



MH Interpretive Program

managed by Grasslands Naturalists
based in Police Point Park

July 4, 2018

2018 MEDICINE HAT SPRING BIRD AND FLOWER COUNT **Sunday, May 27**

Fellow Birders and Flower Watchers:

The 34th Spring Count was blessed with good weather – temperatures were relatively seasonal (high 29° C, low 11° C) and winds were moderate (4-17 km/hr). With these good conditions, 129 species were observed, which was up 1 species from 2017 and fairly typical for our count in the past 4 years. Individual birds counted (9,955) increased about 15% from 2017 and returned to similar levels observed on the 2014-2016 counts (see Data Summary Table, page 3). Species that were down in 2017 had mixed returns in 2018. Three species of Icterids (Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, and Baltimore Oriole) increased whereas 4 species (Western Meadowlark, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Brewer's Blackbird, and Common Grackle) decreased. Other species rebounding in 2018 were Canada Goose, Mallard, Ring-billed Gull, Black-capped Chickadee, and House (English) Sparrow. However, Great Blue Heron, Rock Pigeon, Vesper and Savannah Sparrows declined for a second consecutive count.

The number of species with high counts increased in 2018 as well. All time highs were observed for Turkey Vulture, Merlin, Eurasian-collared Dove, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, House Wren, and American Robin (see Species Table, page 6). Only 3 species had highs in 2017. Other species with notable increases from 2017 were Canvasback, Redhead, White Pelican, American Coot, Franklin's Gull, California Gull, Mourning Dove, Western Wood Pewee, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Cedar Waxwing, Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, and American Goldfinch. In 2018, there was only 1 species with an all time low: Northern Pintail. No new species were observed in 2018 and no species were seen exclusively during count week but not on count day.

Species missing from this year's count that are usually seen included Wood Duck, Eurasian Wigeon, Bufflehead, Pied-billed Grebe, Western Grebe, Osprey, Sharp-shinned Hawk, American Avocet, Upland Sandpiper, Black Tern, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Mountain Bluebird, Townsend's Solitaire, Blackpoll Warbler, American Tree Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Chestnut-collared Longspur, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Pine Siskin.

Less frequently seen species noted in 2017 were Golden Eagle (1), Broad-winged Hawk (1), Solitary Sandpiper (1), Semipalmated Sandpiper (1), Herring Gull (6), Common Tern (1), Common Nighthawk (1), Yellow-bellied sapsucker (1), Pileated Woodpecker (1), Eastern Phoebe (1), Say's Phoebe (2), Orange-crowned Warbler (1), Wilson's Warbler (1), American Redstart (1), Brewer's Sparrow (2), Baird's Sparrow (1), Indigo Bunting (3), and Bobolink (1). Herring Gull and Eastern Phoebe were last seen during the count in 2013, Common Nighthawk in 2010, and Indigo Bunting in 2005.

The Top 10 for 2018 were European Starling (1,275), American Robin (950), Canada Goose (713), Red-winged Blackbird (465), Yellow Warbler (444), Common Grackle (418),

House (English) Sparrow (402), Ring-billed Gull (341), Western Meadowlark (339), and House Wren (314). Two species, Ring-billed Gull and House (English) Sparrow, returned to the Top 10 in 2018 replacing Rock Pigeon and Black-billed Magpie; those later 2 species fell to positions 11 and 12.

As for flowers, 65 species were observed in bloom, which was down for a second straight year but still relatively similar when compared to previous years (see Data Summary Table, page 3 and Flower List, page 5).

Count effort was excellent in 2018. Participants (36) were down slightly from 2017 whereas observation hours (106.5) increased (see Data Summary Table, page 3). Many thanks to all those who volunteered their time this year!

Yours truly,

Marty Drut

Marty Drut
Count Compiler



New Species Observed in 2018: None

Table 1. 2018 Spring Bird Count All Time High and Low Observations.

2018 Spring Bird Count - Highs and Lows			
Species	High	Previous High	Year
Turkey Vulture	42	23	2008
Merlin	11	10 (4 times)	2010 (Most recent)
Eurasian-collared Dove	81	80	2016
Northern Flicker	93	85	2013, 1995
Blue Jay	34	33	2016
House Wren	314	272	2002
American Robin	950	918	2010
Species	Low	Previous Low	Year
Northern Pintail	11	14	1998

DATA SUMMARY 2014 - 2018					
	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Total Individuals	9,955	8,625	9,977	9,152	10,114
Total Bird Species	129	128	130	126	144
Total Flower Species	65	68	75	66	60
Participants	36	38	41	38	37
Total Km Walked	102.3	123	166.8	123.5	139
Total Km Driven	556.5	530	509.5	434	272
Total Km Biked	5	-	-	-	-
Hours of Observation	106.5	101.5	105	99	101.5
on foot:	52	64.25	64	52	70
by car:	47	35.25	38	37	29.5
by bicycle:	1.5	-	-	-	-
feeder:	6	2	3	10	2

PARTICIPANTS

Marty Drut
Mark Schiebelbein
Ben Verner
Michael Verner
Alfred Keep
Rob Gardner
Corlaine Gardner
Bob Frew
Phil Horch
Annalora Horch
Martha Munz Gue
Milt Spitzer
Elaine Spitzer
Cam Lockerbie
Jim Knelson
Colton Prins
Meaghan Morter
Donna Steele
Sue Higgins
Eileen Cowtan
Jo-Anne Reynolds
Ian Turner
Angela Turner
Linda Fisher
Valerie Martins
Barry Anderson
Judy Anderson
Lauren Hider
John Slater
Val Felesky
Fay Felesky
Betty Rainville
Jim Black
Darlene Black
Cash Moore
Mark Oxmitny



Wildflowers in Bloom 2018 (65 Species):

- Prairie Onion (*Allium textile*)
- Star-flowered Soloman's-seal
(*Maianthemum stellatum*)
- Willow (*Salix sp.*)
- Pale Comandra (Bastard Toadflax)
(*Comandra umbellata*)
- Sand Dock (*Rumex venosus*)
- Field Chickweed (*Cerastium arvense*)
- Wild Mustard (*Brassica kaber*)
- Shepherd's Purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*)
- Tansy Mustard (*Descurainia sophia*)
- Western Wallflower (Prairie Rocket)
(*Erysimum asperum*)
- Dame's Rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*)
- Pennycress (Stinkweed) (*Thlaspi arvense*)
- Ball Mustard (*Neslia paniculata*)
- Flixweed (*Descurainia sophia*)
- Golden Currant (*Ribes aureum*)
- Saskatoon (*Amelanchier alnifolia*)
- Three-flowered Avens (*Geum triflorum*)
- Silverweed (*Potentilla anserina*)
- Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*)
- Common Wild Rose (*Rosa woodsii*)
- Two-grooved Milk Vetch
(*Astragalus bisulcatus*)
- Purple Milk Vetch (*Astragalus dasyglottis*)
- Missouri Milk Vetch
(*Astragalus missouriensis*)
- Narrow-leaved Milk Vetch
(*Astragalus pectinatus*)
- Tufted Milk Vetch (*Astragalus spatulatus*)
- Common Caragana (*Caragana arborescens*)
- Wild Licorice (*Glycyrrhiza lepidota*)
- Black Medic (*Medicago lupulina*)
- Early Yellow Locoweed (*Oxytropis sericea*)
- Golden Bean (*Thermopsis rhombifolia*)
- Wild Vetch (*Vicia americana*)
- Tufted Vetch (*Vicia cracca*)
- Wild Blue Flax (*Linum lewisii*)
- Leafy Spurge (*Euphorbia esula*)
- Skunk-bush (Fragrant Sumac)
(*Rhus trilobata*)
- Scarlet Mallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*)
- Early Blue Violet (*Viola adunca*)
- Yellow (Nuttall's) Prairie Violet
(*Viola nuttallii*)
- Pincushion Cactus (*Corypantha vivipara*)
- Prickly-pear Cactus (*Opuntia polyacantha*)
- Silverberry (*Elaeagnus commutata*)
- Scarlet Butterfly-weed (*Gaura coccinea*)
- Red-osier Dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*)
- Showy Milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*)
- Moss Phlox (*Phlox hoodii*)
- Blue Bur (*Lappula squarrosa*)
- Narrow-leaved Puccoon
(*Lithospermum incisum*)
- Stoneseed (*Lithospermum ruderales*)
- Butter and Eggs (Toad-flax)
(*Linaria vulgaris*)
- White Beard-tongue
(*Penstemon albidus*)
- Tartarian Honeysuckle (*Lonicera tatarica*)
- Common Lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*)
- Common Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)
- Tufted (Low) Fleabane
(*Erigeron caespitosus*)
- Colorado Rubberplant
(*Hymenoxys richardsonii*)
- Common Dandelion
(*Taraxacum officinale*)
- Yellow Goat's-beard (*Tragopogon dubius*)
- Perennial Sow Thistle (*Sonchus arvensis*)

Others observed (not in taxonomic order):

- Mountain Ash (*Sorbus sp.*)
- Sedge (*Carex sp.*)
- Reflexed Rock Cress (*Arabis holboelli*)
- Hoary Cress (*Lepidium sp.*)
- Field Bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*)
- Elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa*)
- Common Baby's-breath
(*Gypsophila paniculata*)

Species	May 27 2018	May 28 2017	May 29 2016	May 24 2015	May 25 2014
Canada Goose	713	533	594	481	668
Wood Duck	-	1	-	3	3
Gadwall	15	35	12	36	26
Eurasian Wigeon	-	-	2	-	1
American Wigeon	22	23	15	25	8
Mallard	197	181	257	291	284
Blue-winged Teal	75	31	32	52	191
Cinnamon Teal	2	8	9	-	10 <i>high</i>
Northern Shoveler	44	40	35	55	177
Northern Pintail	11 <i>low</i>	27	16	35	36
Green-winged Teal	2	5	1	5	13 <i>high</i>
Canvasback	20	7	23	6	29
Redhead	25	7	17	1	13
Ring-necked Duck	-	-	-	-	4
Greater Scaup	5	2	2	2	-
Lesser Scaup	4	8	7	7	15
Bufflehead	-	2	1	2	-
Common Goldeneye	8	11	8	11	4
Hooded Merganser	-	-	-	-	2
Common Merganser	30	31	18	16	8
Red-breasted Merganser	-	-	2 <i>high</i>	1	-
Ruddy Duck	3	-	15	-	6
Gray Partridge	22	5	22	43 <i>high</i>	30
Ring-necked Pheasant	91	102	90	131 <i>high</i>	130 <i>high</i>
Sharp-tailed Grouse	2	1	1	4	3
Pied-billed Grebe	-	-	1	1	-
Horned Grebe	1	3	2	2	31 <i>high</i>
Eared Grebe	2	3	12	7	11
Western Grebe	-	1	-	2	-
White Pelican	87	50	29	23	17
Double-crested Cormorant	6	25	16	6	-
Great Blue Heron	72	90	160	40	110
Turkey Vulture	42 <i>high</i>	12	8	9	13
Osprey	-	4	-	-	2
Bald Eagle	2	4	1	3	3
Northern Harrier	1	8	7	5	2
Sharp-shinned Hawk	-	2	2	-	-
Cooper's Hawk	2	6 <i>high</i>	3	4 <i>high</i>	2
Hawk Species	2	12	1	-	-
Broad-winged Hawk	1	3 <i>high</i>	-	1	-
Swainson's Hawk	22	24	21	35	28
Red-tailed Hawk	15	17	21	24 <i>high</i>	15
Ferruginous Hawk	5	1	1	1	1
Rough-legged Hawk	-	-	2 <i>high</i>	-	-

Species	May 27 2018	May 28 2017	May 29 2016	May 24 2015	May 25 2014
Golden Eagle	1	-	-	2	-
American Kestrel	8	6	14	12	8
Merlin	11 <i>high</i>	4	7	7	7
Prairie Falcon	3	5	2	6	5
Falcon Species	-	1	-	-	-
Sora	11	4	3	1	2
American Coot	12	1	5	- <i>low</i>	24
Sandhill Crane	-	-	-	-	CW
Killdeer	25	44	50	38	31
American Avocet	-	2	1	2	15
Solitary Sandpiper	1	-	-	-	12
Willet	2	7	5	7	7
Spotted Sandpiper	17	19	12	25	19
Upland Sandpiper	-	2	-	3	1
Long-billed Curlew	8	13	7	10	9
Marbled Godwit	8	14	5 <i>low</i>	48	10
Semipalmated Sandpiper	1	-	-	-	1
"Peeps" Species	1	-	-	-	2
Long-billed Dowitcher	-	-	-	4 NEW	-
Wilson's Snipe	14	11	7	22	17
Wilson's Phalarope	16	33	38	31	49
Franklin's Gull	173	12	191	50	92
Ring-billed Gull	341	230	288	265	101
California Gull	56	22	30	45	19
Herring Gull	6	-	-	-	-
"White-headed Gulls"	21	40	15	11	1
Caspian Tern	2	1	1	-	1
Common Tern	1	-	5	-	1
Black Tern	-	-	7	1	1
Rock Pigeon	309	312	568	281	289
Eurasian-collared Dove	126 <i>high</i>	81 <i>high</i>	80 <i>high</i>	35	59 <i>high</i>
Mourning Dove	247	165	162	248	275
Great Horned Owl	2	6	9	16	7
Short-eared Owl	-	5	-	-	-
Northern Saw-whet Owl	-	-	-	CW	-
Common Nighthawk	1	-	-	-	-
Black Swift	-	2 NEW	-	-	-
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	-	-	-	-	1
Belted Kingfisher	4	5	3	3	4
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	-	-	-	1
Downy Woodpecker	12	12	13	18	26
Hairy Woodpecker	4	1	3	3	3
Northern Flicker	93 <i>high</i>	65	52	51	62
Pileated Woodpecker	1	1	-	2	2
Western Wood Pewee	19	3	4	-	7

Species	May 27 2018	May 28 2017	May 29 2016	May 24 2015	May 25 2014
Willow Flycatcher	-	-	-	-	1
Alder Flycatcher	-	1	2	-	-
Least Flycatcher	75	36	29	55	74
Empidonax Species	6	-	-	7	-
Dusky Flycatcher	-	-	CW¹	-	-
Eastern Phoebe	1	-	-	-	-
Say's Phoebe	2	4	-	4	3
Western Kingbird	47	54	37	39	77
Eastern Kingbird	49	12 low	82	47	72
Loggerhead Shrike	3	-	4	1	-
Northern Shrike	-	-	-	-	1
Warbling Vireo	37	9	22	11	26
Red-eyed Vireo	2	2	1	2	7
Blue Jay	34 high	25	33 high	16	21
Black-billed Magpie	300	401	377	259	246
American Crow	170	143	158	153	89
Common Raven	3	1	5	1	2
Horned Lark	4	5	2	13	17
Tree Swallow	93	153	174	119	156
Violet-green Swallow	34	61 high	20	5	25
N. Roughed-winged Swallow	11	14	4	39 high	11
Bank Swallow	37	23	41	115	30
Cliff Swallow	13	6	37	77	10
Barn Swallow	28	27	64	29	75
Swallow Species	4	23	-	-	2
Black-capped Chickadee	107	66	109 high	69	88 high
Red-breasted Nuthatch	23	32 high	17	16	9
White-breasted Nuthatch	-	2	2	-	2
Brown Creeper	-	-	-	-	3 high
Rock Wren	2	-	7	5	16
House Wren	314 high	285	175	231	187
Marsh Wren	-	-	1	-	-
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	-	-	-	1	-
Mountain Bluebird	-	-	1	2	2
Townsend's Solitaire	-	-	-	-	1
Veery	-	2	-	-	5
Gray-cheeked Thrush	-	-	-	-	2
Swainson's Thrush	4	10	13	-	51
Hermit Thrush	-	3	-	-	3
American Robin	950 high	787	826	858	762
Gray Catbird	77	67	67	29	61
Brown Thrasher	21	18	24	30	37
European Starling	1,275	1,168	1,138	812	1,146
Sprague's Pipit	2	5	2	16	5
Cedar Waxwing	23	7	37	-	26

Species	May 27 2018	May 28 2017	May 29 2016	May 24 2015	May 25 2014
Tennessee Warbler	1	2	1	4	11
Orange-crowned Warbler	1	1	-	-	6
Yellow Warbler	444	387	318	335	439
Yellow-rumped Warbler	10	-	3	2	2
Palm Warbler	-	-	-	-	1 NEW
Blackpoll Warbler	-	1	2	-	4
American Redstart	1	-	-	1	5
Ovenbird	-	-	-	-	1
Common Yellowthroat	41	7 low	26	22	25
Wilson's Warbler	1	-	-	-	1
Canada Warbler	-	-	-	-	1
Yellow-breasted Chat	3	1	3	4	4
Warbler Species	2	2	-	2	-
Western Tanager	-	-	-	-	CW
Spotted Towhee	29	29	24	27	25
Chipping Sparrow	85	76	59	100	325 high
Clay-coloured Sparrow	75	93	97	191 high	122
Brewer's Sparrow	2	-	1	-	-
American Tree Sparrow	-	2	-	6	9
Vesper Sparrow	53	69	99	150 high	87
Lark Sparrow	16	15	21	16	20
Lark Bunting	-	4	5	4	9
Savannah Sparrow	29	32	65	78	85 high
Grasshopper Sparrow	2	-	4	5	1
Baird's Sparrow	1	3	-	5	6
Le Conte's Sparrow	-	-	-	1	-
Song Sparrow	11	14	20	16	26 high
Lincoln's Sparrow	-	2	-	-	-
White-throated Sparrow	-	-	1	-	-
White-crowned Sparrow	6	-	2	1	16
Sparrow Species	139	18	-	-	-
Dark-eyed Junco	2	2	1	1	2
Chestnut-collared Longspur	-	3	-	2	-
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	-	-	12	2	1
Lazuli Bunting	9	9	8	5	10
Indigo Bunting	3	-	-	-	-
Bobolink	1	-	-	-	1
Red-winged Blackbird	465	355	445	461	479
Western Meadowlark	339	378	473	452	408
Yellow-headed Blackbird	84	94	103	48	69
Brewer's Blackbird	123	260	346	333	305
Common Grackle	418	442	480 high	417	273
Brown-headed Cowbird	70	48	69	120	130
Baltimore Oriole	47	15 low	30	48	58
House Finch	89	76	92	93	128

Species	May 27 2018	May 28 2017	May 29 2016	May 24 2015	May 25 2014
Common Redpoll	2	-	-	-	1
Pine Siskin	-	-	1	4	-
American Goldfinch	89	57	70	53	42
Evening Grosbeak	-	-	1	-	-
House Sparrow	402	221	531	465	558
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	9,955	8,625	9,977	9,152	10,114
TOTAL SPECIES	129	128	130	126	144

¹CW indicates species seen during count week but not on count day