

The Annual Westcliffe Christmas Bird Count

1-4-20

The Annual Christmas Bird Count sponsored by the National Audubon Society and the Arkansas Valley Audubon Society was held on Saturday, January 4. The folks at The Silver Cliff Mountain Inn were more than accommodating to our group, feeding many of us breakfast and lunch, and providing a spot to convene. Thanks, Willie, and staff.

For more than 30 years, Westcliffe has participated in the nationwide bird count, which helps the National Audubon Society keep track of wild bird populations and winter migration patterns in various regions across the country.

The morning was clear and calm, and the temperatures quickly rose, making for a pleasant day. However the mostly frozen water throughout the count circle prevented the group from finding many water birds.

Twenty birders made the day possible, covering just about every corner of the 15 mile count circle that is centered in the town of Westcliffe. The day produced an above average # of species, which was 47. Highlights included a high count of Red-breasted Nuthatches, not found in all years. The count of 42 bested the past high count of 16. Other highlights included Wild Turkeys, not often found on this count, and a single Ferruginous Hawk, seen only in 7 of 30 years. In addition, the large number of 35 Bushtits have only been found in 7 of 30 years. Of interest is the lone Evening Grosbeak found on Oak Creek Grade Road, a species only seen 7 times and not since 2005. Common in large groups in the summer months, this bird must have forgotten to tag along with his migrating comrades.

The other highlights included 2 great finds up at the former ski area. A female Three-toed Woodpecker is new for this count, and a vocalizing Northern Pygmy Owl nearby has only been recorded on one other count in 30 years.

Lovely views, bluebird skies, and in particular, the many friendly and helpful local residents all contribute to a fun day. Thanks to Jordan at

the Wet Mt. Tribune for his article about the count, as many participants were local residents.

Thanks to all the participants and locals for your support in this important research effort.

Jane Pedersen, Compiler

Birds found on the Westcliffe CBC on 1-4-20

Mallard – 35

Wild Turkey - 5

Great Blue Heron – 1

Golden Eagle - 1

Bald Eagle -1

Red-tailed Hawk - 12

Rough-legged Hawk - 2

Ferruginous Hawk – 1

Eurasian Collared Dove -67

Great Horned Owl – 4

Northern Pygmy Owl - 1

Belted Kingfisher -1

Hairy Woodpecker – 5

American Three-toed Woodpecker – 1

Northern Flicker – 5

American Kestrel – 1

Loggerhead Shrike – 1

Pinyon Jay - 6

Stellar Jay - 11

Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay – 10

Black-billed Magpie – 71

Clark's Nutcracker - 109
American Crow - 17
Common Raven - 57
Horned Lark - 151
Black-capped Chickadee - 4
Mountain Chickadee -51
Bushtit - 35
Red-breasted Nuthatch - 42
White-breasted Nuthatch -12

Pygmy Nuthatch - 48
Brown Creeper - 1
American Dipper - 5
American Robin - 4
European Starling - 132
Spotted Towhee - 1
American Tree Sparrow - 30
Dark-eyed Junco - 131
Song Sparrow - 4
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch - 2

Brown-capped Rosy-Finch - 6
House Finch -16
Cassin's Finch - 25
Red Crossbill - 71
Pine Siskin - 30
Evening Grosbeak - 1
House Sparrow -132

Total species: 47

Participants:

Kim Bolton, Sue Peiletier, Sue Smiley, John Ferraiuolo,
Steve and Margaret Linderer, Mary Zawacki, Leonard
and June Ketchum, Jim Potyraj; all of Westcliffe; Leon
and Treva Bright, Westcliffe and Pueblo; Jane Pedersen

and Steve Somora, Hillside and Durango; Dave Silverman, Gib Rokich, Rye; Chris Chappell, Crestone; Margie Joy, Pueblo West; Star Jorgensen, Pueblo and Jack from Ithaca, NY.

Jane Pedersen

1-9-18

[<Home>](#)