

# The 107th Christmas Bird Count

American Birds

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**Standing side by side on the Cape May, New Jersey, CBC were this Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*) (left) and Snow Goose (*Chen caerulescens*). Photo/Kevin T. Karlson**

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**ON THE COVER:** The holiday season brings presents in many ways, and such gifts are usually wrapped in bright colors. Christmas Bird Count observers on the Econlockhatchee, Florida, CBC ended the year with a spectacular day for their count and turned up many exciting finds. But none was more stunning than this Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*), not only a holiday treat for participants but the first of this species ever found on the count since its inception in the 84th CBC. Photo/Roy Halpin

# The 107th Christmas Bird Count

December 14, 2006, to January 5, 2007

Geoffrey S. LeBaron

It was indeed a great day to be out in the field—temperatures were in the mid-50s, with springlike rain giving way to partly cloudy skies. The main focus, of course, was birding, but this was a real “natural history” kind of day, with spring peepers calling from various wet locations, sulphur butterflies flying about, and a basking painted turtle in one pond. Even swatting mosquitoes became necessary as the sun dipped low, and much to my surprise an American Woodcock began peenting nearby. As dusk proceeded to darkness we were treated to the full sky dance of this wonderful “shorebird”—in fact, six males took to the air, timber-doodling away in the waning light.

So where was this nice early spring day in the field? New England, as you may well guess, but not in spring—this was a Christmas Bird Count! But it sure wasn't your typical New England CBC weather...or critter list.

In fact, the fall season in the Northeast leading up to the 107th Christmas Bird Count period had in general been cool and wet. The big picture for this season's CBC was seesaw weather across much of the continent—cold, then mild, then brutally cold again. While much of eastern North America basked in unusually mild conditions during the count period, the Rockies and Great Plains were repeatedly buried under snowstorm after snowstorm, causing the postponement and eventual cancellation of many counts across the region. And on the west coast, unusually cold conditions in the Pacific Northwest were replaced by mild and generally sunny weather to the south. So how did this patchwork quilt of weather affect the 107th CBC results? In essence it was “business as usual” for the avifauna of the geographic regions of Christmas count coverage—locally inclement conditions in some areas



**So what's so special about a Great Blue Heron on a CBC? In general, nothing. However, take a careful look here—this is *not* a Great Blue Heron; it has light gray, rather than chestnut, thighs, and no rust-colored feathers in the bend of the wings. This is a first CBC record away from the Pacific Islands of Gray Heron (*Ardea cinerea*), tallied on the Bermuda Christmas Bird Count. Gray Heron has actually been recorded once before in Bermuda—a specimen found dead in 2005. So don't assume that all big bluish gray herons are Great Blues! Photo/Andrew Dobson**

caused reduced observer effort and suppressed numbers and species of birds found, while other regions benefited from open, pleasant conditions and a plethora of birds. In some areas, in fact, the open and mild conditions led to lower tallies of species and individuals than anticipated, as birds were spread across wide areas of open lakes and wetlands and plentiful food supplies. And while the extremes of stormy and mild conditions were unusual, the pattern of alternating warm and cold was in many ways typical of the early-winter CBC period. In fact what affected birds more profoundly on a continental basis was a record wild food crop across much of the northern forests. Cones of all sizes, seeds of all sorts, mast, and winter fruits were all available in great abundance. So although birders across much of southern Canada and the northern portion of the lower 48 states were eagerly awaiting the arrival of large numbers of “winter finches,” such a flight never materialized. Even across much of Canada crossbills, redpolls, and siskins were surprisingly scarce. Alaska held the season's core range

of many cone and seed eaters (as least as far as the areas where CBCs are conducted), as on population levels most such species stayed far north and west in the plentiful buffet of the boreal forests.

All told, 2052 counts were submitted to the online database in the 107th Christmas Bird Count. This number is very slightly below last season's all-time record of 2060 counts, likely the result of the inclement weather and cancellation of some counts in the Great Plains. Of those 2052 individual Christmas Bird Count circles, 1624 were held in the United States, 371 counts were included from Canada, and 57 counts were conducted in the Caribbean, Latin America, and in the Pacific Islands. And as always we welcome a set of new CBCs this season; those 40 new counts (13 in Canada, 23 in the United States, 2 in Mexico, 1 in Nicaragua, and 1 in Ecuador) are listed in Table 1.

You may notice a new country listed in Table 1—we are pleased to include the inaugural count at Sierritas de Managua, Conteo Navideño, Nicaragua, into the CBC fold. Additionally,

though a re-start and thus not listed with the new counts, we welcome Tikal, Guatemala, back to the database. Here's to many exciting years of counting birds for both these fascinating locations. At the opposite end of the CBC spectrum, we heartily welcome two new CBCs in the Canadian arctic—Inuvik, Northwest Territories, and Arctic Bay, Nunavut (and please pass the hot beverage of choice). Whether struggling to find more than one kind of bird or dealing with the challenges of identifying more than 400 species, Christmas count participants always rise to the challenge during count day.

Of course it takes a lot of birdwatchers to cover such a huge and diverse geographic area, and CBC observers were out in force during the entire count period. All told, 57,851 observers tallied birds this season; interestingly, this sets a new record number of observers, despite the slight decrease in number of counts. The regional breakdown of that grand total is as follows: 44,965 in the United States (40,068 in the field and 4897 at feeders), 11,653 in Canada (8241 afield and 3412 at feeders), and 1233 in the Caribbean, Latin America, and the Pacific Islands (1187 in field parties and 46 at feeders). Congratulations to one and all!



**It seems that with increasing frequency, out-of-range Western Kingbirds turn out to be something else, especially in the fall and CBC season. Alert birders in Salisbury, Maryland, critically identified this Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*), a great find anywhere in North America, and providing the first state record (and needless to say, CBC and count record) of that species in Maryland. Many birders were able to see this southern visitor, which lingered into January. Photo/George M. Jett**

Obviously with all those people going on Christmas Bird Counts, one benchmark for a given count in each season is the number of participants on a count in the field and at feeders. While many counts in less-populated areas do their best to cover their circles with 10 or 20 observers, larger counts strive to reach the 100 participant mark. Table 2 lists the 55 counts across the hemisphere in the 107th CBC that were blessed to have 100 or more observers in the field and at feeders.

In the final cumulative census, all those observers in all those locations in the 107th Christmas Bird Count tallied 69,354,406 birds of 1894 species! In the Neotropics, Caribbean, and Pacific Islands, 586,625 total birds were counted. In North America north of Mexico, where of course the vast majority of CBCs are conducted, in the United States 65,109,503 birds of 643 species, 41 infraspecific forms, and 22 exotics were reported this season. Included in that total are three new species—**Craveri's Murrelet**, tallied for the first time ever on a CBC at Crystal Springs, California—and Sooty Grouse and Dusky Grouse. The latter two species come to us from last year's split of Blue Grouse to these two recently recognized species, so while the names are new, the birds themselves are not! In Canada, as Dick Cannings reports in his Canadian summary, 3,658,278 birds of 289 species were tallied in total, the same number of species as last year. Two species were added to Canada's cumulative CBC species list (in addition to Dusky and Sooty grouse), **Brown Pelican** (on two counts!) and **Curve-billed Thrasher** (see the Canadian summary for full details).

Of course no one Christmas Bird Count can find all the species included in this season's results. In reality, try as we might, we don't find every bird (or maybe even every species) that is present within our count circle on census day. But we make our best effort each season, and the total number of species tallied at the end of the day is often regarded as one measure of success of a count.

Counts blessed with neotropical locations can host a bewildering array of birds, even approaching 500 or more possible species in one count circle! And within North America, circles located in more southern or coastal areas, and that include varied habitats, are often blessed with higher species diversity than those

**Table 1. New counts in the 107th (2006–2007) Christmas Bird Count.**

Count Code	Count Name
<b>CANADA</b>	
ABVE	Vermilion, Alberta
BCYA	Yalakom Valley, British Columbia
NTIN	Inuvik, Northwest Territories
NUAB	Arctic Bay, Nunavut
ONMW	Manitouwadge, Ontario
ONPS	Parry Sound, Ontario
ONPV	Port Burwell-Vienna, Ontario
QCHE	Hemmingford, Quebec
QCMI	Mirabel, Quebec
QCSP	Chute-St-Phillipe, Quebec
SKCR	Creighton, Saskatchewan
SKDL	Dalmeny-Langham, Saskatchewan
SKES	Estevan, Saskatchewan
<b>UNITED STATES</b>	
AZAW	Appleton-Whittell, Arizona
FLLC	Lake City, Florida
FLWM	West Marion County, Florida
IADL	Dallas County, Iowa
IANW	Northwest Clayton County, Iowa
IASE	Southeast Clayton County, Iowa
IDCM	Craters of the Moon, Idaho
INGP	Goose Pond, Indiana
INJT	Jamestown, Indiana
MEBL	Bunker Hill, Maine
MNFB	Fredenberg, Minnesota
MTGK	Grant-Kohrs, Montana
OHRU	Rudolph, Ohio
PABK	Buffalo Creek, Pennsylvania
SCLS	Lower Saluda, South Carolina
TNCS	Crossville, Tennessee
UTBC	Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah
VANW	Nassawadox, Virginia
VTMR	Mad River Valley, Vermont
WACE	Cle Elum, Washington
WIAC	Armstrong Creek, Wisconsin
WIWN	Hales Corners, Wehr Nature Center, Wisconsin
WVMF	Moorefield, West Virginia
<b>CARIBBEAN, LATIN AMERICA</b>	
ECYY	Yanayacu, Ecuador
MXLC	Laguna de Chapala, Jalisco, Mexico
MXRG	Rio Guayalejo, Tamaulipas, Mexico
NISN	Sierritas de Managua, Conteo Navideño, Nicaragua

**Table 2. Counts with 100 or more participants in the 107th (2006–2007) CBC.**

Code	Count Name	# Observers	(Field + Feeder)
ABED	Edmonton, AB	475	(141 + 334)
MACO	Concord, MA	323	(213 + 110)
ABCA	Calgary, AB	223	(107 + 116)
CAOA	Oakland, CA	223	(210 + 13)
BCVI	Victoria, BC	217	(167 + 50)
CAPR	Point Reyes Peninsula, CA	213	(213 + 0)
WASE	Seattle, WA	187	(178 + 9)
OREU	Eugene, OR	185	(128 + 57)
CASB	Santa Barbara, CA	171	(168 + 3)
NSHD	Halifax-Dartmouth, NS	171	(98 + 73)
SCHH	Hilton Head Island, SC	171	(171 + 0)
VAFB	Fort Belvoir, VA	168	(162 + 6)
ORPD	Portland, OR	166	(132 + 34)
SCSC	Sun City-Okatie, SC	166	(121 + 45)
UTKA	Kanab, UT	156	(150 + 6)
BCVA	Vancouver, BC	152	(132 + 20)
OHCF	Cuyahoga Falls, OH	151	(106 + 45)
CTHA	Hartford, CT	140	(129 + 11)
AKAN	Anchorage, AK	137	(88 + 49)
NSWO	Wolfville, NS	137	(56 + 81)
CAMC	Marin County (southern), CA	135	(132 + 3)
WASD	Sequim-Dungeness, WA	134	(103 + 31)
OHCI	Cincinnati, OH	134	(117 + 17)
ONOH	Ottawa-Gatineau, ON	131	(108 + 23)
CASZ	Sonoma Valley, CA	130	(125 + 5)
MANO	Northampton, MA	129	(118 + 11)
AKFA	Fairbanks, AK	128	(89 + 39)
DCDC	Washington, DC	128	(127 + 1)
ECNM	Mindo-Tandayapa, Ecuador	128	(125 + 3)
PAPI	Pittsburgh, PA	128	(102 + 26)
OHMI	Millersburg, OH	127	(113 + 14)
ONHA	Hamilton, ON	127	(86 + 41)
NYIT	Ithaca, NY	122	(102 + 20)
MBWI	Winnipeg, MB	120	(72 + 48)
ABSA	St. Albert, AB	118	(54 + 64)
NSKI	Kingston, NS	116	(22 + 94)
CAWS	Western Sonoma County, CA	113	(113 + 0)
COBO	Boulder, CO	111	(98 + 13)
CODE	Denver, CO	111	(78 + 33)
CASD	San Diego, CA	110	(110 + 0)
SKSA	Saskatoon, SK	110	(58 + 52)
TXMM	Matagorda County-Mad Island Marsh, TX	110	(110 + 0)
FLSC	Sanibel-Captiva, FL	109	(109 + 0)
BCGS	Galiano-North SaltSpring, BC	108	(103 + 5)
CAON	Orange County (northeastern), CA	106	(106 + 0)
CAPA	Palo Alto, CA	106	(106 + 0)
CASF	San Francisco, CA	105	(100 + 5)
ILFB	Fermilab-Batavia, IL	104	(102 + 2)
ONTO	Toronto, ON	104	(102 + 2)
AZCF	Carefree, AZ	103	(89 + 14)
MDSE	Seneca, MD	102	(102 + 0)
CAOC	Orange County (coastal), CA	101	(101 + 0)
ILWA	Waukegan, IL	101	(31 + 70)
ONSS	Sault St. Marie, ON	101	(74 + 27)
PACH	Chambersburg, PA	101	(70 + 31)

in the northern interior of the continent. Whether tallying one species or 400, each and every bird does, indeed, count. Table 3 lists the 84 counts in the United States and Canada, plus the 16 counts in Latin America, that combined their observers' skill and luck to tally 150 or more species. In the United States, perennial leader (since its inception in the 94th CBC) Matagorda

County-Mad Island Marsh, Texas, was topped in the 107th CBC by Corpus Christi, Texas, for the top species honor north of Mexico. And species totals on many California CBCs rebounded this season, no doubt a result of the fact that the weather was favorable on many coastal counts there. And in Latin America, the relatively new Napo Amazon, Ecuador, missed what would

have been their fourth run this season, handing the southern title back to Mindo-Tandayapa, Ecuador, with the Costa Rican and Panamanian counts not far behind at all.

Within each region other competitions may arise; observers try to out-do each other in number of counts attended per season, distance driven or walked, sleepless hours, and worst or coldest counting conditions. But still the most popular competition usually comes down to species total, and Table 4 lists the regional high counts, with their species total and the number of counts in each region, for the 107th Christmas Bird Count.

Some very interesting avian movements were uncovered—and tracked—during the 107th Christmas Bird Count. The mild and open conditions in the eastern half of the continent led to high numbers of waterfowl far north of their expected CBC range—tens of thousands of Snow Geese lingered north of the St. Lawrence River in Quebec and Ontario! And waterfowl numbers on many counts in the Midwest reached record numbers, as lingering migrants took advantage of open ponds and lakes in many areas. While a stellar array of lingering neotropical migrants—birds that should be in the Caribbean or Latin America by the CBC period—is usually turned up across the continent, nothing like the 106th season's hurricane-induced exceptional event was recorded this year. Instead, birds responded to the conditions present during the count period. The aforementioned lack of winter finch movement was among the notable results during the 107th count, but some other species did undertake significant movements, and for reasons best known to themselves. Perhaps most notable in this category was Golden-crowned Kinglet. One of the tiniest passerine birds in North America, this is a familiar species across much of the continent, though it breeds primarily in boreal spruce-fir forests in the north and high mountains of the west. However, varying movements southward and

eastward occur during the winter season. This year, despite the apparent health of the boreal forests based upon the bumper crop of seeds that kept finches to the north, Golden-crowned Kinglets undertook an exceptional flight to the coasts and southward; these birds were notably scarce on some interior northern counts while being tallied in record numbers coastally and as far south as southern California, central Florida, and around the Gulf Coast. Kinglets are gleaners, feeding on insect eggs, chrysalises, and adult bugs found in the tips of branches and in bark crevices. It would seem that while seed production was high in the boreal forests, perhaps the insect crop was poor, and hence the large movement of kinglets to the distal regions of their winter range. Was the bumper seed and cone crop a possible result of reduced insect load on trees in the north? It's certainly possible that this was a factor. It will be interesting to see what the upcoming 108th Christmas Bird Count season brings for both insectivores and seed-eating bird species.

Speaking of winter finches and seed-eating species, Evening Grosbeak continues its free fall in numbers. The highest tallies in the 107th count were only a few hundred each on some counts, mostly in western Canada and the Pacific Northwest plus a few counts in the Atlantic Provinces. Evening Grosbeaks were noted in small numbers in varying locations as unusual species, but none of the widespread huge flocks of winters two decades past were tallied. Evening Grosbeak underwent a tremendous eastward range expansion from the late 1800s through the mid-1900s, likely in response to ornamental plantings of box elders in the East providing a winter food source. We may be seeing a contraction in this species' range and numbers to its traditional western haunts; time, and CBC data, will tell.

One bird that *is* taking over the continent is Eurasian Collared-Dove. Record counts were tallied not only in the origin of its new range in North America—in Florida and the neighboring southeastern

**Table 3. Counts with 150 or more species recorded on the 107th (2006–2007) CBC.**

**Table 3a. Counts north of the United States-Mexican border.**

Count Code	Rank	Count Name	Species Recorded
TXCC	1	Corpus Christi, TX	238
TXMM	2	Matagorda County-Mad Island Marsh, TX	233
CASB	3	Santa Barbara, CA	224
TXGF	4	Guadalupe River Delta-McFadden Ranch, TX	220
TXFR	5	Freeport, TX	215
CAMD	6	Moss Landing, CA	209
CAMR	7	Morro Bay, CA	207
CASD	7	San Diego, CA	207
CACS	9	Crystal Springs, CA	202
CAOC	10	Orange County (coastal), CA	201
CAPR	11	Point Reyes Peninsula, CA	196
CATO	12	Thousand Oaks, CA	191
TXSB	13	San Bernard N.W.R., TX	189
CAMP	14	Monterey Peninsula, CA	185
CAOV	15	Oceanside-Vista-Carlsbad, CA	183
CAVE	15	Ventura, CA	183
CARS	17	Rancho Santa Fe, CA	182
CAMC	18	Marin County (southern), CA	180
CAWS	18	Western Sonoma County, CA	180
CASC	20	Santa Cruz County, CA	179
TXWS	21	Weslaco, TX	178
CACB	22	Centerville Beach to King Salmon, CA	177
CAOA	22	Oakland, CA	177
CAAR	24	Arcata, CA	174
TXAZ	24	Anzalduas-Bentsen S.P., TX	174
CAAN	26	Año Nuevo, CA	173
CASJ	27	San Jose, CA	172
CASS	27	Salton Sea (south), CA	172
TXGA	27	Galveston, TX	172
TXPA	27	Port Aransas, TX	172
CAPA	31	Palo Alto, CA	171
CAPP	31	Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA	171
CASF	31	San Francisco, CA	171
TXKI	31	Kingsville, TX	171
CAHF	35	Hayward-Fremont, CA	170
TXBP	35	Bolivar Peninsula, TX	170
TXCF	37	Corpus Christi (Flour Bluff), TX	169
TXSR	37	Sea Rim S.P., TX	169
CABE	39	Benicia, CA	168
TXAR	39	Aransas N.W.R., TX	168
CASZ	41	Sonoma Valley, CA	167
FLMI	41	Merritt Island N.W.R., FL	167
FLNR	41	West Pasco (New Port Richey), FL	167
NCMC	41	Morehead City, NC	167
NCSB	41	Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands, NC	167
CADN	46	Del Norte County, CA	166
CASU	46	San Juan Capistrano, CA	166
TXLS	46	La Sal Vieja, TX	166
CALB	49	Long Beach-El Dorado, CA	165
TXAP	49	Attwater Prairie Chicken N.W.R., TX	165
TXRO	49	Rockport, TX	165
FLCO	52	Cocoa, FL	162
FLZE	53	Zellwood-Mt. Dora, FL	161
ORCB	53	Coos Bay, OR	161
SCMC	53	McClellanville, SC	161
CAON	56	Orange County (northeastern), CA	160
CARC	56	Rio Cosumnes, CA	160
GASV	56	Savannah, GA-SC	160
NCWI	56	Wilmington, NC	160
CAPS	60	Pasadena-San Gabriel Valley, CA	159
SCCA	60	Charleston, SC	159
CAMU	62	Malibu, CA	157
GACI	62	Cumberland Island, GA	157
CASM	64	Sacramento, CA	156
FLJA	64	Jacksonville, FL	156
FLSB	64	South Brevard County, FL	156
NJCM	64	Cape May, NJ	156
FLAL	68	Alafia Banks, FL	155
FLSP	68	St. Petersburg, FL	155
AZRC	70	Ramsey Canyon, AZ	154
CACC	70	Contra Costa County, CA	154
CALU	70	La Purisima, CA	154
FLSM	70	St. Marks, FL	154
FLSR	70	Sarasota, FL	154
FLGA	75	Gainesville, FL	153
SCHH	75	Hilton Head, SC	153
LASA	77	Sabine N.W.R., LA	152
NCBP	77	Bodie-Pea Island, NC	152
SCLP	79	Litchfield-Pawleys Island, SC	151
SCWB	79	Winyah Bay, SC	151
TXHG	79	Harlingen, TX	151
AZGV	82	Green Valley-Madera Canyon, AZ	150
CALA	82	Los Angeles, CA	150
TXCK	82	Choke Canyon, TX	150

**Table 3b. Counts south of the United States-Mexican border.**

Count Code	Rank	Count Name	Species Recorded
ECNM	1	Mindo-Tandayapa, Ecuador	417
CRRF	2	Rain Forest Aerial Tram, Costa Rica	400
CRMO	3	Monteverde, Costa Rica	363
CRLS	4	La Selva, Lower Braulio Carillo N.P., Costa Rica	329
RPPC	5	Pacific Canal Area, R.P., Panama	299
RPAC	6	Atlantic Canal Area, R.P., Panama	291
RPCC	7	Central Canal Area, R.P., Panama	265
BLPG	8	Punta Gorda, Belize	257
ECY	9	Yanayacu, Ecuador	252
MXES	10	Ensenada, Baja California, Mexico	204
RPVC	11	Volcan, Chiriqui, Panama	199
TRTR	12	Trinidad, W.I.	176
BLGJ	13	Gallon Jug, Belize	170
MXCZ	13	Coast of Central Veracruz, Mexico	170
MXGF	15	Gomez Farias, Tamaulipas, Mexico	158
GMTK	16	Tikal, Guatemala	156



**Golden yellow all over, with white wings and tail and a pink conical bill—what in the world is this bird? Seen by itself, it could be a real stumper, but fortunately this bird was in with a flock of normally-plumaged members of the same species. This aberrant Evening Grosbeak (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*), in Fort McMurray, Alberta, is completely missing black pigmentation. A black-and-white rendering of this stunning bird doesn't do it justice! Please visit the 107th CBC Photo Gallery in the CBC website to see all the photos in this issue (and many others) in color. Photo/Linda Ball**

states—but all over the west (especially in Texas and Colorado), northward through the Midwest and Great Plains, along the west coast, and even into central Mexico. As Bill Pranty explains elsewhere in this issue, this species' primary direction of expansion is to the northwest; few have been found thus far in northeastern North America. But it may only be a matter of time.

Other species are doing less well, as tracked by both Christmas Bird Count and Breeding Bird Survey data. Sage grouse, both the recently recognized Gunnison Sage-Grouse and the more

widespread Greater Sage-Grouse, are declining in numbers throughout their range. Conversion of sage habitat to agricultural and commercial use, plus degradation of much of the remaining sage land as roads are built and natural gas extraction expands through the region are proving to be nearly insurmountable hurdles for these species, which are highly sensitive to disturbance during courtship and nesting.

Additionally, the spread of West Nile virus is affecting a number of species, including both sage grouse. As has been recognized since the introduction of this

pathogen to North America in 1999, some species (including the grouse) are especially susceptible to the disease. Corvids—the crows, jays, and magpies—are another group with significant mortality. West Nile virus has spread to the west coast in recent years, and numbers of both Western Scrub-Jay and Yellow-billed Magpie appear to be declining as reflected by CBC results. Continued monitoring by all of us on Christmas Bird Counts will help track how this avian epidemic plays out.

Elsewhere in these pages you'll find feature articles highlighting the value of CBC data to our understanding of the birds of our regions, and how birds are excellent indicators of the quality of the environment in which we all live. Collaborative large-scale co-analysis of Christmas Bird Count and Breeding Bird Survey data has culminated in an article in this issue announcing the release of the 2007 WatchList. And Scott Weidensaul investigates how CBC data will be helpful in learning how birds may react to global climate change. Given that weather patterns are beginning to fluctuate wildly from the "norm" (whatever that is), as illustrated by recent CBC seasons, we need to gain an understanding of how such climactic events affect the natural world as soon as possible, and CBC data will be crucial to those studies.

This is the 20th Christmas Bird Count I've had the pleasure of summarizing. Over the course of these 20 years (and for the decades of participation prior to them) I've found great joy getting to know many, many people associated with the CBC—and bird conservation—at many levels. From time to time it is inevitable that friends and acquaintances—young and old—are lost both to the passage of time and to accidents. This past year has been one of significant loss, and you'll find mention of several such passings in the Regional Summaries that follow. Frank Graham's tribute to Sandy Sprunt profiles a second-generation "Auduboner" who was instrumental in ornithology



**When we strive to make wildlife-friendly yards, we're blessed with a wide array of species that take advantage of our work. Bird feeders and nest boxes attract many species of birds as well as other wildlife, including predators taking advantage of smaller species. This Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) found a nest box in the Douglas County, Colorado circle to be the perfect perch—and came away with a mammalian rather than avian meal, a rabbit. Photo/Kaye Wilson**

and conservation—and the Christmas Bird Count—in Florida and the Caribbean. Richard Cunningham, long-time compiler, and the irreplaceable Glen Woolfenden from Archbold Biological Station were two other big losses in Florida.

Recently I had the honor of being asked to research Robert L. Pyle's involvement with the CBC program. Bob, who died recently, has been instrumental in the Christmas Bird Count and conservation in the Hawaiian Islands for many years. Of course his CBC involvement went far beyond Hawaii—he participated from the 45th count to the 107th in seven states on 122 CBCs, 29 of which he compiled, and he was CBC Regional Editor for the Hawaiian region for 23 seasons. He and his wife Leilani spent their part of the Honolulu CBC this season in the same spot where they were married in 1954, and they tallied among other birds 16 ethereal White Terns that nest on the church grounds. Was Bob an exceptional person? Absolutely. But he is quite representative of the people involved in the CBC, and his CBC achievements actually pale in comparison to those of many of you reading these words.

It is an honor to work with—and for—all of you. Here's to many more years! 🦅

**Table 4. Regional high counts for the 107th (2006–2007) Christmas Bird Count.**

Region	# of CBCs	Highest Count (species total)
St. Pierre et Miquelon	2	Ile St.-Pierre (45)
Newfoundland	11	St. John's (68)
Nova Scotia	20	Halifax-Dartmouth (112)
Prince Edward Island	2	Hillsborough (49)
New Brunswick	13	Cape Tormentine (61)
Québec	30	Québec (74)
Ontario	110	Blenheim (108)
Manitoba	19	Winnipeg (45)
Saskatchewan	23	Saskatoon (42)
Alberta	41	Calgary (69)
British Columbia	84	Ladner (145)
Northwest Territories	5	Hay River (21)
Nunavut	4	Rankin Inlet (3)
Yukon Territory	7	Whitehorse (24)
Alaska	36	Kodiak (83)
Maine	30	Greater Portland (106)
New Hampshire	17	Coastal New Hampshire (109)
Vermont	17	Ferrisburg (79)
Massachusetts	33	Nantucket (132)
Rhode Island	4	South Kingstown (127)
Connecticut	16	New Haven (131)
New York	69	L.I.: Montauk (130)
New Jersey	29	Cape May (156)
Pennsylvania	67	Southern Lancaster County (111)
Delaware	7	Cape Henlopen-Prime Hook (144)
Maryland	23	Ocean City (149)
District of Columbia	1	Washington (104)
Virginia	39	Cape Charles (148)
North Carolina	45	Morehead City (167)
		Southport, Bald Head, and Oak Islands (167)
South Carolina	20	McClellanville (161)
Georgia	23	Savannah, GA-SC (160)
Florida	65	Merritt Island N.W.R. (167)
		West Pasco (New Port Richey) (167)
Ohio	59	Cincinnati (86)
West Virginia	16	Charles Town (80)
Kentucky	12	Land Between the Lakes (97)
Tennessee	29	Reelfoot Lake (117)
Alabama	12	Gulf Shores (136)
Mississippi	17	Southern Hancock County (148)
Michigan	57	Monroe (82)
Indiana	36	Lake Monroe (95)
Wisconsin	40	Madison (89)
Illinois	57	Rend Lake (111)
Minnesota	45	Duluth (69)
Iowa	33	Saylorville Reservoir (96)
Missouri	26	Squaw Creek N.W.R. (99)
Arkansas	21	Holla Bend N.W.R. (114)
Louisiana	23	Sabine N.W.R. (152)
North Dakota	17	Garrison Dam (61)
South Dakota	15	Pierre (68)
Nebraska	11	Lake McConaughy (90)
Kansas	20	Udall-Winfield (98)
Oklahoma	19	Tishomingo N.W.R. (120)
Texas	102	Corpus Christi (238)
Montana	30	Stevensville (85)
Idaho	24	Lewiston-Clarkston (90)
Wyoming	21	Casper (68)
Colorado	40	Pueblo Reservoir (122)
New Mexico	30	Bosque del Apache (125)
Utah	21	Provo (100)
Nevada	12	Trukee Meadows (105)
Arizona	34	Ramsey Canyon (154)
Washington	42	Sequim-Dungeness (145)
Oregon	39	Coos Bay (161)
California	115	Santa Barbara (224)
Hawaii	9	Honolulu, O'ahu (55)
Northern Mariana Islands	5	Saipan (49)
Mexico	21	Ensenada, Baja California (204)
Belize	2	Punta Gorda (257)
Guatemala	1	Tikal (156)
Nicaragua	1	Sierritas de Managua, Conteo Navideño (99)
Costa Rica	3	Rain Forest Aerial Tram (400)
Panama	4	Pacific Canal Area (299)
Ecuador	3	Mindo-Tandayapa (417)
Peru	1	Rio Orosa, Loreto (135)
Chile	1	Drake Passage, South Atlantic Ocean (17)
Trinidad	1	Trinidad (176)
Bahamas	3	New Providence Island (109)
Dominican Republic	2	Puerto Escondido (76)
Puerto Rico	3	Cabo Rojo (116)
British Virgin Islands	2	Tortola (53)
U.S. Virgin Islands	2	St. Croix (66)
Bermuda	1	Bermuda (96)

# The 107th Christmas Bird Count in Canada

December 14, 2006, to January 5, 2007

*Richard J. Cannings*

The total number of Canadian counts rose again this year, to 371, up from 363 last year. Fourteen new counts came in from all over the country, from the Yalakom Valley in the Coast Mountains of British Columbia to Inuvik in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut's Arctic Bay, and south to Estevan, Saskatchewan. The number of field observers rose as well, but the number of feederwatchers dropped by about 600, mostly because of a change in direction at the feederwatcher powerhouse count of North Bay, Ontario. The number of individual birds reported climbed more than 10 percent to 3.6 million, while the species total was 289, the same as last year. Table 1 summarizes the counts by province and territory.

Ladner, British Columbia, again topped all counts in the country for highest species total with 145. In Alberta, Calgary and Edmonton added four species to last year's totals, with 69 and 56 species, respectively. Blenheim hung on to the Ontario crown with 108 species, down three from last year. The best noncoastal count was again reported from Oliver-Osoyoos, BC, where

birders set a new interior BC record with 115 species, followed closely by Okanagan rivals Penticton and Kelowna with 111 and 109 species. On the Atlantic coast, Halifax-Dartmouth came back down to earth with 112 species after last year's stratospheric 135. Other provincial high counts are shown in Table 1. Counts in Nunavut again totaled five species for the second year in a row.

The big picture story this year was the weather. Eastern Canada had a very mild early winter, while savage storms pounded the west coast. Table 2 shows minimum temperatures reported on counts across the country; Ontario and Quebec enjoyed temperatures more than 5 degrees Celsius warmer this year than last. British Columbia, on the other hand, was cooler this year, and in the northern territories temperatures were considerably colder. Record highs were set for Tundra Swan, Canvasback, Red-breasted Merganser, Black-crowned Night-Heron, and Turkey Vulture on various Ontario counts, and European Starlings, Canada Geese, Herring Gulls, and Ring-billed Gulls were seen in much greater numbers



**Curve-billed Thrasher at Dalmeny-Langham, SK. Photo/Chris Saunders**

across the country, likely due to the mild weather in Central Canada (Table 3). American Crow numbers plunged inexplicably by about 60,000 birds this year, long after the advent of West Nile virus; all of that decline happened in Ontario. Last year's high numbers of Bohemian Waxwings and Dark-eyed Juncos dipped to more normal figures this year; perhaps the mild temperatures allowed those species to stay in forests rather than suburbs.

The most widespread species in Canada are shown in Table 4. The top four species in this list are almost always the same, though ranks may be traded year by year. Redpolls missed the top 15

**Table 1. Provincial and territorial summaries for the 107th Christmas Bird Count.**


Province or Territory	Counts	Field observers	Feeder watchers	Species	Individuals	Highest species total and count
Alberta	41	951	812	110	206,362	69, Calgary
British Columbia	84	2226	581	226	1,139,935	145, Ladner
Manitoba	19	324	110	74	71,166	45, Winnipeg
New Brunswick	13	231	87	109	63,291	61, Cape Tormentine
New Foundland and Labrador	11	130	49	116	51,016	68, St. John's
Northwest Territories	5	54	23	23	4225	19, Hay River
Nova Scotia	20	511	438	158	244,609	112, Halifax-Dartmouth
Nunavut	4	6	0	5	277	3, Rankin Inlet
Ontario	110	2818	1046	185	1,513,273	108, Blenheim
Prince Edward Island	2	35	4	57	21,439	49, Hillsborough
Québec	30	578	147	140	280,195	73, Québec
St.-Pierre et Michelon	2	25	2	69	9067	45, Île Saint-Pierre
Saskatchewan	23	271	86	88	49,388	42, Saskatoon
Yukon Territories	7	81	27	33	4035	25, Whitehorse
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>8220</b>	<b>3410</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>3,658,278</b>	

for the second year in a row, dropping to 23rd in the rankings. Bald Eagles continued their slow climb up the list, placing 10th this year, and Pileated Woodpecker made the top 15 for the first time ever.

The most unexpected find this year was a Curve-billed Thrasher on the new count of Dalmeny-Langham, SK. Another new species for Canadian CBCs was Brown Pelican; singles were seen on not one, but two counts—Victoria and Sooke, BC. Towhees made the news in central Canada, with a Spotted Towhee decidedly out of place in Kenora, ON, and a Green-tailed Towhee in Longueuil, QC. The latter is only the second record of this southwestern species on a Canadian count. Other second-records

were a Yellow-legged Gull in St. John's, NL, and a White-winged Dove at Cape Sable Island, NS. The all-time Canada species list for Christmas Bird Counts now stands at 408.

One of Canada's most enthusiastic CBC counters, John Miles, passed away just before count season. His Fisherville

CBC has always been one of the most exciting counts in the country, especially for numbers of hawks and owls. Two other longtime compilers retired this year: Felix Hilton of Montreal and Dick Tafel of North Bay. We thank them for their years of hard work promoting the Christmas Bird Count in their areas. 

**The Internet is playing an increasingly important role in birding, as illustrated by this Dickcissel reported as a count week bird at Port Alberni, BC. It was "discovered" by a British birder through a photo posted on an Internet email group. He realized it was an unusual species for Vancouver Island and notified friends in British Columbia, who in turn contacted the count compiler. Photo/Guy Monty**



**Table 2. Average minimum temperatures reported on Christmas Bird Counts across Canada on the 106th count (2005–2006) and the 107th count (2006–2007).**

Minimum Temperature (°C/°F)		
Region	106th Count	107th Count
British Columbia	-2.4/27.6	-3.6/25.5
Prairies	-11.8/10.8	-11.0/12.2
Central	-7.1/19.1	-1.7/28.9
Atlantic	-4.7/23.5	-2.9/26.7
Territories	-14.1/6.6	-20.4/-4.8

**Table 3. Birds with totals exceeding 50,000 on the 107th Christmas Bird Count in Canada, with totals from last year for comparison.**

Species	107th Count	106th Count
European Starling	457,478	371,437
Canada Goose	297,987	204,373
Mallard	224,279	227,869
American Crow	191,328	250,642
House Sparrow	138,627	137,371
Black-capped Chickadee	132,821	140,971
Rock Pigeon	124,107	127,302
Glaucous-winged Gull	112,596	119,326
Herring Gull	97,568	81,281
Ring-billed Gull	81,888	25,725
Bohemian Waxwing	76,004	146,750
American Wigeon	72,972	92,111
Dark-eyed Junco	66,514	147,384
American Goldfinch	57,760	50,065
Greater Scaup	53,773	47,183
Dunlin	52,872	56,576

**Table 4. The most widespread species on Canadian Christmas Bird Counts, as measured by the number of counts on which they were reported.**

Species	No. of counts	Rank 107th Count	Rank 106th Count	Rank 105th Count	Rank 104th Count
Downy Woodpecker	334	1	2	1	3
Black-capped Chickadee	332	2	1	2	2
Hairy Woodpecker	329	3	3	3	1
Common Raven	324	4	4	4	4
European Starling	302	5	5	8	6
House Sparrow	294	6	6	9	8
Red-breasted Nuthatch	294	7	8	7	5
Dark-eyed Junco	293	8	10	6	9
Rock Pigeon	293	9	7	10	10
Bald Eagle	255	10	14	13	14
American Crow	252	11	11	12	12
Mallard	242	12	11	15	16
Pileated Woodpecker	239	13	16	16	17
Golden-crowned Kinglet	237	14	18	24	22
American Goldfinch	224	15	15	21	20