



MH Interpretive Program

**managed by Grasslands Naturalists
based in Police Point Park**

Draft July 9, 2021

2021 MEDICINE HAT SPRING BIRD AND FLOWER COUNT Sunday, May 30

Fellow Birders and Flower Watchers:

The 37th Spring Count had relatively seasonal temperatures (high 24° C, low 6° C) and light winds (S - SW, 7-19 km/hr). Despite these good conditions, both species and individual birds were down from last year. Species decreased 14% from 139 to 119; 2021 total species was 9% less than the 4-year average of 131. Individual birds declined 14% from 10,073 in 2020 to 8,629 in 2021 and 8% from the 4-year average of 9,388 (see Data Summary Table, page 3). Warm and windy afternoon conditions reducing bird activity and impacts from drought may have contributed to these changes.

There were 7 species with an all-time high count: Eurasian-collared Dove, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, Common Grackle, White-winged Crossbill, and Common Redpoll (see Table 1, page 2). In addition to these high counts, 7 species showed notable upticks in 2021 including Long-billed Curlew, Wilson's Phalarope, Least Flycatcher, Black-billed Magpie, Cliff Swallow, American Robin, and House Finch (see Species Table, page 6). Three species had all-time lows in 2021 including American Kestrel, Marbled Godwit, and Bank Swallow (see Table 1, page 2). This was the first count no Bank Swallows were observed. There were also 3 species that showed a decline for 3 years or more: these included Blue-winged Teal and American Crow. The third, Savannah Sparrow, showed declines over the past 5 years. Furthermore, three other sparrow species decreased from 2020 and included Chipping, Clay-colored, and Vesper. One additional decline that occurred was Eared Grebe observations went from 43 in 2020 to 0 in 2021 (see Species Table, page 6). No new species were observed in 2020. One species, Common Nighthawk, was seen exclusively during count week but not on count day.

Species missing from this year's count that were seen in 2020 included Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Horned Grebe, Eared Grebe, American Bittern, Ferruginous Hawk, Solitary Sandpiper, Pileated Woodpecker, Willow Flycatcher, Blue-headed Vireo, Bank Swallow, Marsh Wren, Mountain Bluebird, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Sprague's Pipit, Tennessee Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, American Redstart, Yellow-breasted Chat, American Tree Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Baird's Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Bobolink, and Evening Grosbeak. Nine additional species have been absent from the count two or more years: Western Grebe (2019), Sharp-tailed Grouse (2018), Sharp-shinned Hawk (2017), Caspian Tern (2019), Black Tern (2016), Short-eared Owl (2017), Wilson's Warbler (2019), Brewer's Sparrow (2019), and Chestnut-collared Longspur (2017).

Less frequently seen species observed in 2021 were Hooded Merganser (1), Pied-billed Grebe (2), American Avocet (5), Upland Sandpiper (1), Eastern Screech-owl (1), Olive-sided Flycatcher (1), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (1), Townsend's Solitaire (1), Veery (1), Hermit

Thrush (1), Pine Siskin (6), Rose-breasted Grosbeak (1), and Red and White-winged Crossbills (15 each species) (see Species Table, page 6). Some of these species had extended absences from the count: Pied-billed grebe was last observed in 2014, Eastern Screech-owl in 2001, Red Crossbill in 2013, and White-winged Crossbill in 2007.

The Top 10 for 2021 were European Starling (1,161), American Robin (905), Common Grackle (576), House (English) Sparrow (445), Canada Goose (436), Black-billed Magpie (400), Red-winged Blackbird (398), Yellow Warbler (382), Western Meadowlark (234), and House Finch (225). House Finch replaced Chipping Sparrow, which slipped to the 22nd position in 2021.

As for flowers, 53 species were observed in bloom, which was a 29% increase from last year. The later date for 2021 may have impacted the number of species in bloom (see Data Summary Table, page 3 and Flower List, page 5).

Count effort was excellent in 2021. Participants, distances covered, and hours of observation were similar to last year (see Data Summary Table, page 3). Masterpiece Southland Meadows took part for the second consecutive count. A colossal thank-you to everyone who volunteered their time this year, especially in light of the concurrent Covid-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,

Marty Drut

Marty Drut
Count Compiler

New Species Observed in 2021: None. Rare sightings of Pied-billed Grebe (2), Eastern Screech-owl (1), Olive-sided Flycatcher (1), and Red and White-winged Crossbills (15 each species)

Table 1. 2021 Spring Bird Count All Time High and Low Observations.

2021 Spring Bird Count - Highs and Lows			
HIGHS			
Species	High	Previous High	Year
Eurasian-collared Dove	141	126	2018
Northern Flicker	94	93	2018
Blue Jay	43	34	2018
Black-capped Chickadee	129	109	2016
Common Grackle	576	480	2016
White-winged Crossbill	15	9	2002
Common Redpoll	4	2	2018 & 1998
LOWS			
Species	Low	Previous Low	Year
American Kestrel	1	3	2019
Marbled Godwit	1	5	2015
Bank Swallow	0	5	2003

DATA SUMMARY 2017 - 2021					
	May 30 2021	May 24 2020	May 26 2019	May 27 2018	May 28 2017
Total Individuals	8,629	10,073	8,900	9,955	8,625
Total Bird Species	119	139	128	129	128
Total Flower Species	53	41	55	65	68
Participants	49	56	40	36	38
Total Km Walked	108.5	99.2	85	102.3	123
Total Km Driven	591	568.5	495	556.5	530
Total Km Biked	8	8	8	5	-
Hours of Observation	104	117	102.5	106.5	101.5
on foot:	57	59.75	52	52	64.25
by car:	33.5	44	45.5	47	35.25
by bicycle:	2	1.5	2	1.5	-
feeder:	11.5	11.75	3	6	2



PARTICIPANTS

Marty Drut
Dan Schiebelbein
Mark Schiebelbein
Milt Spitzer
Elaine Spitzer
Rob Gardner
Corlaine Gardner
Michael Velner
Mark Oxamitny
Rob Wapple
Lorrie Sielski
Phil Horch
Annalora Horch
Donna Steele
Sue Higgins
Eileen Cowtan
Cam Lockerbie
Jeremy Williamson
Jane McGough
Hugh Armstrong
Dee Armstrong
Carol Wickenheiser
Christy Wickenheiser
Ian Turner
Angela Turner
Eric Vokes
Amy Moores
Sandi Robertson
Pam Hodgkinson
Ian Langill
Jill Gatfield
Barrett Wolski
Barry Anderson
Judy Anderson
John Slater
Val Felesky
Fay Felesky
Bruce McLeod
Jim Black
Darlene Black
Charmaine Leidal

Masterpiece Southland Meadows
Gregg Campbell
7 Residents



Wildflowers in Bloom 2021 (53 Species):

- Prairie Onion (*Allium textile*)
 - Star-flowered Solomon's-seal
(*Maianthemum stellatum*)
 - Willow (*Salix sp.*)
 - Pale Comandra (Bastard Toadflax)
(*Comandra umbellata*)
 - Field Chickweed (*Cerastium arvense*)
 - Low Larkspur (*Delphinium bicolor*)
 - Mouse-eared Chickweed
(*Cerastium vulgatum*)
 - Wild Mustard (*Brassica kaber*)
 - Shepherd's Purse
(*Capsella bursa-pastoris*)
 - Tansy Mustard/Flixweed
(*Descurainia sophia*)
 - Western Wallflower (Prairie Rocket)
(*Erysimum asperum*)
 - Tall Hedge Mustard
(*Sisymbrium loeselii*)
 - Pennycress (Stinkweed)
(*Thlaspi arvense*)
 - Golden Currant (*Ribes aureum*)
 - Saskatoon (*Amelanchier alnifolia*)
 - Three-flowered Avens (*Geum triflorum*)
 - 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*)
 - Common Caragana
(*Caragana arborescens*)
 - Annual Lupine (*Lupinus pusillus*)
 - Black Medic (*Medicago lupulina*)
 - Purple Prairie Clover
(*Petalostemon purpureum*)
 - Early Yellow Locoweed
(*Oxytropis sericea*)
 - Golden (Buffalo) 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*)
 - Yellow (Nuttall's) Prairie Violet
(*Viola nuttallii*)
 - Pincushion cactus
(*Coryphantha vivipara*)
 - Prickly-pear Cactus
(*Opuntia polyacantha*)
 - Red-osier Dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*)
 - Moss Phlox (*Phlox hoodii*)
 - Narrow-leaved Puccoon
(*Lithospermum incisum*)
 - Stoneseed (*Lithospermum ruderales*)
 - White Beard-tongue
(*Pentstemon albidus*)
 - Smooth Blue Beard-tongue
(*Penstemon nitidus*)
 - Tartarian Honeysuckle
(*Lonicera tatarica*)
 - Common Lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*)
 - Pasture Sage (*Artemisia frigida*)
 - Common Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)
 - Colorado Rubberplant
(*Hymenoxys richardsonii*)
 - Common Dandelion
(*Taraxacum officinale*)
 - Yellow Goat's-beard
(*Tragopogon dubius*)
 - Perennial Sow Thistle
(*Sonchus arvensis*)
 - Scentless Chamomile
(*Matricaria perforata*)
- Others observed (not in taxonomic order):**
- Pygmy Flower
(*Androsace septentrionalis*)
 - Hoary Cress (*Lepidium sp.*)

Species	May 30 2021	May 24 2020	May 26 2019	May 27 2018	May 28 2017
Canada Goose	436	978 high	569	713	533
Wood Duck	-	-	1	-	1
Gadwall	21	48	11	15	35
Eurasian Wigeon	-	-	2	-	-
American Wigeon	14	43	6	22	23
Mallard	188	233	178	197	181
Blue-winged Teal	37	46	61	75	31
Cinnamon Teal	1	2	2	2	8
Northern Shoveler	41	47	48	44	40
Northern Pintail	12	37	11 low	11 low	27
Green-winged Teal	-	7	-	2	5
Canvasback	8	14	5	20	7
Redhead	28	26	17	25	7
Ring-necked Duck	-	2	-	-	-
Greater Scaup	-	1	-	5	2
Lesser Scaup	5	23	8	4	8
Bufflehead	-	5	5	-	2
Common Goldeneye	1	10	21	8	11
Hooded Merganser	1	-	-	-	-
Common Merganser	24	26	32	30	31
Ruddy Duck	-	6	-	3	-
Duck Species	-	25	1	-	-
Gray Partridge	4	2	9	22	5
Ring-necked Pheasant	62	96	84	91	102
Sharp-tailed Grouse	-	-	-	2	1
Pied-billed Grebe	2	-	-	-	-
Horned Grebe	-	1	2	1	3
Eared Grebe	-	43	2	2	3
Western Grebe	-	-	1	-	1
White Pelican	52	61	29	87	50
Double-crested Cormorant	13	32	13	6	25
Great Blue Heron	37	80	67	72	90
American Bittern	-	1	1	-	-
Turkey Vulture	23	53 high	26	42 high	12
Osprey	1	4	-	-	4
Bald Eagle	3	6	5	2	4
Northern Harrier	6	10	8	1	8
Sharp-shinned Hawk	-	-	-	-	2
Cooper's Hawk	1	2	5	2	6 high
Hawk Species	7	5	6	2	12
Broad-winged Hawk	1	4 high	-	1	3 high
Swainson's Hawk	34	40 high	27	22	24
Red-tailed Hawk	24	15	18	15	17

Species	May 30 2021	May 24 2020	May 26 2019	May 27 2018	May 28 2017
Ferruginous Hawk	-	4	4	5	1
Golden Eagle	2	3	1	1	-
American Kestrel	1 <i>low</i>	8	3 <i>low</i>	8	6
Merlin	6	8	2	11 <i>high</i>	4
Prairie Falcon	4	4	2	3	5
Falcon Species	-	1	-	-	1
Sora	3	2	2	11	4
American Coot	15	21	5	12	1
Killdeer	27	44	19	25	44
American Avocet	5	25	1	-	2
Solitary Sandpiper	-	6	-	1	-
Willet	10	14	6	2	7
Spotted Sandpiper	14	18	12	17	19
Upland Sandpiper	1	1	1	-	2
Long-billed Curlew	19	11	15	8	13
Marbled Godwit	1 <i>low</i>	10	10	8	14
Semipalmated Sandpiper	-	-	-	1	-
"Peeps" Species	-	-	-	1	-
Wilson's Snipe	13	12	8	14	11
Wilson's Phalarope	37	11	10	16	33
Franklin's Gull	41	34	134	173	12
Ring-billed Gull	149	142	409	341	230
California Gull	32	63	51	56	22
Herring Gull	-	-	-	6	-
"White-headed Gulls"	60	14	44	21	40
Caspian Tern	-	-	5	2	1
Common Tern	5	-	1	1	-
Tern Species	-	-	7	-	-
Rock Pigeon	177	229	350	309	312
Eurasian-collared Dove	141 <i>high</i>	115	60	126 <i>high</i>	81 <i>high</i>
Mourning Dove	141	201	159	247	165
Great Horned Owl	3	13	5	2	6
Short-eared Owl		-	-	-	5
Eastern Screech-owl	1	-	-	-	-
Common Nighthawk	CW¹	CW¹	-	1	-
Black Swift	-	-	-	-	2 NEW
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	-	-	1	-	-
Hummingbird Species	-	1	-	-	-
Belted Kingfisher	4	6	2	4	5
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	-	-	-	1	-
Downy Woodpecker	21	21	22	12	12
Hairy Woodpecker	2	3	2	4	1
Northern Flicker	94 <i>high</i>	77	66	93 <i>high</i>	65

Species	May 30 2021	May 24 2020	May 26 2019	May 27 2018	May 28 2017
Pileated Woodpecker	-	4 high	1	1	1
Woodpecker Species	2	-	-	-	-
Olive-sided Flycatcher	1	1	-	-	-
Western Wood Pewee	4	1	2	19	3
Willow Flycatcher	-	3 high	-	-	-
Alder Flycatcher	-	-	-	-	1
Least Flycatcher	58	43	45	75	36
Empidonax Species	1	11	-	6	-
Eastern Phoebe	-	-	-	1	-
Say's Phoebe	2	3	1	2	4
Western Kingbird	34	63	39	47	54
Eastern Kingbird	32	38	16	49	12 low
Loggerhead Shrike	3	1	2	3	-
Blue-headed Vireo	-	1	-	-	-
Warbling Vireo	11	7	5	37	9
Red-eyed Vireo	2	2	-	2	2
Blue Jay	43 high	30	25	34 high	25
Black-billed Magpie	400	335	299	300	401
American Crow	108	125	136	170	143
Common Raven	7	10 high	6	3	1
Horned Lark	8	6	2	4	5
Tree Swallow	53	92	71	93	153
Violet-green Swallow	12	72 high	24	34	61 high
N. Roughed-winged Swallow	7	25	12	11	14
Bank Swallow	- low	52	29	37	23
Cliff Swallow	63	31	71	13	6
Barn Swallow	29	24	30	28	27
Swallow Species	4	1	6	4	23
Black-capped Chickadee	129 high	74	101	107	66
Red-breasted Nuthatch	23	28	30	23	32 high
White-breasted Nuthatch	3	2	-	-	2
Rock Wren	10	4	2	2	-
House Wren	145	241	173	314 high	285
Marsh Wren	-	1	1	-	-
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	-	1	-	-
Mountain Bluebird	-	1	-	-	-
Townsend's Solitaire	1	1	-	-	-
Veery	1	-	-	-	2
Gray-cheeked Thrush	-	2	1	-	-
Swainson's Thrush	17	65	19	4	10
Hermit Thrush	1	1	-	-	3
American Robin	905	796	725	950 high	787
Thrush Species	6				

Species	May 30 2021	May 24 2020	May 26 2019	May 27 2018	May 28 2017
Gray Catbird	39	65	55	77	67
Brown Thrasher	12	24	20	21	18
European Starling	1,161	1,150	1,649 <i>high</i>	1,275	1,168
Sprague's Pipit	-	2	4	2	5
Cedar Waxwing	4	38	7	23	7
Tennessee Warbler	-	6	7	1	2
Orange-crowned Warbler	-	8	5	1	1
Nashville Warbler	-	-	1	-	-
Yellow Warbler	382	396	323	444	387
Yellow-rumped Warbler	1	5	8	10	-
Blackpoll Warbler	-	6	9	-	1
Magnolia Warbler	-	-	CW¹	-	-
American Redstart	-	2	-	1	-
Ovenbird	-	-	CW¹	-	-
Common Yellowthroat	22	28	15	41	<i>7 low</i>
Wilson's Warbler	-	-	1	1	-
Canada Warbler	-	-	CW¹	-	-
Yellow-breasted Chat	-	CW¹	1	3	1
Warbler Species	-	-	1	2	2
Western Tanager	-	3	CW¹	-	-
Spotted Towhee	49	40	34	29	29
Chipping Sparrow	71	314	123	85	76
Clay-coloured Sparrow	70	83	73	75	93
Brewer's Sparrow	-	-	-	2	-
American Tree Sparrow	-	4	-	-	2
Vesper Sparrow	75	93	51	53	69
Lark Sparrow	8	9	6	16	15
Lark Bunting	-	-	1	-	4
Savannah Sparrow	3	20	24	29	32
Grasshopper Sparrow	-	1	-	2	-
Baird's Sparrow	-	2	-	1	3
Le Conte's Sparrow	-	CW¹	-	-	-
Song Sparrow	17	19	7	11	14
Lincoln's Sparrow	1	2	-	-	2
White-throated Sparrow	-	2	2	-	-
White-crowned Sparrow	2	10	2	6	-
Sparrow Species	52	108	-	139	18
Dark-eyed Junco	3	2	-	2	2
Chestnut-collared Longspur		-	-	-	3
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1	5	1	-	-
Black-headed Grosbeak	-	-	2	-	-
Lazuli Bunting	2	9	6	9	9
Indigo Bunting	-	-	-	3	-

Species	May 30 2021	May 24 2020	May 26 2019	May 27 2018	May 28 2017
Bobolink	-	1	-	1	-
Red-winged Blackbird	398	457	424	465	355
Western Meadowlark	234	366	227	339	378
Yellow-headed Blackbird	94	96	66	84	94
Brewer's Blackbird	211	209	188	123	260
Common Grackle	576 <i>high</i>	476	323	418	442
Brown-headed Cowbird	66	79	76	70	48
Baltimore Oriole	20	41	16	47	15 <i>low</i>
Blackbird Species	20	-	-	-	-
House Finch	225	104	125	89	76
Red Crossbill	15	-	-	-	-
White-winged Crossbill	15 <i>high</i>	-	-	-	-
Common Redpoll	4 <i>high</i>	-	1	2	-
Pine Siskin	6	4	1	-	-
American Goldfinch	65	54	28	89	57
Evening Grosbeak	-	2	-	-	-
Finch Species	18	-	-	-	-
House Sparrow	445	375	411	402	221
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	8,629	10,073	8,900	9,955	8,625
TOTAL SPECIES (Identified)	119	139	128	129	128
Unidentified Species	9	8	6	7	6

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