

The 71st Saskatoon Christmas bird and mammal count attracted 70 participants. Skies were overcast with snow, heavy at times, but temperature was mild and winds were light. The species count at 39 on count day was above the long-term average (LTA) of 36, but below the average of 42 in recent years (2000-2024).

Two rarities were seen on the river: a Greater Scaup on count day, a first for the count, and a Tundra Swan at the weir during the count period, only the second sighting for this species. Canada Goose (20% of LTA) and Mallard (43% of LTA) were quite sparse this year.

After unprecedented numbers of Gray Partridge last year, the count has returned to the LTA (104% of LTA), although this is still more than four times the average count since 2000.

No Bald Eagles were observed on the first 46 Christmas counts, but since the first sighting in 1997 they have been seen in 14 of 29 years, five of the last six. Pileated Woodpecker wasn't observed until the 54th Christmas count in 2004 but has been seen every year since 2014.

Since 2020 the magpie count at the Sutherland Beach roost has far exceeded the combined counts for all other sectors and has been used as a surrogate for the entire city count, but this year only 110 were seen at the roost, rather than the several hundred expected. The combined counts away from the roost were triple the roost count, so this year the combined sector count was used as a better estimate of magpie numbers (71% of LTA). In the weeks since the count the numbers at the roost have recovered substantially (e.g 540 on January 17). Whatever the cause of the low magpie count, it didn't affect all corvids. Common Raven count (321% of LTA) recovered after two years of decline.

House Sparrow count (46% of LTA) has declined in the last three years by 21%, 25% and 41% to near an all-time low. They are reported to have disappeared from some yards, and sick or dead sparrows have been seen, suggesting disease is the cause. Songbirds are generally minimally affected by Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, so it is more likely E. coli or Salmonella.

Reflecting a fairly poor berry crop in the city, Bohemian Waxwing count was far below the LTA (6% of LTA). American Goldfinch (1800% of LTA) were seen only once in the first 43 years of the count, but since then have been seen in 17 of 28 years, with a new high count this year. Snow Bunting (492% of LTA) were also abundant this year, with several large flocks sighted.

Thank you to all who participated in the 2025 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 in the current year).

C1	C2	C3a	C3b	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	NEa	NEb	NEc	NW	NWc	SEa	SEb	SEc	SWa	SWb	Sector	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
12	5	11		11	5	12	7	10	14		11	12	14	12	12	16	13	9	16	21	16	Total Species - count day	39	40	44	38	35	44	38
		1						1											1			Total Species - count period	2	2	3	1	5		5
1.5	2.3	7.8		2.7	1.4	5.8	4.7	3.7	4.2		2.8	5.4	5.0	6.3	3.5	12.6	5.5	2.5	7.7	7.3	8.9	Party Hours (field)	101.1	116.6	122.2	87.2	92.2	172.8	93.5
2	2	5		2	1	3	7	2	9		1	3	5	6	2	7	3	2	6	3	2	Participants (field +FW)	70	71	65	69	73	99	77

																						BIRDS							
																						Snow Goose			2				
																						Cackling Goose			11				
				4				9			46											Canada Goose	59	595	2231	11	47	186	1918
								-1														Tundra Swan	-1						
				13				5							2					1		Mallard	21	200	370	77	186	142	46
																						Green-winged Teal			-2				
																						Ring-necked Duck			1				
											1											Greater Scaup	1						
																						Lesser Scaup			3			1	
																						Long-tailed Duck		1					
13		1		208					610		21				22					28		Common Goldeneye	610	750	456	914	221	1032	721
																						Merganser sp.			1				
																						Hooded Merganser		1				2	
								1														Common Merganser	1	3			1		
																						Ruffed Grouse			1				
										2							1	8			20	Sharp-tailed Grouse	31	160	13	75	14	32	9
										11				28			10	1	51	7		Gray Partridge	108	495	44	21		144	
																						Ring-necked Pheasant			1				
25	14	51		167		20	37	4	128		2		3	18	10	828	6	2	320	29		Rock Pigeon (feral)	1644	1704	3108	1396	924	2272	1410
																			15			Eurasian Collared-Dove	15	31	20	12	15	32	40
				1					1		1									1		Bald Eagle	3	1	3	-1	3	3	
																						Hawk sp.					1		
																						Accipiter sp.					1		
											1											Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	2	6	3	1	3	1
																						American Goshawk		2	1	1		3	
																						Rough-legged Hawk			1				
															1							Snowy Owl	1		1				
															1							Great Horned Owl	1	1	3		1	1	-1
																						Northern Hawk Owl					-1		
																						Great Gray Owl		1					
																						Boreal Owl		1					
																			1			Northern Saw-whet Owl	1		-1		-1	1	-1
												1										Woodpecker sp.	1		1				
															1							Picoides sp.	1	2			3	1	

Saskatoon Bird and Mammal Count - Dec 26, 2025

C1	C2	C3a	C3b	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	NEa	NEb	NEc	NW	NWc	SEa	SEb	SEc	SWa	SWb	Sector	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	
																						American Three-toed Woodpecker							-1	
																						Black-backed Woodpecker							-1	
4						4			2		2	1	1	3		15	1		9	4	5	Downy Woodpecker	51	69	58	53	55	65	47	
1		1			1			1					1		1			1	5	2	6	Hairy Woodpecker	20	31	28	19	15	20	17	
																			2			Pileated Woodpecker	2	4	1	3	3	1	1	
						4		1								8						Northern Flicker	13	17	19	8	12	22	10	
													2			1						Merlin	3	5	7	8	1	4	1	
																						Gyr Falcon					-1		1	
																					1	Northern Shrike	1			1			1	
11	2	2			1	4	7	1	2					6		4	7	3	3	8	3	Blue Jay	64	64	114	53	50	160	69	
6	7	14		19	1	41	8	21	17		14	5	125	42	14	32	15	9	17	6	22	Black-billed Magpie	325	654	747	789	871	726	411	
													1	2	3				1			American Crow	7	14	12	5	6	7	4	
3	2	4		4		2		2	8		2	4	2	4	7	11	55	3	10	46	51	Common Raven	220	161	129	176	263	499	174	
20		50		14	4	57	23	7	39		6	8	8	28	6	73	75	14	58	38	83	Black-capped Chickadee	611	654	647	670	456	1178	729	
																				2		Horned Lark	2							
																						Golden-crowned Kinglet				3		1	-2	
									1													Nuthatch sp.	1	2	2	2				
3	1	13		3		8	8	2	3		2		1	5		15	2		7	5	1	Red-breasted Nuthatch	79	174	99	250	49	291	168	
1		4				3			4				2	1		1	6		2	1	1	White-breasted Nuthatch	26	28	49	16	12	29	17	
																						Brown Creeper				1	1	2	5	3
																	10		30			European Starling	40	80	23	54	22	86	1	
																						Townsend's Solitaire				2		-1	1	
																						Varied Thrush							1	
																						Hermit Thrush							1	
																	1					American Robin	1	3	3	21	1	8	3	
																						Waxwing sp.				30				
																	2		44	55	38	Bohemian Waxwing	139	71	530	596	1970	852	476	
																						Cedar Waxwing		131		57	4			
11		186		39	34	96	81	253	66		42	32	20	130	29	234			390	30	10	House Sparrow	1683	3303	4632	4207	3403	6292	3515	
																						Finch sp.					40			
													2									Pine Grosbeak	2	-8	31		6	48	15	
20		4		11		24	44	8			3	24	4	9		28			20	16	2	House Finch	217	292	205	191	350	468	213	
																						Purple Finch		1					1	
																30	1	230		30	300	Redpoll	591	41	74		1054	43	5	
																						Red Crossbill			16	20			36	
																						White-winged Crossbill		198		2		132	6	
																						Pine Siskin		2	8		11	36	9	
																				20		American Goldfinch	20	-12		6	2	2	3	
											42				7					500	1450	Snow Bunting	1999	45		20	350	66	56	
													5		2					1		Dark-eyed Junco	8	6	1	25	18	10	2	
						1										1						White-throated Sparrow	2			1	-2	2	1	

C1	C2	C3a	C3b	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	NEa	NEb	NEc	NW	NWc	SEa	SEb	SEc	SWa	SWb	Sector	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
																						Rusty Blackbird				1			
																						Common Grackle	-1		-1	1		2	
118	26	330		483	41	264	208	300	896		128	145	177	248	110	1305	182	280	935	874	2000	Total Birds - count day	8626	10000	13716	9799	10444	14912	10141
								1														Total Birds - count period	2	20	4	1	6		6

- a minus sign indicates a count period observation (Dec 14 - Jan 5) which is recorded only if the species was not seen on count day. Only the observation closest to count day is recorded for a bird sighted multiple times

																						MAMMALS								
																						Shrew sp.		3T						
																						Snowshoe Hare		10T	1		T	T	T	
1T					1			2			XT	xT		1 5T		14T	2			1	10T	White-tailed Jackrabbit	7	2	38	23	25	39	20	
																			1			Eastern Fox Squirrel	1							
				1		1							2			1 1T					2	American Red Squirrel	7	21	13	11	3	14	9	
																						American Beaver		1T		CH		T		
																						Deer Mouse		2T						
																						Muskrat			1	T				
																						Vole sp.		1T				1	T	
																						Meadow Vole					T			
																						Mouse sp.		7T			T	T	T	
																						House Mouse					T	T		
																			1T		3T	Porcupine	4T	3			1	2	T	
																1T			1		1 5T	Coyote	2	7	8	6	1	18	4	
																	1		1		7T	Red Fox	2	3	2	T	1	4	T	
																						Least Weasel		1						
																						Mink		1T			T	T	T	
													1									River Otter	1				1			
																						Deer sp.		4		T	T			
											3 XT		12								2T	Mule Deer	15	2	3		9	6		
											XT								5	2	2T	White-tailed Deer	7	10	9	13	22	9	32	
																					2T	Moose	2T							

Saskatoon Bird and Mammal Count - Dec 26, 2025

C1	C2	C3a	C3b	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	NEa	NEb	NEc	NW	NWc	SEa	SEb	SEc	SWa	SWb	Sector	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
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		PARTICIPANTS
C1	Meghan Mickelson, Warrick Baijius	
C2	Kyron Giroux, Jade Giroux	
C3a	Trent Watts, Mary Anne Rubin, Olive Watts 18, Hamish Watts 18, Robert Johanson	
C3b		
C4	Leanne Grieves, David Montour	
C5	Mike Gollop	
C6	Joe Monahan, Carol Monahan, Louise Cook FW	
C7	Jim Paul, Lorie Henderson, Brian Johns FW, Dianne Johns FW, Audrey MacKenzie FW, Bill MacKenzie FW, Trish Santo FW	
C8	Greg Fenty, Norman Zlotkin	
C9	Raea Gooding, Troy Lange, Melanie Elliott FW, Richard Kerbes, Karen Hunter, Phil Taylor FW, Margot Taylor FW, Janet Loran FW, Don Loran FW	
C10		
C11	Sarah Bradley	
NEa	Bob Godwin, Kathy Meeres, Lisa Rohachuk	
NEb	Ron Jensen, Guy Wapple, Rob Wapple, Scott Mitchell, Julie Jensen, Carol Blenkin	
NEc	Scott Mitchell, Brandon Wapple FW, Gerry Wapple FW, Guy Wapple, Rob Wapple, Sandra Wapple FW, Alyssa Vibert	
NW	Elisa Elizondo, Christian Roy	
NWc	David Forbes, Geoff Carter, Kathleen Carter, Roseanne Carter, Rob O'Flanagan, Kathlin Simpkins, Audrey Sadler FW	
SEa	Nick Saunders, Joan Feather , Bill Robertson	
SEb	Kerry Hjertaas, Stephanie Gauthier	
SEcd	Marten Stoffel, Dan Zazelenchuck, Martin Gerard, Sylvia Gerard, Mike Chorney, David Millar	
SWa	John Patterson, Marc Sabourin, George West	
SWb	Alexander Acton, Rylan Urban	

FW - Feeder Watcher, 18 - Youth

																					EFFORT											
9:49	9:15	10:00		9:54	12:20	9:15	9:30	10:30	10:00		12:30	10:14	9:30	11:00	10:00	9:30	9:00	10:13	8:35	9:35	8:30	Start Time	8:30	8:30	8:30	8:45	8:34	8:15				
15:35	11:30	15:30		13:06	13:45	17:00	14:50	14:10	15:42		15:20	16:30	15:30	17:15	15:30	16:00	14:30	12:41	16:00	13:43	15:55	End Time	17:15	17:30	17:15	17:30	17:15	17:15				
1.5	2.0	6.8		2.7	1.4	2.5	1.3	0.3	4.2		0.6	2.8	1.2	3.8	0.3	7.8			1.5	2.0	1.4	Time on foot (hr)	43.9	52.9	62.8	55.1	46.4	116.3	46.4			
0.0	0.3	1.0		0.0	0.0	3.3	3.3	3.4			2.3	2.5	3.8	2.5	3.2	4.8	5.5	2.5	6.2	5.3	7.5	Time by Car (hr)	57.2	63.8	59.4	44.1	45.2	56.5	47.1			
0.5						5.8	2.5	6.0				0.8									0.7	Time at Feeder (hr)	16.1	32.1	23.6	23.9	40.9	38.9	48.9			
4.7	3.0	15.5		10.0	6.0	7.5	1.5	1.0	7.1		0.8	5.2	2.0	4.0	0.5	14.5			6.0	2.5	0.8	Dist by foot/ski (km)	92.4	102.9	132.5	104.5	81.4	286.3	107.3			
	8	3				28	43	40			50	20	43	50	38	65	60	57	83	73	146	Dist by car (km)	807	842	859	870.4	664	750	848			

C1	C2	C3a	C3b	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	NEa	NEb	NEc	NW	NWc	SEa	SEb	SEc	SWa	SWb	Sector	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019		
																							WEATHER								
																						Min. Wind (kph)	10	10	8	12	11	10	16		
																						Max. Wind (kph)	18	18	21	22	21	20	23		
																						Wind direction	SSE	SSE	NNE						
																						Min. Temp. (°C)	-8	-8	-10	-14	-33	-8	-16		
																						Max Temp (°C)	-4	-4	6	-11	-28	-7	-10		
--	--			30	--	12	20	--	10		10	20	5	10	10	40	10	--	20	15	33	Min Snow Depth (cm)	15	15		10	3	15	4		
30	--	20		--	--	12	35	--	40		40	30	8	25	10	60	30	--	30	20	36	Max Snow Depth (cm)	40	40	2	70	60	32	15		
--	100			100	--	100	100	100	100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	60	100	100	100	Cloud cover AM (%)	ms	pcr	mcr	ov	mcr	ov	cr		
100	--			--	--	100	100	90	100		100	100	100	100	100	80	100	60	100	100	100	Cloud cover PM (%)	ov	pcd	pcr	cd	mcr	ov	cr		

ov - overcast, cd - cloudy, mcd - mostly cloudy, pcd - partly cloudy, pcr - partly clear, mcr - mostly clear, cr - clear, ls - light snow, ms - moderate snow, hs - heavy snow

																					HABITAT								
																					Evergreen forest								
																					Mixedwood forest		5		5				
																					Deciduous forest				5				
																20	30	85	15	20	Aspen grove/ farmland	10	10	10	5	25	10	10	
																20	30				Aspen grove/prairie				10	5			
												5									Native prairie								
																	10			10	Tame pasture				5				
											45		15		70		10			60	Farmland	10	5	5	15		5	5	
												10				5			5	Farmsteads								5	
80	75	95		65	100	100	100	100	36		35	85	70	100	30	60	40	30	15	70	Urban (incl. cottages/landfill)	70	75	70	50	65	80	75	
	5			5								5				5			5	Open water			5						
20	20	5		30					64			10				40				10	5	Riparian (river bank)	10	5	10	5	5	5	5
											20										Other (specify)								

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