyon Jays, Pygmy Nuthatch, and Canyon Wren; Rapid City reported Gray Jay, Pygmy Nuthatch, Canyon Wren, and American Dipper (cw); Spearfish reported Lewis's Woodpecker, Canyon Wren, and American Dipper.

Nebraska CBCers completed and submitted 12 counts this past season, and Lake McConaughy took first place prize honors with 103 species reported on count day, while rivals Omaha and Lincoln tallied 70 and 69 species, respectively. It was, however, Lake McConaughy that reported some really nice finds including 23 waterfowl and four grebe species, plus eight gull species including three Mew's, but Dunlin was probably the best find of the day. Elsewhere, American White Pelicans lingered late enough to be seen at both Ames and Lake McConaughy, and Trumpeter Swans were reported from Calamus-Loup, Lake McConaughy, and Norfolk. Common Redpolls were only found in Crawford and North Platte, while Purple Finches were sprinkled around the state and noted on seven counts. Finally, the Snowy Owl invasion...
Long-tailed Ducks (Clangula hyemalis), Yankton, South Dakota. Photo/Roger Dietrich

extended to Nebraska, but not as dramatically as in the Dakotas: Calamus-Loup, Lake McConaughy, and North Platte each reported single birds on count day.

Kansans completed 23 CBCs this past season; Udall-Winfield reported the most species seen at 106, and Lawrence took second place with a very respectable 100. Trumpeter Swans have become increasingly common in the last decade with reports this year from Baldwin City, Lawrence (cw), Osaloosa-Perry Lake, Parsons, and Red Hills, while Osaloosa-Perry Lake and Udall-Winfield reported Tundra Swans. A statewide survey can quickly detail some of the better sightings: Cimarron N.G. had Ladder-backed Woodpecker (cw), Western Scrub-Jay, Common Raven, Sage Thrasher, and Lark Bunting; Halsehead-Newton had Black-crowned Night-Heron; Quivira N.W.R. reported both Trumpeter and Tundra Swans and Sprague’s Pipit at Norman; Western Grebe and Thayer’s and Lesser Black-backed gulls at Oklahoma City; and Sprague’s Pipit at Sooner Lake. Also seen and reported were: a Sedge Wren at Stillwater; a Common Yellowthroat at Spavinaw; an ibis (Plegadis), sp. Say’s Phoebe, Common Yellowthroat, and most unexpectedly, a Green-tailed Towhee at Tishomingo N.W.R. At Tallgrass Prairie Preserve, birders reported both Trumpeter and Tundra Swans and Sprague’s Pipit, Tulsa observers found Western Grebe and a far out-of-range Lesser Goldfinch, while at Washita N.W.R. birders reported another Tundra Swan. Finally, a survey of lingering/late waders will, I think, underscore the truly mild nature of the winter just passed. Killdeer were found on 12 of the 18 counts, Greater Yellowlegs were noted on 10 counts, while Lessers were found on two (Tishomingo N.W.R. and Wichita Mountains W.R.). Least Sandpipers were found on seven counts, Wilson’s Snipe on eight, and as previously noted Broken Bow found four woodcocks.

In closing, let me acknowledge the hard work of all compilers in editing their counts. This dedication not only ensures the highest data accuracy and quality for each count, but it also makes my job as regional editor that much easier. Additionally, I find information containing interesting historical, weather, or contextual count information to be especially helpful; thanks for passing this information along. As always, thank you!

TEXAS
Brent Ortego  
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department  
2805 N. Navarro, Suite 600B  
Victoria, TX 77901  
brent.ortego@tpwd.state.tx.us  

Manx Shearwater at Matagorda County, Black-vented Oriole and Blue Bunting at Anzalduas-Bentsen, Golden-crowned Warbler and Rose-throated Becard at Weslaco, Crimson-collared Grosbeak at Brownsville, Little Gull at Port Aransas and Lake Ray Hubbard, Hepatic Tanager at Victoria, American Golden-Plover at San Bernard and Red-throated Loon at Lake Tawakoni. These were the headliners in a season whose landscape was dominated by exceptional drought throughout Texas along with more than four million acres of wildfires. In all, 2838 birders on 109 Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) produced 377 species and 11 additional infraspecific forms, which is the lowest species tally in my six years as editor. Thirteen species were deleted that were not supported with satisfactory documentation. A total of 113 species were missed that were reported during the last 10 CBC seasons. Party hours declined by 4 percent, but birder numbers increased by 3 percent. We welcome new CBCs: Lost Pines near Austin, and Pineywoods at Lake Livingston.

Matagorda County was Number One in the Nation with 244 species, and Guadalupe River Delta was second with 225 species. Freeport had 199, San Bernard 196, and, amazingly, Weslaco 195. Weslaco is about 45 miles inland with a previous high tally of 178. This is the highest species count for an inland CBC in Texas. Corpus Christi-Flour
Bluff had 184, Bolivar Peninsula and Corpus Christi had 183, Port Aransas had a record 178, Anzalduas 173, Rockport 172, and 15 additional CBCs with at least 150 species. Bill Graber compiled Bolivar Peninsula for his 50th year, which is a remarkable feat.

The Manx Shearwater is mostly a pelagic seabird of the Atlantic Ocean. It is not expected near Texas with the relatively shallow edge of the Gulf of Mexico. Petra Hockey spotted one while doing her Sea Watch for the Matagorda County CBC. The shearwater was being pushed by strong onshore winds and flew along the beach. The Black-vented Oriole returned to Anzalduas-Bentsen for the second winter on 13 October and stayed throughout the season in the state park. Blue Buntings were reported at a number of Lower Rio Grande Valley hotspots during winter, but only one was found on a CBC. The Golden-crowned Warbler made its second appearance on a CBC this decade and was first sighted on 17 Dec and stayed through the winter; Ira Sanders photographed it on the Weslaco CBC. Another cooperative bird was the Rose-throated Becard, which arrived in November for the winter. It was the fourth Texas CBC record this decade and was photographed by Kyle O’Haver.

The Crimson-collared Grosbeak was reported at several Valley locals during the winter, but only on the Brownsville CBC for the fourth CBC record this decade. The Little Gull made its third appearance on Texas CBCs this decade. Two were found on the Port Aransas CBC, which was very atypical since most reports traditionally are away from the Gulf Coast, and another bird was found at Lake Ray Hubbard CBC. New for Texas CBCs this decade was a Hepatic Tanager on the Victoria CBC found by David and Mark Elwonger on a TOS sanctuary. Another new species for the decade was an American Golden-Plover found on the San Bernard CBC by Jennifer Sanchez and Phil Huxford. In its fifth year in a row, the Red-throated Loon is starting to become a regular at the Lake Tawakoni CBC.

One exciting aspect of participating in CBCs is finding the only species for a count and maybe for the state. There were many “exclusives” this season. Texas had many instances where only one individual was found, but it is still amazing when you think about it: 2838 birder days in the field and they only found one individual of a species. This was repeated 30 times for the season. Eleven other exclusives were reported that were more numerous.

The coastal CBCs above the Valley have the most people, CBCs, species, and exclusives in Texas. Guadalupe River Delta had more exclusives than the other CBCs. It had the only Yellow-throated Vireo, Wood Thrush, Tropical
The 112th Christmas Bird Count
American Birds

Brown Jay (Psilorhinus morio), Falcon Dam and S.P., Texas. Photo/Brandon K. Percival

Parula, American Redstart, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Matagorda County was productive with the only Black Scoters, Manx Shearwater, and Broad-winged Hawk. Attwater's had the only Attwater's Greater Prairie-Chicken, San Bernard had an American Golden-Plover, Kenedy County had Least Terns, Freeport a repeat Eastern Whip-poor-will from last season, Bolivar Peninsula had a Prairie Warbler, Brazos Bend a Louisiana Waterthrush, and Victoria had a far out of range Hepatic Tanager.

The Lower Rio Grande Valley produced the exciting tropical rarities. Anzalduas-Bentsen had the only Hook-billed Kite, Blue Bunting, Black-headed Grosbeak, and Black-vented Oriole. Weslaco had its own special rarities with the only Rose-throated Becard, Bank Swallows, Cliff Swallows, and Golden-crowned Warbler. Falcon Dam had the only native Muscovy Ducks, Red-billed Pigeon, and Brown Jay, and Brownsville the only Crimson-collared Grosbeak.

Our western CBCs had their own set of unique species. Davis Mountains had the most of these with the only Moustaza Quail, Band-tailed Pigeon, and Western Screech-Owl. Lubbock had the only Ring-necked Pheasant, Mc Nary the only California Gull, El Paso the only Glacous Gull, Big Bend N. P. the only Gray Flycatcher, Chisos Mountains the only Mexican Jays, and the Guadalupe Mountains had the only Juniper Titmouse.

Lake Tawakoni has developed its own set of rarities with the only Red-throated Loons and Smith's Longspurs this season. Spring Creek produced its traditional Red-cockaded Woodpecker, and Muleshoe produced the only Cassin's Finch.

What about the rare species we expected to locate, but missed this season? There were only 13 species missed that are typically reported on 70 percent of the seasons; Long-tailed Duck, Purple Gallinule, Wilson's Phalarope, Groove-billed Ani, Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, Williamson's Sapsucker, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Northern Shrike, Plumbeous Vireo, Tennessee Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, and Baltimore Oriole.

I review population trends of species reported each season by comparing the results of the season for each species to the average number reported for the previous 10 years. I view a population as changed if it varies from the average of a species greater than one standard deviation; i.e., White-fronted Goose 10-year average = 27,158, standard deviation = 13,000, this season = 11,652 = population decrease.

Most of Texas only received one-third of its normal rainfall in 2011. The preceding year was about average and the year before that was another severe drought that covered about three-fourths of the state. The difference in 2009 to the worst drought of this past season was that the coast received 10 inches of rain before the CBC season, which filled many wetlands, and in 2011 all shallow non-tidal wetlands were dry and bay salinities were at full sea strength.

This influenced Texas CBCs to report 26 percent infraspecific forms as above average, and 22 percent below average this season. Compared to last season with average rainfall, they reported 30 percent of species increasing and 4 percent decreasing, with 24 percent increasers and 14 percent decreasers in the preceding season’s severe drought. With a high percent of Texas winter birds originating from more northern states and Canada, which had an above average rainfall year, this made for a complicated mix of above average numbers of migrants. These migrants were produced under good nesting conditions and they arrived on parched wintering grounds. The results were that ducks, loons, grebes, pelicans, raptors, plovers, shorebirds, terns, doves, hummers, and orioles were generally above average (deep water sites that did not dry out held many ducks). Raptor numbers were extremely high in coastal counties; many deaths were related to vehicle collisions while birds foraged along highways. The drought dried all shallow wetlands and reduced the availability of irrigation water, which is normally sold to duck hunting clubs. The drought also lowered the water levels of some normally deep lakes to optimum depths of many waterbirds. The result of this situation was high numbers of shorebirds on the Guadalupe River Delta CBC. On the other extreme, the Kenedy County CBC waterfowl numbers dropped from 110,000 last season to 8000 this season when salinities in the Laguna Madre rose from 22 to 55 parts per thousand (35 is sea strength) during the drought.

Heron, egrets, rails, flycatchers, vireos, swallows, titmice, wrens, gnatchatchers, and warblers were generally lower in number than average. Parched marshes created very poor winter conditions for many wetland birds. Dry pastures...
resulted in record lows of Cattle Egrets with a number of CBCs missing them for the first time in their history. Drought created dismal conditions for insectivores. Populations were generally suppressed and a number of normally expected species were absent.

Brief summaries from Special Aspects reports are provided here to characterize conditions as described by compilers: Panhandle region had very dry range land practically devoid of birdlife with many area lakes dry, but some drying lakes created unusual waterbird situations. The Trans Pecos region was severely impacted by drought and wildfires causing low populations. The Rolling Plains region had an invasion of western and southwestern species that might have been influenced by drought and fires in those areas. Some CBCs had little or no water. The Edwards Plateau region reported western birds pushed into area because of drought and fires. The Post Oak Savannah region reported northern portion received fall rains which helped increase waterfowl counts, but insectivorous birds were scarce. The Pineywoods region had mixed results from drought and fires. The Coastal Prairie and Marshes region had one CBC with 30 percent of area burned. Dry wetlands prevailed throughout and there was an invasion by western species and raptors. The drought appeared to suppress some bird numbers. The South Texas brushlands reported high salinities in bays with some CBCs having high species diversity, especially Weslaco and Corpus Christi–Flour Bluff.

Data were examined for select species to determine if observed species populations were more the result of the Texas situations or broader continental events. The 4511 Red-tailed Hawks were 12 percent above the highest tally for the decade in Texas, and the United States reported about 58,000 this season. Texas reported 3813 last season while the United States had about 65,000. Thus, the continental population appeared to decline while record numbers were being reported across Texas.

The 240 White-eyed Vireos were 50 percent lower than the smallest tally this past decade. Florida, which is also a good winter ground for this species, had a normal year by reporting 758. Texas reported 746 last season while Florida 727. The decline in Texas did not appear to be part of a continental change.

The 1555 Tree Swallows reported this season was the second lowest for the decade while Florida, which is an important wintering area for this species, had about 1,800,000. Texas reported 5263 last season and Florida 1,205,611. Low numbers in Texas did not appear to be part of a broader trend.

The 151 Green-tailed Towhees reported were 50 percent higher than its previous highest tally for the decade. The 15 CBCs that had unusually high numbers of this species were mostly near the Gulf Coast, and seven CBCs experiencing unusually low numbers were from far West Texas in the Trans Pecos. The normal South Texas winter areas had normal numbers. Numbers to the west of Texas were also reported lower than normal. There was a similar eastward movement of this species in Texas during the 80th CBC season, but weather conditions were not discussed in that Texas CBC report.

The 897 Spotted Towhees reported were 60 percent higher than the previous high tally this decade, and the second highest tally ever in Texas. The record count occurred during another drought. Twenty-five CBCs had unusually high numbers this season with most of those in the Edwards Plateau and Coastal Prairie. Seven had unusually low numbers and were from western Texas, but not all of the West Texas CBCs had below-average numbers.

The 1178 Lincoln’s Sparrow reported was the lowest tally since the 70th season. No CBC had an unusually high number. Numbers outside of Texas appear to be higher than normal. High numbers in Texas appear related to an overall population increase.

Warblers occurred in relatively low diversity with only 21 species reported, which is seven below the record posted during the 103rd CBC season. Guadalupe River Delta had the most species with 13. This was followed by 12 at both Matagorda County and Weslaco. This was not an “irruptive” year for northern seedeaters. There were no crossbills or western jays. Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, and American Goldfinch occurred in normal numbers. Sage Thrasher occurred in above-average numbers, and Mountain Bluebirds occurred farther east than normal, but the total for Texas was in its normal range.

Species tallies at Matagorda County, Guadalupe River Delta, and Weslaco were much higher than expected, while most other CBCs reported more modest numbers for their area. The combination of an eastern dispersal of western species and lingering migrants contributed to their success. The extreme drought in Texas, the above average precipitation in Canada and northern states appeared to have some affects on populations. However, they could not be used to explain all seasonal changes and there likely were several other factors influencing populations.

The most common species this season were Red-tailed Hawk and Mourning Dove, tallied on 106 of the 109 CBCs. American Kestrel and House Sparrow occurred on 104, and Northern Mockingbird and Northern Cardinal 103.
In closing, I would like to thank all of the compilers, birders, conservation organizations, land managers, and sponsors who make the results reported here possible.

MONTANA

Daniel Casey
American Bird Conservancy
33 Second Street East, Suite 10
Kalispell, MT 59901
dcasey@abcbirds.org

Montana CBC weather was fairly mild overall; six counts stayed above freezing all day, and only eight stayed below freezing. Chester had the high, 56°F, and Big Hole the low, minus 9 degrees Fahrenheit. Counts averaged 1 to 6 inches of snow, with the deepest (36 in.) at West Yellowstone. Although there were some exceptional finds, none of the 146 species reported on 31 counts were new to the state CBC list. Bigfork tallied a new all-time Montana high of 90 species; Stevensville and Missoula each recorded 85. With effort and luck, will one of these counts soon break the 100-species barrier? The excellent new high of 73 species at Ennis included four count firsts: Virginia Rail (2), Barn Owl, American Three-toed Woodpecker, and Gray Catbird. There were 37 other count firsts established statewide, including Red-necked Grebe and Northern Saw-Whet Owl at Glacier N.P., both Ross's and Snow goose at Bozeman, Canvasback (2) at Libby, and Cooper's Hawk at Miles City. The Grant-Kohrs count led the state with 23 new high count totals and five new species in this, their sixth year.

Common Montana breeding species that are exceedingly rare (e.g. Blue-winged Teal, Chipping Sparrow) or absent (e.g. Swainson's Hawk) in winter are reported without details nearly annually, usually by less experienced observers. This year was no exception. I remind compilers to seek details or photos for these out-of-season reports, which will otherwise be dropped from count results. Luckily, a few of this year's notable rarities were well documented with photographs (e.g. Barn Owl, count week Cape May Warbler) and/or detailed descriptions (e.g. Spotted Sandpiper).

Great Falls hosted more than one-fifth (13,106) of all the Canada Geese reported statewide. Five Cackling Geese at Fort Peck were the only ones reported and were joined by two Snow Geese, one of each color morph. The total of 66 Trumpeter Swans at West Yellowstone was down 66 percent from the 10-year average for this count. Five Tundra Swans at Troy was a new high count there; the species was found on just five counts, with 92 percent of them (272) at Bigfork. A single Blue-winged Teal was reported (with marginal details) at Eureka, where “count day was perhaps the mildest weather in the history of the count.” The only Spruce Grouse reported were two at Upper Swan Valley. Hamilton had a five-year low count of California Quail (189), and Stevensville's total (383) was also down from last year’s peak (658). CBC data are the primary dataset in ongoing deliberations regarding this species’ addition to the official state list.

Twenty Golden Eagles at Lewistown and 19 at Livingston (Park County) contributed to a new high total of 129 statewide. Single Gyrfalcons were new to the Big Hole and Bowdoin N.W.R. counts; another was found at Ninepipe N.W.R., where they have been seen six of the past 20 years. An injured American White Pelican on the Clark Canyon Dam count expired less than two weeks later; previous state CBC records (e.g., Great Falls in 2006) have also represented sick or injured birds.

The Spotted Sandpiper at Stevensville was the second for that count and the fourth CBC record for Montana. A first-winter Glaucous-winged Gull that overwintered was new to the Kalispell count; there are two previous CBC records (Fort Peck). It was a banner year for Snowy Owls, with 15 on eight counts. They were new to the Big Hole and Miles City counts. The Barn Owl photographed at Ennis was the second state CBC record of a species whose winter (and overall) distribution in the state is still relatively poorly known. Remarkably, count week hummingbirds were reported from both Missoula and Kalispell, none confirmed to species (likely Anna’s). Three lingering Lewis’s Woodpeckers were reported from counts where they are most expected: two from Missoula and one at Hamilton.

A Mountain Bluebird was found count week at Yellowstone. The 89 Townsend’s Solitaires at Warm Springs more than doubled their previous high, but the number paled in comparison with the 234 at Bozeman, which that compiler attributed to much better coverage of foothills habitats. Well-docu-
mented Hermit Thrushes (four previous CBC records) were new to the Bozeman and McNeil Slough counts. Gray Catbird was new at Ennis, but, perhaps surprisingly, has occurred on 10 previous Montana counts. A Cape May Warbler photographed in Helena just two days prior to the count was not found count day, but established a first state winter record. Missoula and Billings (2) had the only Yellow-rumped Warblers. Both counts also had single White-crowned Sparrows, as did Clark Canyon Dam. Seven White-throated Sparrows were reported, from five counts, with two each at Bigfork and at Missoula, which hosted the only Harris’s Sparrow. The (Red) Fox Sparrow photographed by Dave Allen at Chester was the first so well documented, in spite of numerous previous CBC reports around the state. It was present for more than two months. Two hundred Lapland Longspurs at Three Forks were the only ones reported. Spotted Towhee and Common Grackle (one each) were new for the Helena count.

The 26 Hoary Redpolls on five counts comprised 1.4 percent of all (1865) redpolls reported on 24 counts, which seems reasonable for a mild irruption year. But reports included sparse details at best, and we may never know whether the number of Hoaries that go undetected in flocks balances out those bright male Common Redpolls misidentified as Hoaries.

Thank you to the nearly 600 observers who tallied more than 1200 party hours in the field, and to all the compilers, for persevering through a yet another trying data entry process. Admirably, Fritz Predlitz again single-handedly ran the Little Rocky Mountains count, where (numbers of) “small birds were greatly reduced from what would be expected.” Here’s hoping he will get more support in future years there. Seasonal distribution changes are afoot, and we want to describe them with confidence. So kudos to the Stevensville observers that described the Spotted Sandpiper there in great detail, and to everyone else who sent photos and details for rarities.

IDAHO

Charles Swift
414 South Lincoln Street
Moscow, ID 83843
chaetura@gmail.com

Idaho birders conducted 27 counts during the count period, and 26 counts are summarized here. The period was decidedly average in terms of rarities and overall diversity, but interesting early winter phenomena and ongoing trends in bird populations were as always discernible. Party hours increased slightly and total observers increased by 20 percent, indicating continued growth in participation statewide. Two new counts are scheduled to start in the upcoming period, Challis in east-central Idaho and a count centered near Kendrick in north-central Idaho. I look forward to including them in this summary in 2013.

The northwest, including much of Idaho, experienced one of its driest Decembers on record, resulting in low snowpacks in most parts of the state by the count period. The fairly benign weather pattern before and during the count period may have resulted in the fairly mundane species totals and lack of rarities. This despite generally favorable count day conditions that should in theory bolster count results. Although the causes of species presence (or absence) during the count period are varied and complex, it seems that count periods preceded by cold snaps produce higher species diversity and more rarities.

The 164 species reported statewide is close to the five-year average (165.8) with total individuals increasing by 30 percent over the previous period to almost 457,000. As usual the change in total individuals is largely attributable to the fluctuation in numbers of Canada Geese and Mallards on a handful of counts. These two species increased this year by close to 120,000 primarily on three Snake River plain counts: Hagerman Valley, Bruneau, and Nampa.
Bruneau scored top count honors with 96 species, with two other counts—Nampa (93), and Lewiston-Clarkston (91)—also breaking 90 species. As always much credit goes to count compilers and participants for efforts vitally important to furthering the understanding of population trends and winter phenomena, and for aiding in the conservation of Idaho’s birds. Following is a review of count highlights (and low-lights) in roughly taxonomic order.

Red-necked Grebes appear to have almost entirely disappeared as a wintering species in Idaho with only seven reported, whereas the count as recently as five years ago was 140. The reasons for the decline are unknown and worth investigating. American Kestrel numbers fluctuate but have generally increased over the past 10 years recording a new high (840) this year. Rare gulls were scarce (perhaps partly due to landfill access issues) with only count week Mew and Thayer’s gulls and Glaucous-winged Gull (2) on two Treasure Valley Counts. Idaho benefited from the widespread Snowy Owl irruption with individuals present on two counts, Nampa (2) and Lewiston-Clarkston (1), the former enjoyed by many southern Idaho birders. Eurasian Collared-Doves increased, as they have done every year since appearing in the state, by 37 percent to 3259; only three were recorded in 2004–2005 and the count exceeded 1000 (1523) for the first time just three years ago.

Red-breasted Nuthatches (556) were found in near record numbers despite little evidence of an irruption from lower elevation counts. Townsend’s Solitaires (137) were similarly in near record numbers bolstered by high tallies from three eastern Idaho counts (Idaho Falls, Pocatello, and Teton Valley). A well-documented Wilson’s Warbler, only the second ever for an Idaho count, was a big surprise at Bonner’s Ferry up near the Canadian border. Nampa reported an impressive 15 Orange-crowned Warblers, surely the winter hotspot for this species in Idaho. Idaho had its best irruption of Common Redpolls (950) since 2001, as well as one of the better irruptions of Pine Siskins (803) in recent years. Lesser Goldfinch populations have increased markedly in Boise and the Lewiston-Clarkston Valley, resulting in a record count of 335 with small numbers of prospecting birds on four other counts. Indian Mountain in the panhandle reported two Rusty Blackbirds in an area providing a number of previous winter records. Thanks and good birding!

WYOMING/UTAH

Keith Evans
4826 Kiwana Drive
South Ogden, UT 84403
bkevans4@comcast.net

For the 112th Christmas Bird Count, 19 count circles were reviewed for Wyoming and 25 count circles for Utah. One new count was established in Park City, Utah (UTPC). The region experienced a mild winter; however, a couple of cold fronts froze much of the open water just prior to the count period. Again this season, Utah had very low counts of Bohemian Waxwings, with only 12 on three counts. Wyoming’s Bohemian Waxwing count was down by 34 percent from CBC-111, with 1329 observed on five counts. The Red-tailed Hawk is the most abundant raptor in both Wyoming and Utah. Looking at the last 10 count years, the Red-tailed Hawk in Wyoming was at its lowest on CBC-103 (49 on 12 count circles) and steadily increased to a high of 164 on 18 count circles on CBC-109. This year, 129 were reported on 13 counts, slightly higher than the 10-year average of 108 individuals. In Utah, no trend in Red-tailed Hawks was apparent; however, there was a high of 806 reported (on 23 counts) on CBC-110. This year, 566 were counted on 22 circles, which is higher than the 10-year average of 528. Birding in northern Utah during the period just before the CBC-112 count period, I had the impression this was going to be a “good” year for Rough-legged Hawks; however, the Utah count of 116 on 16 counts was very close to the 10-year average of 113 individuals. One Winter Wren was reported during the count week in Cheyenne, Wyoming. I’m unsure if eastern Wyoming is in the Pacific Wren range or the Winter Wren range. I would appreciate hearing from someone who has studied the wintering ranges after the split between Winter Wren and Pacific Wren. Documentation of any winter sightings of both Winter