



MH Interpretive Program

managed by Grasslands Naturalists
based in Police Point Park

June 19, 2019

2019 MEDICINE HAT SPRING BIRD AND FLOWER COUNT **Sunday, May 26**

Fellow Birders and Flower Watchers:

The 35th Spring Count had relatively seasonal temperatures (high 19° C, low 7° C) but winds were high (NE-E, 20-20, gust to 40 km/hr). Despite the windy conditions, 128 species were observed, which was down only 1 species from 2018 and fairly typical for our count in the past 4 years. However, individual birds counted (8,900) decreased about 11 % from 2018 (see Data Summary Table, page 3).

There was one species with an all-time high count, European Starling (1,649; previous high 1,405 in 1987). Although high counts were fewer than 2018 (7), several species had notable upticks in 2019 including Common Merganser, Northern Harrier, Long-billed Curlew, Ring-billed Gull, Downy Woodpecker, Cliff Swallow, Chipping Sparrow, Brewer's Blackbird, and House Finch (see Species Table, page 6).

Two species that have been observed in every year had all-time low counts, Northern Pintail and American Kestrel. Pintails matched their low count of 11 set in 2018 whereas Kestrels previous low was 5 in 2011. Several species showed declines for the past 3 counts: Great-blue Heron, Killdeer, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Yellow-headed Blackbird, and Common Grackle (see Species Table, page 6).

No new species were observed in 2019. Four species, Magnolia Warbler, Ovenbird, Canada Warbler, and Western Tanager, were seen exclusively during count week but not on count day.

Species missing from this year's count that are usually seen included Green-winged Teal, Greater Scaup, Ruddy Duck, Pied-billed Grebe, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Osprey, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Black Tern, Red-eyed Vireo, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brewer's Sparrow, Baird's Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, and Chestnut-collared Longspur.

Less frequently seen species noted in 2019 were Wood Duck (1), Eurasian Wigeon (2), Bufflehead (5), Western Grebe (1), American Avocet (1), Upland Sandpiper (1), Ruby-throated Hummingbird (1), Marsh Wren (1), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (1), Gray-cheeked Thrush (1), Nashville Warbler (1), Blackpoll Warbler (9), White-throated Sparrow (2), Rose-breasted Grosbeak (1), Black-headed Grosbeak (2), and Pine Siskin (1). This year was the first Ruby-throated Hummingbird sighting since 1995 and only the third overall for our count.

The Top 10 for 2019 were European Starling (1,649), American Robin (725), Canada Goose (569), Red-winged Blackbird (424), House (English) Sparrow (411), Ring-billed Gull (409), Rock Pigeon (350), Common Grackle (323), Yellow Warbler (323), and Black-billed Magpie (299). Two species, Rock Pigeon and Black-billed magpie, returned to the Top 10 in 2019 replacing Western Meadowlark and House Wren; those later 2 species fell to positions 11 and 14.

As for flowers, 55 species were observed in bloom, which was down for a third straight year and represented a 20% decrease from the past 4-year average (68.5) (see Data Summary Table, page 3 and Flower List, page 5).

Count effort was excellent in 2019. Participants (40) were up slightly from 2018 whereas observation hours (102.5) decreased (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 2019: None. Rare sighting of Ruby-throated Hummingbird (1).

Table 1. 2019 Spring Bird Count All-time High and Low Observations.

2019 Spring Bird Count - Highs and Lows			
Species	High	Previous High	Year
European Starling	1,649	1,405	1987
Species	Low	Previous Low	Year
Northern Pintail	11	11	2018
American Kestrel	3	5	2011

DATA SUMMARY 2015 - 2019					
	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Total Individuals	8,900	9,955	8,625	9,977	9,152
Total Bird Species	128	129	128	130	126
Total Flower Species	55	65	68	75	66
Participants	40	36	38	41	38
Total Km Walked	85	102.3	123	166.8	123.5
Total Km Driven	495	556.5	530	509.5	434
Total Km Biked	8	5	-	-	-
Hours of Observation	102.5	106.5	101.5	105	99
on foot:	52	52	64.25	64	52
by car:	45.5	47	35.25	38	37
by bicycle:	2	1.5	-	-	-
feeder:	3	6	2	3	10

PARTICIPANTS

Marty Drut
Dan Schiebelbein
Mark Schiebelbein
Ian Wallis
Wendy Blackwell
Ben Verner
Michael Verner
Rob Gardner
Corlaine Gardner
Justine Bolen
Milt Spitzer
Elaine Spitzer
Phil Horch
Annalora Horch
Christine Foster
Donna Steele
Sue Higgins
Eileen Cowtan
Cam Lockerbie
Colton Prins
Ben Meakin
Mark Oxamitny
Hugh Armstrong
Dee Armstrong
Ian Turner
Angela Turner
David McKenzie
Anne McKenzie
Linda Fisher
Jill Gatfield
Barrett Wolski
Barry Anderson
Judy Anderson
John Slater
Val Felesky
Fay Felesky
Betty Rainville
Jim Black
Dale Holmes
Lisa Holmes



Wildflowers in Bloom 2019 (55 Species):

- Prairie Onion (*Allium textile*)
- Star-flowered Solomon'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/Flixweed
(*Descurainia sophia*)
- Western Wallflower (Prairie Rocket)
(*Erysimum asperum*)
- Dame's Rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*)
- Pennycress (Stinkweed) (*Thlaspi arvense*)
- Ball Mustard (*Neslia paniculata*)
- Dog Mustard (*Erucastrum gallicum*)
- Golden Currant (*Ribes aureum*)
- Saskatoon (*Amelanchier alnifolia*)
- Three-flowered Avens (*Geum triflorum*)
- Shrubby Cinquefoil (*Potentilla fruticosa*)
- Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*)
- Pin Cherry (*Prunus pensylvanica*)
- Two-grooved Milk Vetch
(*Astragalus bisulcatus*)
- Missouri Milk Vetch
(*Astragalus missouriensis*)
- Narrow-leaved Milk Vetch
(*Astragalus pectinatus*)
- Common Caragana (*Caragana arborescens*)
- Early Yellow Locoweed (*Oxytropis sericea*)
- Golden Bean (*Thermopsis rhombifolia*)
- Wild Vetch (*Vicia americana*)
- Wild Blue Flax (*Linum lewisii*)
- Leafy Spurge (*Euphorbia esula*)
- Skunk-bush (Fragrant Sumac)
(*Rhus trilobata*)
- Scarlet Mallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*)
- Prickly-pear Cactus (*Opuntia polyacantha*)
- Scarlet Butterfly-weed (*Gaura coccinea*)
- Red-osier Dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*)
- Showy Milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*)
- Moss Phlox (*Phlox hoodii*)
- Western Blue Bur (*Lappula occidentalis*)
- Narrow-leaved Puccoon
(*Lithospermum incisum*)
- Stoneseed (*Lithospermum ruderale*)
- Smooth Blue Beard-tongue
(*Penstemon nitidus*)
- Tartarian Honeysuckle (*Lonicera tatarica*)
- Common Lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*)
- Common Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)
- Low Everlasting (Pussy-toes)
(*Antennaria aprica*)
- Colorado Rubberplant
(*Hymenoxys richardsonii*)
- Common Dandelion
(*Taraxacum officinale*)
- Yellow Goat's-beard (*Tragopogon dubius*)
- Perennial Sow Thistle (*Sonchus arvensis*)
- Pineapple Weed (*Madricaria discoidea*)
- Pasture Sage (*Artemisia frigida*)
- Wormwood Sage/Absinthe
(*Artemisia absinthium*)
- Skeleton Weed (*Lygodesmia juncea*)

Others observed (not in taxonomic order):

- Hawthorn (*Crataegus* sp.)
- Stickseed (*Hackelia floribunda*)
- Thorny Buffaloberry
(*Shepherdia canadensis*)

Species	May 26 2019	May 27 2018	May 28 2017	May 29 2016	May 24 2015
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Canada Goose	569	713	533	594	481
Wood Duck	1	-	1	-	3
Gadwall	11	15	35	12	36
Eurasian Wigeon	2	-	-	2	-
American Wigeon	6	22	23	15	25
Mallard	178	197	181	257	291
Blue-winged Teal	61	75	31	32	52
Cinnamon Teal	2	2	8	9	-
Northern Shoveler	48	44	40	35	55
Northern Pintail	11 <i>low</i>	11 <i>low</i>	27	16	35
Green-winged Teal	-	2	5	1	5
Canvasback	5	20	7	23	6
Redhead	17	25	7	17	1
Ring-necked Duck	-	-	-	-	-
Greater Scaup	-	5	2	2	2
Lesser Scaup	8	4	8	7	7
Bufflehead	5	-	2	1	2
Common Goldeneye	21	8	11	8	11
Common Merganser	32	30	31	18	16
Red-breasted Merganser	-	-	-	2 <i>high</i>	1
Ruddy Duck	-	3	-	15	-
Duck Species	1	-	-	-	-
Gray Partridge	9	22	5	22	43 <i>high</i>
Ring-necked Pheasant	84	91	102	90	131 <i>high</i>
Sharp-tailed Grouse	-	2	1	1	4
Pied-billed Grebe	-	-	-	1	1
Horned Grebe	2	1	3	2	2
Eared Grebe	2	2	3	12	7
Western Grebe	1	-	1	-	2
White Pelican	29	87	50	29	23
Double-crested Cormorant	13	6	25	16	6
Great Blue Heron	67	72	90	160	40
American Bittern	1	-	-	-	-
Turkey Vulture	26	42 <i>high</i>	12	8	9
Osprey	-	-	4	-	-
Bald Eagle	5	2	4	1	3
Northern Harrier	8	1	8	7	5
Sharp-shinned Hawk	-	-	2	2	-
Cooper's Hawk	5	2	6 <i>high</i>	3	4 <i>high</i>
Hawk Species	6	2	12	1	-
Broad-winged Hawk	-	1	3 <i>high</i>	-	1
Swainson's Hawk	27	22	24	21	35
Red-tailed Hawk	18	15	17	21	24 <i>high</i>

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Ferruginous Hawk	4	5	1	1	1
Rough-legged Hawk	-	-	-	2 high	-
Golden Eagle	1	1	-	-	2
American Kestrel	3 low	8	6	14	12
Merlin	2	11 high	4	7	7
Prairie Falcon	2	3	5	2	6
Falcon Species	-	-	1	-	-
Sora	2	11	4	3	1
American Coot	5	12	1	5	- low
Killdeer	19	25	44	50	38
American Avocet	1	-	2	1	2
Solitary Sandpiper	-	1	-	-	-
Willet	6	2	7	5	7
Spotted Sandpiper	12	17	19	12	25
Upland Sandpiper	1	-	2	-	3
Long-billed Curlew	15	8	13	7	10
Marbled Godwit	10	8	14	5 low	48
Semipalmated Sandpiper	-	1	-	-	-
"Peeps" Species	-	1	-	-	-
Long-billed Dowitcher	-	-	-	-	4 NEW
Wilson's Snipe	8	14	11	7	22
Wilson's Phalarope	10	16	33	38	31
Franklin's Gull	134	173	12	191	50
Ring-billed Gull	409	341	230	288	265
California Gull	51	56	22	30	45
Herring Gull	-	6	-	-	-
"White-headed Gulls"	44	21	40	15	11
Caspian Tern	5	2	1	1	-
Common Tern	1	1	-	5	-
Black Tern	-	-	-	7	1
Tern Species	7	-	-	-	-
Rock Pigeon	350	309	312	568	281
Eurasian-collared Dove	60	126 high	81 high	80 high	35
Mourning Dove	159	247	165	162	248
Great Horned Owl	5	2	6	9	16
Short-eared Owl	-	-	5	-	-
Northern Saw-whet Owl	-	-	-	-	CW
Common Nighthawk	-	1	-	-	-
Black Swift	-	-	2 NEW	-	-
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	1	-	-	-	-
Belted Kingfisher	2	4	5	3	3
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	-	1	-	-	-
Downy Woodpecker	22	12	12	13	18

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Hairy Woodpecker	2	4	1	3	3
Northern Flicker	66	93 high	65	52	51
Pileated Woodpecker	1	1	1	-	2
Western Wood Pewee	2	19	3	4	-
Willow Flycatcher	-	-	-	-	-
Alder Flycatcher	-	-	1	2	-
Least Flycatcher	45	75	36	29	55
Empidonax Species	-	6	-	-	7
Dusky Flycatcher	-	-	-	CW¹	-
Eastern Phoebe	-	1	-	-	-
Say's Phoebe	1	2	4	-	4
Western Kingbird	39	47	54	37	39
Eastern Kingbird	16	49	12 low	82	47
Loggerhead Shrike	2	3	-	4	1
Warbling Vireo	5	37	9	22	11
Red-eyed Vireo	-	2	2	1	2
Blue Jay	25	34 high	25	33 high	16
Black-billed Magpie	299	300	401	377	259
American Crow	136	170	143	158	153
Common Raven	6	3	1	5	1
Horned Lark	2	4	5	2	13
Tree Swallow	71	93	153	174	119
Violet-green Swallow	24	34	61 high	20	5
N. Roughed-winged Swallow	12	11	14	4	39 high
Bank Swallow	29	37	23	41	115
Cliff Swallow	71	13	6	37	77
Barn Swallow	30	28	27	64	29
Swallow Species	6	4	23	-	-
Black-capped Chickadee	101	107	66	109 high	69
Red-breasted Nuthatch	30	23	32 high	17	16
White-breasted Nuthatch	-	-	2	2	-
Rock Wren	2	2	-	7	5
House Wren	173	314 high	285	175	231
Marsh Wren	1	-	-	1	-
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	-	-	-	1
Mountain Bluebird	-	-	-	1	2
Veery	-	-	2	-	-
Gray-cheeked Thrush	1	-	-	-	-
Swainson's Thrush	19	4	10	13	-
Hermit Thrush	-	-	3	-	-
American Robin	725	950 high	787	826	858
Gray Catbird	55	77	67	67	29
Brown Thrasher	20	21	18	24	30

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European Starling	1,649 <i>high</i>	1,275	1,168	1,138	812
Sprague's Pipit	4	2	5	2	16
Cedar Waxwing	7	23	7	37	-
Tennessee Warbler	7	1	2	1	4
Orange-crowned Warbler	5	1	1	-	-
Nashville Warbler	1	-	-	-	-
Yellow Warbler	323	444	387	318	335
Yellow-rumped Warbler	8	10	-	3	2
Blackpoll Warbler	9	-	1	2	-
Magnolia Warbler	CW ¹	-	-	-	-
American Redstart	-	1	-	-	1
Ovenbird	CW ¹	-	-	-	-
Common Yellowthroat	15	41	7 low	26	22
Wilson's Warbler	1	1	-	-	-
Canada Warbler	CW ¹	-	-	-	-
Yellow-breasted Chat	1	3	1	3	4
Warbler Species	1	2	2	-	2
Western Tanager	CW ¹	-	-	-	-
Spotted Towhee	34	29	29	24	27
Chipping Sparrow	123	85	76	59	100
Clay-coloured Sparrow	73	75	93	97	191 high
Brewer's Sparrow	-	2	-	1	-
American Tree Sparrow	-	-	2	-	6
Vesper Sparrow	51	53	69	99	150 high
Lark Sparrow	6	16	15	21	16
Lark Bunting	1	-	4	5	4
Savannah Sparrow	24	29	32	65	78
Grasshopper Sparrow	-	2	-	4	5
Baird's Sparrow	-	1	3	-	5
Le Conte's Sparrow	-	-	-	-	1
Song Sparrow	7	11	14	20	16
Lincoln's Sparrow	-	-	2	-	-
White-throated Sparrow	2	-	-	1	-
White-crowned Sparrow	2	6	-	2	1
Sparrow Species	-	139	18	-	-
Dark-eyed Junco	-	2	2	1	1
Chestnut-collared Longspur	-	-	3	-	2
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1	-	-	12	2
Black-headed Grosbeak	2	-	-	-	-
Lazuli Bunting	6	9	9	8	5
Indigo Bunting	-	3	-	-	-
Bobolink	-	1	-	-	-
Red-winged Blackbird	424	465	355	445	461

Species	May 26 2019	May 27 2018	May 28 2017	May 29 2016	May 24 2015
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Western Meadowlark	227	339	378	473	452
Yellow-headed Blackbird	66	84	94	103	48
Brewer's Blackbird	188	123	260	346	333
Common Grackle	323	418	442	480 <i>high</i>	417
Brown-headed Cowbird	76	70	48	69	120
Baltimore Oriole	16	47	15 <i>low</i>	30	48
House Finch	125	89	76	92	93
Common Redpoll	1	2	-	-	-
Pine Siskin	1	-	-	1	4
American Goldfinch	28	89	57	70	53
Evening Grosbeak	-	-	-	1	-
House Sparrow	411	402	221	531	465
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	8,900	9,955	8,625	9,977	9,152
TOTAL SPECIES	128	129	128	130	126

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