

## Matanuska Valley (AKMV) 39th Christmas Bird Count (CBC) Results

The 2017 Matanuska Valley Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) took place on Sunday, December 17th. During the CBC, Field Teams and Feeder Counters at home counted all of the birds that they saw within the Matanuska Valley CBC Count Circle, a 15 mile diameter circle centered on the old Four Corners intersection of Old Trunk Road/Stringfield Road and the Palmer-Wasilla Highway. Count totals for this year's Count are:

Mallard	501
Common/Barrow's Goldeneye	Count Week
Common Merganser	16
Ruffed Grouse	Count Week
Spruce Grouse	5
Bald Eagle	Adult - 104
	Imm. - 23
Bald Eagle Total Count	127
Northern Harrier	2
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1
Northern Goshawk	2
Red-tailed Hawk (Harlan's)	1
Rock Pigeon	226
Short-eared Owl	12*
Belted Kingfisher	1
Downy Woodpecker	26
Hairy Woodpecker	27
Northern Shrike	3
Gray Jay	9
Steller's Jay	Count Week
Black-billed Magpie	214
Common Raven	510 - Field Counters count ravens only until 12 noon
Black-capped Chickadee	872
Boreal Chickadee	4
Red-breasted Nuthatch	117*
Brown Creeper	5
American Dipper	11
American Robin	2
European Starling	408*
Bohemian Waxwing	798

Snow Bunting	50 - Found by Mat-Su Birders member Chuck Iliff on Count Day
White-crowned Sparrow	5
Dark-eyed Junco	29
Brambling	1** Reported & photographed on Count Day by Bill Wood @ his home in Wasilla. 1st Mat-Su Boro. record for this Eurasian species. Bill's photos are below.
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch	123*
Pine Grosbeak	381
White-winged Crossbill	12*
Common Redpoll	502
<b>Species seen on Count Day</b>	<b>33 - AKMV Circle High Count - 35 in 1999</b>
<b>Birds seen on Count Day</b>	<b>5,003</b>
<b>Count Week Species</b>	<b>3</b>
* New high count record	
** New species record	

We had 34 Field Counters and 26 Feeder Counters (4 of whom also Field Counted) participating, and we also had two species reports from two local residents who were not participating in the Count. Although mostly in the mid-20's for the majority of the day, temperatures ranged from about 15° to 27° with occasionally cloudy to clear skies. The winds were very mild with a maximum wind speed of about 5 MPH in some areas. Almost all of the lakes in our Count Circle were frozen but parts of many streams were open. There was some open water at the Palmer Waste Water Treatment Plant and at streams such as the Cottonwood Creek outflow from Wasilla Lake and below the Creekside Shopping area, and some parts of Spring Creek in the Old Matanuska Townsite area and off of Fireweed Road.

Although counts for almost all species were somewhat down, there were five exceptions. We set a new high record count of 12 Short-eared Owls (all found on the Palmer Hay Flats / previous high count was 1), a new high record count of 117 Red-breasted Nuthatches (previous high was 98), a new high record count of 408 European Starlings (previous high was 275), a new high record count of 123 Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches (previous high was 60), and a new high count of 12 White-winged Crossbills (previous high was 10).

And, we were very surprised to find out that, right during the peak of our December 17th Count Day, we had an Asian avian visitor practically in downtown Wasilla, a Brambling. This has turned into quite an interesting CBC.

At the end of Count Day, we finished up with a delicious potluck/wrapup meeting at Jean and Harry Holt's home on Finger Lake, with Jean providing the basic dishes for the potluck. Eighteen of our participants took part in the fun wrapup meeting where everyone tried to outdo everyone else with their amazing stories of how they found their odd species.

A very special thanks to Jean and Harry Holt for a fun potluck/wrapup meeting and thanks to all of our Field Counters, Feeder Counters, and to the two local residents for helping with this year's Christmas Bird Count!

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