

## CHILLIWACK CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT (122<sup>th</sup> CBC) – 27 December 2021

This was the 122<sup>th</sup> year for the Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Nature Chilliwack held the 43<sup>th</sup> CBC this year on 27 December 2021. The Chilliwack (BCCH) count covers a ~24.07km diameter circle reaching from Cultus Lake in the south to Deroche and Harrison Bay in the north. The western part of the circle enters the east end of Vedder Mountain and all of the Bert Brink Wildlife Management area (McGillivray Game Reserve) while the easternmost sections of the circle reaches almost to the centre of Rosedale, most of Slesse Trailer Park and the peak of Elk Mountain.

Temperatures on December 27 were at -10 to -16°C with light winds and 100 % cloud cover, some showers in the morning and some clearing in the afternoon. The number of individual bird counters and groups were way down from last year's count. However, counters did an excellent job of finding and identifying birds as usual!

This year's count day attracted a total of **25** counters on routes plus **19** feeder watchers. They observed **94** different bird species, down 3 species from last year. The total of individual birds came to **18,962** birds. In the cold year of 2008, we had 89 species on the count day with 20,313 individual birds. The number of individual birds on 27 December 2021 was down 35,370 individual birds counted in 2020, but way down by 47,016 from the extreme high of 65,978 individuals on the 2011 count. For comparison, our numbers on the 2009 and 2013 count days was 99 species both years with individual birds totalling 31,606 in 2009 and 41,091 in 2013, which is more typical of the normal numbers.

Part of the reason for the low count was a lack of bird counters due to the rescheduling of the count and the extreme cold, prior and on the day of the count. Last year, we had 19 groups in cars on count routes with 43 observers. This year, we only had 12 groups in cars on count routes consisting of a total of 25 observers. Hours in the field last year totaled 189.58 hr. This year, the hours in the field totaled 63 hours and two area count routes were not counted.

This year 4 species broke high record numbers for individuals. The record breaking high counts were all sparrows - White-crowned Sparrow 447, White-throated Sparrow 3, Song Sparrow 468 and Spotted Towhee. Some of the common species that are seen on more than half our counts, had only one observation this year, including - Red-tailed Hawk, Herring Gull, Pileated Woodpecker, American Kestrel, Merlin and Northern Shoveler. We recorded 33 Anna's Hummingbirds, 71 below the 2018 high of 102 birds. European Collard Doves dropped again in numbers with 55 seen this year down from the 2019 count of 362 doves. This year we only had 927 European Starlings. We found three owl species again on count day this year - 1 Barred Owl, 2 Great Horned Owls and 1 Western Screech Owl.

We had some rare species as well on the count day - 1 Pine Grosbeak and a Western Screech Owl. For the count week rare birds, we got 1 Gyrfalcon. We also had our first new species in many years - a Rusty Blackbird.

Audubon also collects and prints birds observed in the Chilliwack CBC count week (cw). This year, cw ran from Dec. 24 to 30, 2021 and 1 species was observed that was not seen

on count day included a rare species for our area, a Gyrfalcon. Count week helps to shows birds that occur in the count area but eluded counters on the count day. So next year, be sure to report birds that you saw 3 days before or after the count date that were not located by anyone on the count day. You can report a cw bird anywhere in the 24.07 km diameter count circle.

No new bird species for Chilliwack were observed during the CBC or count week (cw) this year. 'New' birds are defined as birds never before seen on the Chilliwack CBC day or week. 'Rare' birds include birds that are unusual species. For simplicity and clarity that means 'new/rare' birds are birds that have not been seen on our count for 6 years or more. Over the 43 years since are count started, we have only had 25 species in the total number of species commonly occur on our count every year, with 8 more additional species recorded on 40 counts.

Since the Chilliwack count started 43 years ago in the winter of 1978-79, our participants have found a total of 168 confirmed species in the Chilliwack CBC area. The confirmed number of course depends on the final tally accepted by Bird Studies Canada.

Click on your Regional Editors e-mail address: Jeremiah Kennedy to contact him [christmasbirdbc@gmail.com](mailto:christmasbirdbc@gmail.com) . All regional summaries are contained in the Audubon publication *American Birds*, <https://www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count> which can be accessed through the Audubon CBC home page. Also on the web is access to all CBC circles <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=fadfb421e95f4949bdc20c29a38228bd>. For more information contact Denis at 604 858-5141 or email to [bcwilddenis@uniserve.com](mailto:bcwilddenis@uniserve.com) . Please pass this summary of the count on to others that may be interested.

Thanks for all your help and enjoy the Birds!

Denis Knopp  
Nature Chilliwack

<https://naturechilliwack.ca/membership/>