

The 70th Saskatoon Christmas bird and mammal count attracted 73 participants. The temperature was mild, winds were light and skies were partly cloudy. The species count at 40, was above the long-term average of (LTA) of 35.

The counts for waterfowl species on the river were unremarkable, but two rarities were seen: Long-tailed Duck and Hooded Merganser. For each species this was only the second sighting in the history of the count.

Gamebird numbers for the nearby, mostly rural counts (Clark's Crossing and Pike Lake) were exceptionally high this year. On the Saskatoon count Gray Partridge was double the LTA and Sharp-tailed Grouse matched the LTA, but both were well below the counts years ago when the footprint of the city was much smaller. As the city expands, the availability of suitable habitat within the count circle for gamebirds shrinks. This may also be a factor in the declining counts for Great Horned Owl, although the extent of the decline suggests other factors are at play too. From 1955-2013 the average count was 5.2. Since then, it has been 1.2 and only a single Great Horned Owl was reported this year.

This has been a good year for northern owls and on count day a Great Gray Owl and a Boreal Owl were seen. Neither species had been seen on the count before.

For the 8th straight year European Starling count (42% of LTA) has been far below the LTA. House Sparrow have been reported on the Breeding Bird Survey to be in long-term decline and the count this year was the second lowest since the count began (38% of LTA). Despite an abundant crop of mountain ash berries in the city, Bohemian Waxwing count was the second lowest on record (1% of LTA).

Pine Grosbeak, Red Crossbill and American Goldfinch were absent, Redpoll (3% of LTA) and Pine Siskin (5% of LTA) were scarce, but White-winged Crossbill (235% of LTA) bucked the trend.

Thank you to all who participated in the 2024 count. We hope to see you back again next year.

Stan Shadick and Kerry Hjertaas, Organizers

John Patterson, Compiler

Note: all counts above have been corrected for effort, unless otherwise noted, so results from different years are comparable.
(Corrected count = Raw count X Average party hours for all years ÷ Party hours).

Saskatoon Bird and Mammal Count - Dec 26, 2024

C1	C2	C3a	C3b	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	NEa	NEb	NEc	NW	NWc	SEa	SEb	SEc	SWa	SWb	Sector	Year	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
13	17	14	7	9	6	11	10	10	20	4	12		20	12	15	16	21	13	18	18	14	Total Species - count day	40	45	38	36	44	38	39	
																							Total Species - count period	2	3	1	4		5	2
2.5	4.3	7.9	1.0	1.8	2.2	5.2	6.2	5.0	12.4	1.5	3.3		5.3	8.5	4.6	15.6	5.7	5.1	5.2	5.9	7.7	Party Hours	116.6	122.2	87.2	92.2	172.8	93.5	93.5	
1	2	8	1	6	1	3	4	2	12	1	1		6	7	3	4	3	3	4	2	2	Participants	73	65	69	73	99	77	61	

																						BIRDS											
																						Snow Goose		2									
																							Cackling Goose		11								
	211	2							31							339				12		Canada Goose	595	2231	11	47	186	1918	2100				
				27					200							2						Mallard	200	370	77	186	142	46	85				
																						Green-winged Teal		-2									
																						Ring-necked Duck		1					2				
																						Lesser Scaup		3			1		5				
	1																					Long-tailed Duck	1										
11	23	24		60					750				10							15		Common Goldeneye	750	456	914	221	1032	721	178				
									1													Merganser sp.		1									
																						Hooded Merganser	1				2						
	3																			2		Common Merganser	3			1							
																						Ruffed Grouse		1									
											3	71		2	3	18	12	11	8	32		Sharp-tailed Grouse	160	13	75	14	32	9	64				
											46			26	9	5	282	32	65	30		Gray Partridge	495	44	21		144						
																						Ring-necked Pheasant		1									
7	57	75	6	152				25	27	366	5	16		10	23	18	489	4	13	280	93	38	Rock Pigeon (feral)	1704	3108	1396	924	2272	1410	2028			
																1		6		24		Eurasian Collared-Dove	31	20	12	15	32	40	40				
																						Hawk sp.				1			1				
																						Accipiter sp.				1							
								1							1							Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	6	3	1	3	1	-1				
																				2		American Goshawk	2	1	1		3						
									1													Bald Eagle	1	3	-1	3	3						
																						Rough-legged Hawk		1									
																						Snowy Owl		1									
																	1					Great Horned Owl	1	3		1	1	-1	2				
																						Northern Hawk Owl				-1							
																			1			Great Gray Owl	1										
													1									Boreal Owl	1										
																						Northern Saw-whet Owl		-1		-1	1	-1					
																						Woodpecker sp.		1									
										2												Picoides sp.	2			3	1						
																						American Three-toed Woodpecker						-1	1				
																						Black-backed Woodpecker						-1					

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	2	3				1		1	6		1		5	3	2	15	3	1	20	1	5	Downy Woodpecker	69	58	53	55	65	47	44	
3		3							5				3		1	2	2	2	4		6	Hairy Woodpecker	31	28	19	15	20	17	21	
																1	1	2				Pileated Woodpecker	4	1	3	3	1	1	2	
	1	5				1	1	1	5			1	1	1								Northern Flicker	17	19	8	12	22	10	16	
						1			1		1		1	1								Merlin	5	7	8	1	4	1	2	
																						Gyr Falcon				-1		1		
																							Northern Shrike			1			1	1
1	1	3			3	4	3	2	2		2		9	4		9	3	1	11	4	2	Blue Jay	64	114	53	50	160	69	102	
9	27	36	6	13	4	39	18	28	75	3	17		457	21	33	57	27	47	51	29	102	Black-billed Magpie	878	747	789	871	726	411	476	
	2								1						2						9	American Crow	14	12	5	6	7	4	4	
4	2	2	1	1		2	1	3	5		3		2	3	4	5	65	10	20	14	14	Common Raven	161	129	176	263	499	174	128	
14	62	43	6	15	12	32	35	12	62	3	12		48	29	10	66	62	7	25	40	59	Black-capped Chickadee	654	647	670	456	1178	729	800	
																							Golden-crowned Kinglet			3		1	-2	
									2														Nuthatch sp.	2	2	2				
1	8	25	1	3	4	9	6	4	21		1		18	12	2	29	10		14	6		Red-breasted Nuthatch	174	99	250	49	291	168	143	
1	2		2						3				3	2		2	4		1	4	4	White-breasted Nuthatch	28	49	16	12	29	17	24	
																							Brown Creeper		1	1	2	5	3	
																	60		20				European Starling	80	23	54	22	86	1	14
																							Townsend's Solitaire		2		-1		1	
																							Varied Thrush					1		1
																							Hermit Thrush					1		
													1				1			1			American Robin	3	3	21	1	8	3	
																							Waxwing sp.			30				
	6												15				25		13	12			Bohemian Waxwing	71	530	596	1970	852	476	270
																					131		Cedar Waxwing	131		57	4			30
67	232	270	152	8	72	187	127	225	450	1	53		50	223	198	412	10	18	500	21	27	House Sparrow	3303	4632	4207	3403	6292	3515	3379	
																							Finch sp.				40			
					-8																		Pine Grosbeak	-8	31		6	48	15	
10	11	24		4	2	3	29	11	29		7		93	25		32			12			House Finch	292	205	191	350	468	213	353	
																	1						Purple Finch	1					1	
													21				20						Redpoll	41	74		1054	43	5	46
																							Red Crossbill		16	20			36	7
20		11											28			79	30			23	7	White-winged Crossbill	198		2		132	6	1	
						2																	Pine Siskin	2	8		11	36	9	159
					-12																		American Goldfinch	-12		6	2	2	3	1
																			45				Snow Bunting	45		20	350	66	56	5
1									2				2							1			Dark-eyed Junco	6	1	25	18	10	2	19
																							White-throated Sparrow			1	-2	2	1	2
																							Spotted Towhee							-1
																							Rusty Blackbird			1				
																							Common Grackle		-1	1		2		1

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149	651	526	174	283	97	281	246	314	2020	12	162		403	347	302	1550	358	440	1042	351	466	Total Birds - count day	10224	13716	9799	10444	14912	10141	10557	
																							Total Birds - count period	20	4	1	6		6	2

- a minus sign indicates a count period observation (Dec 14 - Jan 5) . These are only recorded if the species was not seen on count day.

																						MAMMALS							
									3T													Shrew sp.	3T						
													5T								5T	Snowshoe Hare	10T	1		T	T	T	2
3T	1 39T	XT			1	C	xT	xT	2T	2T	xT		1T	5T		45T	2T					White-tailed Jackrabbit	2	38	23	25	39	20	3
						1			2 2T				3		1	2	2		2	6	2	American Red Squirrel	21	13	11	3	14	9	12
									1 Cut				1T									American Beaver	1T		CH		T		
									2T													Deer Mouse	2T						
																						Muskrat		1	T				
								xT														Vole sp.	1T				1	T	
																						Meadow Vole				T			
1T	4T												1T			1T						Mouse sp.	7T			T	T	T	
																						House Mouse				T	T		
																		3			1T	Porcupine	3			1	2	T	
									1 1T						1	2			2	1		Coyote	7	8	6	1	18	4	1
1T	1T								2T				1T					1			2	Red Fox	3	2	T	1	4	T	
																					1 1T	Least Weasel	1						
									1T													Mink	1T			T	T	T	
																						River Otter				1			
1T	4																					Deer sp.	4		T	T			
												xT		1								1 3T	Mule Deer	2	3		9	6	6
																1T	2		8			White-tailed Deer	10	9	13	22	9	32	22
															1				1		3T	Moose	2		2	1			

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C1	C2	C3a	C3b	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	NEa	NEb	NEc	NW	NWc	SEa	SEb	SEc	SWa	SWb	Sector	Year	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
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																							PARTICIPANTS				
C1	Meghan Mickelson																										
C2	LeeAnn Latremouille, Kiel Drake																										
C3a	Robert Johanson, Trent Watts, Olive Watts 18, Jane McPhee, Shan Landry, Mary Anne Rubin, Hamish Watts 18, Blair McCann FW																										
C3b	Britt Agrey																										
C4	Kyron Giroux, Jade Giroux, Keith Giroux, Denise Giroux, Heather Giroux, Tara Giroux																										
C5	Mike Gollop, Louise Cook																										
C6	Joe Monahan, Carol Armstrong Monahan, Helena Larsen McKay																										
C7	Jim Paul, Bill MacKenzie FW, Audrey MacKenzie FW, Trish Santo FW																										
C8	Greg Fenty, Norman Zlotkin FW																										
C9	Donna Bruce, Raea Gooding, Troy Lange, Philip Taylor, Richard Kerbes, Julie Jensen FW, Carol Blenkin FW, Diane Nowlan FW, David Forbes FW, Lauren Burgess, Jennifer Burgess FW, Janet Loran FW, Don Loran FW																										
C10	Donna Bruce																										
C11	Sarah Bradley																										
NEb	Kerry Hjertaas, Stephanie Gauthier, Carol Blenkin, Jeff Jensen, Ron Jensen, Ruth Skinner, Anna Janzen																										
NEc	Guy Wapple, Valerie Martz FW, Scott Mitchell, Arvid Pederson, Brandon Wapple FW, Rob Wapple, Sandra Wapple FW																										
NW	Elisa Elizondo, Christian Roy, Liam Burgess																										
NWc	David Forbes, Kathlin Simpkins, Geoffrey Carter, Jenny Sutton																										
SEa	Nick Saunders, Joan Feather, Bill Robertson																										
SEb	Marten Stoffel, Dan Zazelenchuck, Carson Kearns																										
SEcd	Marten Stoffel, Dan Zazelenchuck, Martin Gerard, Sylvia Gerard																										
SWa	John Patterson, Marc Sabourin																										
SWb	Alexander Acton, Amanda Horvath																										

FW - Feeder Watcher, 18 - Youth

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C1	C2	C3a	C3b	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	NEa	NEb	NEc	NW	NWc	SEa	SEb	SEc	SWa	SWb	Sector	Year	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018							
																						EFFORT															
10:12	10:10	10:00	15:30	12:45	10:05	9:20	9:30	9:20	9:25	14:50	8:54		9:10	9:00	9:22	9:30	9:00	13:40	8:30	9:35	8:34	Start Time	8:30	8:30	8:45	8:34	8:15										
14:14	16:02	14:30	16:30	14:30	12:15	16:30	16:00	15:38	14:30	16:22	12:11		16:00	17:00	16:30	17:30	15:00	16:00	13:40	15:40	16:34	End Time	17:30	17:15	17:30	17:15	17:15										
1.9	2.8	4.9	1.0	1.8		2.0	2.5	1.0	8.5	1.1	1.8		3.9	5.5	1.0	10.8				1.1	1.4	Time on foot (hrs)	52.9	62.8	55.1	46.4	116.3	46.4	46.3								
0.6	1.5	3.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	3.2	3.7	4.0	3.9	0.5	1.5		1.4	3.0	3.6	4.8	5.7	5.1	5.2	4.8	6.2	Time by Car (hrs)	63.8	59.4	44.1	45.2	56.5	47.1	47.2								
0.5		3.3				1.5	1.7	5.5	9.8				4.8	4.0		0.8					0.4	Time at Feeder (hrs)	32.1	23.6	23.9	40.9	38.9	48.9	15.9								
	6.5	13.0	3.6	5.5	10.5	3.5	3.9	1.6	12.6	2.9	4.2		8.7	5.5	1.5	16.0				1.4	2.0	Dist by foot/ski (km)	102.9	132.5	104.5	81.4	286.3	107.3	89.0								
	16	10				26	47	45	35	8	26		39	66	51	60	76	126	73	59	79	Dist by car (km)	842	859	870.4	664	750	848	772								

																						WEATHER																		
																						Min. Wind (kph)	10	8	12	11	10	16	2											
																						Max. Wind (kph)	18	21	22	21	20	23	7											
																						Wind direction	SSE	NNE																
																						Min. Temp. (°C)	-8	-10	-14	-33	-8	-16	-12											
																						Max Temp (°C)	-4	6	-11	-28	-7	-10	-9											
--	20	--	--	--	--	--	20	5	15	11	14		--	10	25	10	10	--	30	10	3	Min Snow Depth (cm)	15		10	3	15	4	2											
35	60	--	--	--	--	80	40	35	25	25	46		--	25	30	50	40	30	--	30	3	Max Snow Depth (cm)	40	2	70	60	32	15	15											
--	10	--	--			--	5	5	10	60			5	5	25	25	50	--	--	--	--	Cloud cover AM (%)	pcr	mcr	ov	mcr	ov	cr	pcd											
	90	--	60		--	20	5	10	80	85			10	5	75	35	50		5	--	50	Cloud cover PM (%)	pcd	pcr	cd	mcr	ov	cr	pcd											

ov - overcast, cd - cloudy, mcd - mostly cloudy, pcd - partly cloudy, pcr - partly clear, mcr - mostly clear, cr - clear

																						HABITAT																													
																						Evergreen forest																													
																						Mixedwood forest	5		5								25	5	10																
																						Deciduous forest			5											10															
																						Aspen grove/ farmland	10	10	5	25	10	10	10				10			100				15	20										
																						Aspen grove/prairie			10	5																									
																						Native prairie																													
																						Tame pasture			5																										
																						Farmland	5	5	15		5	5	5																						
																						Farmsteads																													
80	77	95	100		100	100	100	100	70	70	65		65	100	80	80	60			70		Urban (incl. cottages/landfill)	75	70	50	65	80	75	70																						
	18																																																		
20	5	5								30						5	5				10	5	Riparian (river bank)	5	10	5	5	5	5	10																					
																						Other (specify)									15																				

																						Wild Fruit Crop	f	p	g	f	f	f	p											
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p - poor, f - fair, g - good, e - excellent