

41st Matanuska Valley (AKMV) Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) Results

The 41st Matanuska Valley Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) took place on Count Day, Sunday, December 15, 2019. 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 Team's species' totals for this year's Count are:

Mallard	582
Common Goldeneye	6*
Northern Shoveler	1**
Ruffed Grouse	1***
Spruce Grouse	3
Willow Ptarmigan	1
Wild Turkey	14***
Bald Eagle	Adult - 102
	Imm. - 27
Bald Eagle Total Count	129
Northern Harrier	1
Merlin	1
Rock Pigeon	105
Great Horned Owl	Count Week
Downy Woodpecker	25
Hairy Woodpecker	19
Northern Flicker	1
Black-billed Magpie	154
Common Raven	750 - Field Counters count ravens only until 12 noon
Black-capped Chickadee	795
Boreal Chickadee	12
Red-breasted Nuthatch	66
Brown Creeper	3
American Dipper	5
American Robin	1
European Starling	221
Bohemian Waxwing	2264
Pine Grosbeak	58
Common Redpoll	76
Hoary Redpoll	1

* New high count record

** New species record

*** Exotic/Introduced-Not countable

Countable species seen on Count Day 25 - AKMV Circle High Count - 35 in 1999

Countable birds seen on Count Day 5,280

Count Week Species 1 - (Count Week - 3 days prior & 3 days following Count Day)

30 Field Counters and 20 Feeder Counters (2 of whom also Field Counted) participated in this year's Count. Temperatures were mostly in the mid-20's for the majority of the day, and ranged from about 15° to 30° with mostly partly cloudy 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 mostly frozen but 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.

Counts for almost all species were down and appeared to be a reflection of what most birders in south-central Alaska have been seeing this winter at their bird feeders. The crazy weather patterns seem to have really affected the way that most species move through our area. Despite the generally low species' counts, a new high record count was set for one species, Common Goldeneye, with six observed (previous high - 2), and one new species was observed, a Northern Shoveler. The only raptors seen were one Northern Harrier down on the Hay Flats and one Merlin in an area above the Hay Flats.

At the end of Count Day, we finished up with a delicious potluck/wrapup meeting at The Annex in Palmer. Seventeen of our Count participants took part in the fun wrapup meeting where everyone tried to outdo everyone else with their amazing stories of what they had seen during the Count.

A very special thanks to our Mat-Su Birders' President, Thomas Cappiello, for arranging for us to get together at The Annex, which was a great place to meet. Thanks to all of our Field Counters and Feeder Counters for helping with this year's Christmas Bird Count! Final Count details will appear on the Mat-Su Birders' website (<www.matsubirders.org>).

Happy Holidays to all of our participants,
Bob Winckler <winckler@mtaonline.net>
Matanuska Valley CBC Compiler