

## **Christmas Bird Counts Yellowhead Flyway Birding Trail Association (YFBTA) Region**

### **East of City of Yorkton - YFBTA member Martin Phillips**

On December 15th a bird count was undertaken east of Yorkton. The day was partly cloudy with a light breeze. The temperature was between -15 and -5 degrees. The organizer was Martin Phillips. He had the help of Ray Thies, Lloyd Liebrecht, Lorne Nierbergal, Kirk Screpnick and Fred Phillips. Martin Phillips travelled the roads of the area while the rest of the group surveyed their yards and their bird feeders. The area surveyed was just east of Yorkton.

The group logged 17 different species with over 600 birds counted. Highlights included a Bald Eagle, a Horned Owl, A Snowy Owl as well as a Short Eared Owl. We also spotted 12 Sharptailed Grouse, 33 Gray Partridge, 1 Ruffed Grouse and numerous smaller birds ( Woodpeckers, Chickadees, Grosbeaks and Redpoles) . It should be noted that there was no shortage of Ravens and Magpies.

### **Churchbridge - YFBTA member Walter Karau**

The day selected to conduct the 2011 Bird and mammal count was 15 December. The morning was overcast and somewhat hazy with intermittent light snow. The days' temperature varied between minus 12 (AM) to minus 8 (PM) and winds between 10 and 15 kph.

Thirteen persons participated in the count. Ron and Eline Johnson, Phyllis Kaeding, John and Elaine Pollock, Denis and Dianne Putland and Gloria Wirth made observations from their respective rural farm yards. Cas and Verna Chyz and Martha Karau monitored the activity at their urban feeders. Wally Karau and Ed Wirth traveling by truck put on 128 KMs in the Churchbridge registered Count Area, which consists of eighty five square miles.

The results of the days count was 523 individual birds, of 17 species. The number of mammals counted was 10 individual mammals of 4 species, along with a number of signs of mammal activity such as tracks, dens, smell and carcasses.

### **Togo Locality Christmas Bird Count - Doug Elsasser**

Togo's count day was a very mild January 04<sup>th</sup> with ten people counting birds at feeders, walking, skiing and/or driving around.

Eighteen species of birds were noted on count day. The most unusual was an Orange-crowned Warbler spotted at a feeder approximately 8 km south of the village. Anita Huziak recorded this sighting at a distance of 5 metres. She had identified Orange-crowned Warblers in late summer. We assume that this bird simply stayed put instead of migrating. Common Redpolls were the most numerous bird with 153 individuals; followed by Ravens (118).

A total of 655 birds were recorded by these Togo's observers: Chutskoff, Kevin; Dewores, Donna; Elsasser, Barb; Elsasser, Doug; Harper, Amanda; Huziak, Anita; King, Edward; King, Louise; Koreliuk, William; Leis, Karen

### **Canora Christmas Bird Count - Oney Pollock and Thom Carnahan**

4 Black capped Chickadees; 57 snow buntings; 5 house sparrows; 4 ravens; 64 Bohemian waxwings; 7 common red polls; 3 hairy woodpeckers; 2 white breasted nuthatches; 4 blue jays; 2 downy woodpeckers

### **Birding in Melville and District area - YFBTA members Ted and Margaret Starchuk**

As of late, this winter viewing for us has been quite slow and not as consistent as we would like it to be due to health issues that are still in the process of recovery, however, I'll make reference to several items:

Our most common visitors throughout the winter feeding sessions are several species of sparrows, varying from colourful song sparrows to English and House sparrows. These number from 25 to 50's. Just yesterday, Jan. 16, we counted approx. 75 Cedar Waxwings

( not absolutely certain if it's not Bohemian), feeding on our cedars for about an hour and then swooped away to the neighbour's trees for berries etc. A couple species of chickadees arrive occasionally at their feeders but as usual there is competition with the numerous sparrows. Number 5 or 6 from time to time. Our neighbour reported a smaller falcon-like bird feeding on what appeared to be another bird in their yard in the first week in January. We have regular visits from 4 or 5 huge ravens in the Crescent area here in Melville. We have sighted many throughout the highways and roadways within a 20 km radius of Melville. There has been a noticeable reduction of whitetail deer population, however, our neighbour has had the misfortune of colliding with one 2 weeks ago. Outside of this winter's limited count, we've had the enjoyment of sighting the big blue heron in Melville area this past summer. There are 6 other interested 'birders' who take interest and keep in touch with me periodically. We are frantically trying to locate a nesting colony if at all possible. Two ruby-throated hummingbirds visit our feeders throughout the summer months. There appears to be an increased sightings of badgers near the City of Melville as well as on our golf course and on a neighbouring farm.

### **Chatsworth Count - YFBTA member George Murray**

A Christmas Bird count was done Jan. 03, 2012 in the Chatsworth District (east of Saltcoats). That day was sunny with a temperature of +1 Celcius and moderate winds. Those participating were: George and Laurie Murray; Herb and Stuart Rooke and some members of the Tangedal family. 15 species of birds were noted and a total of 290 individuals were counted. A distance of 42 km was traveled driving and walking. The most unusual bird seen on the count day was a Bald Eagle. Other birds of special note were: 85 Common Redpolls; 50 Snow Buntings; 11 gray Partridge and 08 Sharp-tailed Grouse. Another bird of note was 1 Piliated Woodpecker (Dec. 17)

### **Saltcoats - YFBTA member Rob Wilson**

Saltcoats conducted its annual Christmas Bird Count December 31, 2011. The numbers were collected by driving, walking and with the help of some individuals tallying visitors to their feeders. The winter "birders" were: Arden and Donna Bradford; Walter and Olga Brygider; Walter and Joan Farquharson and grandchildren Kaito and Gregor; Jim Jowsey; Betty Michael; Rob and Joan Wilson; Herb Rooke and Stuart Rooke and all of his family. A special thank you to Mae Ann Chilman and Gloria Rathgeber who travelled from Yorkton to Saltcoats to assist with the count.

A total of 16 bird species were observed. Five hundred forty-five individual birds were observed. Some birds to be highlighted are: a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and a Snowy Owl. Other interesting birds seen outside the official count day are: a Golden Eagle (Dec. 20); Pine Grosbeaks and Evening Grosbeaks. Five mammal species were noted, the most interesting being a freshly