



MH Interpretive Program

managed by Grasslands Naturalists
based in Police Point Park

July 2, 2016

2016 MEDICINE HAT SPRING BIRD AND FLOWER COUNT

Fellow Birders and Flower Watchers:

The 32nd Spring Count was blessed with good weather – temperatures were seasonal (high 22° C, low 6° C) and winds were moderate (13-31 km/hr). With these excellent conditions, 130 species were observed, which was up from 2015 and fairly typical for our count. Individual birds counted (9,977) were also up from last year and well above the average of 7,655 for 2011-2013 (see Data Summary Table, page 2).

This year, there were 6 species with record high counts (see Table 1, page 2). They ranged across the taxonomic board from waterfowl to blackbirds and included Red-breasted Merganser, Rough-legged Hawk, Eurasian Collared-dove, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, and Common Grackle. One species, Marbled Godwit, experienced a record low in 2016; they have been observed in all count years. No new species were observed in 2016. One observation of a Gyrfalcon is noted here in the text but not included in the species table, as it could not be confirmed through a photograph or an independent observation. A gyrfalcon has never been observed during our spring count and could be confused with similar species such as a prairie falcon.

Species missing from this year's count that are usually seen included Western Grebe, Wood Duck, Osprey, Broad-winged Hawk, Golden Eagle, Solitary Sandpiper, Upland Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Common Nighthawk, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Phoebe, Say's Phoebe, Brown Creeper, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, American Redstart, Wilson's Warbler, Baird's Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, and Chestnut-collared Longspur.

Less frequently seen species noted in 2016 were Eurasian Wigeon (2), Bufflehead (1), Red-breasted Merganser (2), Sharp-shinned Hawk (2), Rough-legged Hawk (2), Common Tern (5), Caspian Tern (1), Alder Flycatcher (2), White-breasted Nuthatch (2), Marsh Wren (1), Brewer's Sparrow (1), and Evening Grosbeak (1) (see Species Data Table, page 5). Alder Flycatchers and Evening Grosbeaks have not been observed on the count since 2001 and 1997, respectively.

The top 10 for 2016 were European Starling (1,138), American Robin (826), Canada Goose (594), Rock Pigeon (568), House Sparrow (531), Common Grackle (480), Western Meadowlark (473), Red-winged Blackbird (445), Black-billed Magpie (377), and Brewer's Blackbird (346). Note that 4 of the top 10 are in the blackbird family.

One species was seen during count week but not on count day: dusky flycatcher.

As for flowers, 75 species were observed in bloom, which was relatively high compared to the previous 4 years (see Data Summary Table, page 2 and Flower List, page 3).

Count effort was excellent in 2016. Participants (41) and observation hours (105) were up from last year and the past 3 years have shown a marked improvement in both areas from previous years (see Data Summary Table, page 2). Many thanks to all those who volunteered their time this year!

Yours truly,
Marty
 Marty Drut
 Count Compiler

New Species Observed in 2016: None

Table 1. 2016 Spring Bird Count All Time High and Low Observations.

2016 Spring Bird Count - Highs and Lows			
Species	High	Previous High	Year
Red-breasted Merganser	2	2	2008, 2006, 1996
Rough-legged Hawk	2	2	2008
Eurasian Collared-dove	80	59	2014
Blue Jay	33	26	2013
Black-capped Chickadee	109	88	2014
Common Grackle	480	417	2015
Species	Low	Previous Low	Year
Marbled Godwit	5	6	2012

DATA SUMMARY 2012 - 2016					
	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Total Individuals	9,977	9,152	10,114	7,426	7,740
Total Bird Species	130	126	144	130	113
Total Flower Species	75	66	60	51	65
Participants	41	38	37	32	26
Total Km Walked	166.8	123.5	139	100.5	69.5
Total Km Driven	509.5	434	272	199	415
Hours of Observation	105	99	99.5	71.25	69.75
on foot:	64	52	70	59.25	32.25
by car:	38	37	29.5	22	37.5
feeder:	3	10	2	0	5

PARTICIPANTS

Mark Schiebelbein
Dan Schiebelbein
Milt Spitzer
Elaine Spitzer
Ben Velner
Michael Velner
Gary Martin
Janet Martin
Rob Wapple
Lorrie Sielski
Bob Frew
Phil Horch
Annalora Horch
Ian Turner
Angela Turner
Cailey Turner
Cam Lockerbie
Jim Knelson
Morganne Wall
Mackenzie Fai
Hugh Armstrong
Dee Armstrong
Jo-Anne Reynolds
Andre Brazeau
Dave McKenzie
Lisa Bey
Geno Carlson
Monica Bartha
Valerie Martins
Barry Anderson
Judy Anderson
Lauren Hider
John Slater
Val Felesky
Fay Felesky
Bill Piggott
Betty Rainville
Taylor Dell
Marty Drut
Charmaine Trottier
Calvin Eddy



Wildflowers in Bloom 2016 (75 Species):

- Prairie Onion (*Allium textile*)
- Wild Asparagus (*Asparagus officinalis*)
- Star-flowered Soloman's-seal
(*Maianthemum stellatum*)
- Willow (*Salix sp.*)
- Common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*)
- Pale Comandra (Bastard Toadflax)
(*Comandra umbellata*)
- Yellow Umbrella-plant (*Eriogonum flavum*)
- Field Chickweed (*Cerastium arvense*)
- Mouse-eared Chickweed
(*Cerastium vulgatum*)
- Wild Mustard (*Brassica kaber*)
- Shepherd's Purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*)
- Tansy Mustard (*Descurainia sophia*)
- Dog Mustard (*Erucastrum gallicum*)
- Dame's Rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*)
- Common Peppergrass (*Lepidium densiflorum*)
- Tumble Mustard
(*Sisymbrium altissimum*)
- Pennycress (Stinkweed) (*Thlaspi arvense*)
- Golden Currant (*Ribes aureum*)
- Saskatoon (*Amelanchier alnifolia*)
- Three-flowered Avens (*Geum triflorum*)
- Prairie Cinquefoil (*Potentilla pensylvanica*)
- Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*)
- Prickly Wild Rose (*Rosa acicularis*)
- Common Wild Rose (*Rosa woodsii*)
- Two-grooved Milk Vetch
(*Astragalus bisulcatus*)
- Purple Milk Vetch (*Astragalus dasyglottis*)
- Prairie Milk Vetch (*Astragalus laxmannii*)
- Missouri Milk Vetch
(*Astragalus missouriensis*)
- Narrow-leaved Milk Vetch
(*Astragalus pectinatus*)
- Common Caragana (*Caragana arborescens*)
- Black Medic (*Medicago lupulina*)
- White Sweet Clover (*Melilotus alba*)
- Yellow Sweet Clover (*Melilotus officinalis*)
- Early Yellow Locoweed (*Oxytropis sericea*)
- Indian Bread-root (*Pediomelum esculentum*)
- Golden Bean (*Thermopsis rhombifolia*)
- Wild Vetch (*Vicia americana*)
- Wild Blue Flax (*Linum lewisii*)
- Yellow Flax (*Linum rigidum*)
- Leafy Spurge (*Euphorbia esula*)
- Skunk-bush (Fragrant Sumac)
(*Rhus trilobata*)
- Scarlet Mallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*)
- Western Canada Violet (*Viola canadensis*)
- Pincushion Cactus (*Corypantha vivipara*)
- Prickly-pear Cactus (*Opuntia polyacantha*)
- Fireweed (*Epilobium augustifolium*)
- Scarlet Butterfly-weed (*Gaura coccinea*)
- Red-osier Dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*)
- Spreading Dogbane
(*Apocynum androsaemifolium*)
- Indian Hemp (*Apocynum cannabinum*)
- Showy Milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*)
- Field Bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*)
- Moss Phlox (*Phlox hoodii*)
- Large-flowered Stickseed (*Hackelia floribunda*)
- Black Henbane (*Hyoscyamus niger*)
- Narrow-leaved Puccoon
(*Lithospermum incisum*)
- Butter and Eggs (Toad-flax)
(*Linaria vulgaris*)
- White Beard-tongue
(*Penstemon albidus*)
- Cleavers (*Gallium aparine*)
- Tartarian Honeysuckle (*Lonicera tatarica*)
- Common Lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*)
- Common Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)
- Low Everlasting (Pussy-toes)
(*Antennaria aprica*)
- Narrow-leaved Hawk's-beard
(*Crepis tectorum*)
- Tufted (Low) Fleabane
(*Erigeron caespitosus*)
- Great Blanket Flower (*Gaillardia aristata*)
- Gumweed (*Grindelia squarrosa*)
- Colorado Rubberplant
(*Hymenoxys richardsonii*)
- Ox-eye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*)
- Pineapple Weed (*Matricaria discoidea*)
- Scentless Chamomile
(*Matricaria perforata*)
- Woolly Groundsel (*Packera cana*)
- Perennial Sow Thistle (*Sonchus arvensis*)
- Common Dandelion
(*Taraxacum officinale*)
- Yellow Goat's-beard (*Tragopogon dubius*)

Species	May 29 2016	May 24 2015	May 25 2014	May 26 2013	May 27 2012
Canada Goose	594	481	668	615	313
Wood Duck	-	3	3	2	7
Gadwall	12	36	26	42	18
Eurasian Wigeon	2	-	1	-	-
American Wigeon	15	25	8	35	11
Mallard	257	291	284	248	303
Blue-winged Teal	32	52	191	27	105
Cinnamon Teal	9	-	10 <i>high</i>	4	6
Northern Shoveler	35	55	177	37	85
Northern Pintail	16	35	36	16	42
Green-winged Teal	1	5	13 <i>high</i>	-	10
Canvasback	23	6	29	9	47
Redhead	17	1	13	7	3
Ring-necked Duck	-	-	4	-	-
Greater Scaup	2	2	-	2	-
Lesser Scaup	7	7	15	24	27
Bufflehead	1	2	-	2	12
Common Goldeneye	8	11	4	10	12
Hooded Merganser	-	-	2	-	-
Common Merganser	18	16	8	18	12
Red-breasted Merganser	2 <i>high</i>	1	-	-	-
Ruddy Duck	15	-	6	-	-
Gray Partridge	22	43 <i>high</i>	30	14	8
Ring-necked Pheasant	90	131 <i>high</i>	130 <i>high</i>	77	55
Sharp-tailed Grouse	1	4	3	2	-
Pied-billed Grebe	1	1	-	-	-
Horned Grebe	2	2	31 <i>high</i>	-	1
Eared Grebe	12	7	11	-	2
Western Grebe	-	2	-	1	3
White Pelican	29	23	17	58	66
Double-crested Cormorant	16	6	-	8	-
Great Blue Heron	160	40	110	47	40
Turkey Vulture	8	9	13	12	1
Osprey	-	-	2	-	1
Bald Eagle	1	3	3	6	1
Northern Harrier	7	5	2	1	3
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	-	-	-	-
Cooper's Hawk	3	4 <i>high</i>	2	-	1
Hawk Species	1	-	-	-	-
Broad-winged Hawk	-	1	-	-	-
Swainson's Hawk	21	35	28	20	16
Red-tailed Hawk	21	24 <i>high</i>	15	11	7
Ferruginous Hawk	1	1	1	2	1
Rough-legged Hawk	2 <i>high</i>	-	-	-	1
Golden Eagle	-	2	-	-	2

Species	May 29 2016	May 24 2015	May 25 2014	May 26 2013	May 27 2012
American Kestrel	14	12	8	9	5 <i>low</i>
Merlin	7	7	7	4	4
Prairie Falcon	2	6	5	7 <i>high</i>	1
Sora	3	1	2	1	3
American Coot	5	- <i>low</i>	24	4 <i>low</i>	9
Sandhill Crane	-	-	CW	-	-
Killdeer	50	38	31	16 <i>low</i>	39
Black-necked Stilt	-	-	-	-	-
American Avocet	1	2	15	2	4
Solitary Sandpiper	-	-	12	-	-
Willet	5	7	7	16	2 <i>low</i>
Spotted Sandpiper	12	25	19	20	28
Upland Sandpiper	-	3	1	-	-
Long-billed Curlew	7	10	9	3	8
Marbled Godwit	5 <i>low</i>	48	10	36	6 <i>low</i>
Semipalmated Sandpiper	-	-	1	28 <i>high</i>	-
“Peeps” Species	-	-	2	-	-
Long-billed Dowitcher	-	4 NEW!	-	-	-
Wilson’s Snipe	7	22	17	8	22
Wilson’s Phalarope	38	31	49	10	57 <i>high</i>
Franklin’s Gull	191	50	92	44	200
Ring-billed Gull	288	265	101	174	842
California Gull	30	45	19	44	164
Herring Gull	-	-	-	4	-
“White-headed Gulls”	15	11	1	10	12
Caspian Tern	1	-	1	2	-
Common Tern	5	-	1	-	10
Black Tern	7	1	1	-	-
Rock Pigeon	568	281	289	219	486
Eurasian-collared Dove	80 <i>high</i>	35	59 <i>high</i>	23 <i>high</i>	7
Mourning Dove	162	248	275	214	109
Great Horned Owl	9	16	7	5	3
Northern Saw-whet Owl	-	CW	-	-	-
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	-	-	1	-	-
Belted Kingfisher	3	3	4	3	6
Red-headed Woodpecker	-	-	-	-	CW
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	-	-	1	-	-
Downy Woodpecker	13	18	26	14	12
Hairy Woodpecker	3	3	3	2	3
Northern Flicker	52	51	62	85 <i>high</i>	33
Pileated Woodpecker	-	2	2	1	3 <i>high</i>
Western Wood Pewee	4	-	7	5	2
Willow Flycatcher	-	-	1	-	-
Alder Flycatcher	2	-	-	-	-

Species	May 29 2016	May 24 2015	May 25 2014	May 26 2013	May 27 2012
“Trail’s Flycatcher” = (Alder & Willow Flycatcher)	-	-	-	-	-
Least Flycatcher	29	55	74	40	44
Empidonax Species	-	7	-	-	-
Dusky Flycatcher	CW	-	-	-	-
Eastern Phoebe	-	-	-	1	-
Say’s Phoebe	-	4	3	1	2
Western Kingbird	37	39	77	58	55
Eastern Kingbird	82	47	72	73	24
Loggerhead Shrike	4	1	-	-	3
Northern Shrike	-	-	1	-	-
Warbling Vireo	22	11	26	31	20
Red-eyed Vireo	1	2	7	14 high	-
Blue Jay	33 high	16	21	26 high	6
Black-billed Magpie	377	259	246	243	148
American Crow	158	153	89	87	71
Common Raven	5	1	2	2	-
Horned Lark	2	13	17	13	1 low
Tree Swallow	174	119	156	113	80
Violet-green Swallow	20	5	25	17	28
N. Roughed-winged Swallow	4	39 high	11	20	4
Bank Swallow	41	115	30	25	97
Cliff Swallow	37	77	10	33	3 low
Barn Swallow	64	29	75	26	43
Swallow Species	-	-	2	-	10
Black-capped Chickadee	109 high	69	88 high	32	39
Red-breasted Nuthatch	17	16	9	18	13
White-breasted Nuthatch	2	-	2	-	-
Brown Creeper	-	-	3 high	-	-
Rock Wren	7	5	16	13	4
House Wren	175	231	187	180	102
Marsh Wren	1	-	-	1	-
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	-	1	-	-	-
Mountain Bluebird	1	2	2	-	-
Townsend’s Solitaire	-	-	1	1	-
Veery	-	-	5	4	-
Gray-cheeked Thrush	-	-	2	2	-
Swainson’s Thrush	13	-	51	18	4
Hermit Thrush	-	-	3	-	-
American Robin	826	858	762	555	628
Gray Catbird	67	29	61	19	23
Brown Thrasher	24	30	37	26	6 low
European Starling	1,138	812	1,146	793	562
Sprague’s Pipit	2	16	5	4	1
Cedar Waxwing	37	-	26	36	10

Species	May 29 2016	May 24 2015	May 25 2014	May 26 2013	May 27 2012
Tennessee Warbler	1	4	11	2	-
Orange-crowned Warbler	-	-	6	-	-
Yellow Warbler	318	335	439	327	215
Magnolia Warbler	-	-	-	-	CW
Yellow-rumped Warbler	3	2	2	4	-
Palm Warbler	-	-	1 NEW!	-	-
Blackpoll Warbler	2	-	4	-	-
American Redstart	-	1	5	-	2
Ovenbird	-	-	1	2	-
MacGillivray's Warbler	-	-	-	-	3
Common Yellowthroat	26	22	25	8	7 low
Wilson's Warbler	-	-	1	-	-
Canada Warbler	-	-	1	-	-
Yellow-breasted Chat	3	4	4	1	1
Warbler Species	-	2	-	-	-
Western Tanager	-	-	CW	1	-
Spotted Towhee	24	27	25	12	18
Chipping Sparrow	59	100	325 high	165	15
Clay-coloured Sparrow	97	191 high	122	87	23
Brewer's Sparrow	1	-	-	-	-
American Tree Sparrow	-	6	9	-	-
Vesper Sparrow	99	150 high	87	74	55
Lark Sparrow	21	16	20	24	13
Lark Bunting	5	4	9	4	7
Savannah Sparrow	65	78	85 high	73 high	20
Grasshopper Sparrow	4	5	1	2	-
Baird's Sparrow	-	5	6	1	-
Le Conte's Sparrow	-	1	-	-	-
Song Sparrow	20	16	26 high	16	2
Lincoln's Sparrow	-	-	-	2	-
White-throated Sparrow	1	-	-	9	-
Harris's Sparrow	-	-	-	4	-
White-crowned Sparrow	2	1	16	3	-
Sparrow Species	-	-	-	-	40
Dark-eyed Junco	1	1	2	2	-
Chestnut-collared Longspur	-	2	-	3	-
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	12	2	1	1	-
Black-headed Grosbeak	-	-	-	-	-
Lazuli Bunting	8	5	10	1	2
Bobolink	-	-	1	-	-
Red-winged Blackbird	445	461	479	438	505
Western Meadowlark	473	452	408	184	257
Yellow-headed Blackbird	103	48	69	56	55
Brewer's Blackbird	346	333	305	159	335
Common Grackle	480 high	417	273	214	310

Species	May 29 2016	May 24 2015	May 25 2014	May 26 2013	May 27 2012
Brown-headed Cowbird	69	120	130	49	80
Baltimore Oriole	30	48	58	34	35
Purple Finch	-	-	-	1	-
House Finch	92	93	128	74	53
Red Crossbill	-	-	-	20 high	1
Common Redpoll	-	-	1	3	-
Pine Siskin	1	4	-	13	1
American Goldfinch	70	53	42	26	45
Evening Grosbeak	1	-	-	-	-
House Sparrow	531	465	558	432	307
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	9,977	9,152	10,114	7,453	7,740
TOTAL SPECIES	130	126	144	130	113