

2015 Glacier Bay Christmas Bird Count Summary

Nat Drumheller

The 43rd Glacier Bay Christmas Bird Count was held on 19 December 2015. **71 species** were found on count day. This ties the 4th highest count total of 71 in 2004. There have been three years that 73 species were found, all since 2002. **83 species** were found during count week, 16-22 December 2015, beating the previous record of 82 in 2014.

A record **37 people** participated to varying degrees in this year's count. Thank you to all. Once again, we are greatly indebted to Glacier Bay National Park's protection division for providing a boat to cover the vast saltwater portion of our count and to Bethany Robichaud for operating it. Thank you to Kimber Owen for hosting a gathering after the count and to Jim Saracco for the chili.

Temperature on count day was 30 to 36 degrees. Still ponds were frozen. There was a trace of rain in the afternoon. Wind was 15 to 20 mph out of the NE and N. This made for great conditions for most of the participants, although the water was a bit rough in lower Glacier Bay and it was windy along the shore from Bartlett Cove to Point Gustavus. Weather during count week was good. Weather this fall was warm and wet with temperatures dipping into the teens for a few nights in November and for a few nights in December.

Notable finds on count day include record high counts of **7 Northern Pygmy-Owls, 3 Northern Saw-whet Owls, 3 Short-eared Owls, and 7 Western Grebes**. A **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch** was a first for the count, and three **Mountain Bluebirds** made the count for the third time.

Good finds during count week include **Tundra Swan, Red-winged Blackbird, Red-tailed Hawk, Northern Flicker, and Great Horned Owl**.

The wintering shorebird flock of **Dunlin, Rock Sandpipers, and Sanderlings** was missed despite excellent beach coverage this year. The flock was probably at the mouth of Rink Creek, which is outside the count circle. Although Sanderling and Rock Sandpiper made the count day list, Dunlin was missed entirely. Two other species seen regularly before and after the count that were missed on count day were **Red-breasted Nuthatch** and **Gadwall**.

Two small geese present in Gustavus for over a month with Canada Geese and seen on count day are being left as unidentified. They are either Lesser (*parvipes*) Canada Geese or Cackling Geese of unknown subspecies, but not our usual *minima* Cackling Geese. Their appearance and size seemed to change from one day to the next.

It has been a winter of disturbing news about **Common Murres** in Alaska with widespread reports of birds dying and being found in unlikely places indicating they are stressed. This has been the case at Gustavus and

Bartlett Cove, and on count day Common Murres were widely dispersed and were in places where they are not normally found with many appearing weak and disoriented according to Greg Streveler.

2015 Count Totals

<u>Species</u>	<u>Count</u> (cw=count week)
Cackling/Canada Goose	2 <i>parvipes</i> Canada Geese or Cackling Geese (not <i>minima</i>). Both are rare in winter.
Canada Goose	202
Trumpeter Swan	22
Tundra Swan	cw Very rare in winter.
Gadwall	cw
American Wigeon	72 Record high count. Previous high was 61 in 1997.
Mallard	959
Northern Pintail	cw
Green-winged Teal	90 Third highest count with 159 in 1997 and 141 in 1989.
Greater Scaup	9
scaup sp.	3
Harlequin Duck	57
Surf Scoter	1262
White-winged Scoter	510
Black Scoter	265
scoter sp.	440
Long-tailed Duck	204
Bufflehead	153
Common Goldeneye	24
Barrow's Goldeneye	531
goldeneye sp.	5
Hooded Merganser	cw
Common Merganser	48
Red-breasted Merganser	82
Sooty Grouse	1
Red-throated Loon	4
Pacific Loon	30
Common Loon	58
loon sp.	7
Horned Grebe	62
Red-necked Grebe	38
Western Grebe	7 Record high count for any time in GLBA. Only 5 th time in CBC with previous high of 5 in 2009.
Double-crested Cormorant	1 Rare in winter.
Pelagic Cormorant	148
Great Blue Heron	6

Bald Eagle	62
Northern Harrier	2 Rare in winter.
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1 Rare in winter.
Red-tailed Hawk	cw Second time in count, with one on count day in 2007. Very rare in winter.
Black Oystercatcher	11
Sanderling	2
Rock Sandpiper	2
Dunlin	cw
shorebird sp.	1
Wilson's Snipe	1 Rare in winter.
Common Murre	4300 Second highest count with 5023 in 1989.
Pigeon Guillemot	440
Marbled Murrelet	108
Black-legged Kittiwake	4
Mew Gull	1220
Herring Gull	1
Thayer's Gull	1 Rare in winter.
Glaucous-winged Gull	570
gull sp.	300
Eurasian Collared-Dove	3 Second highest count with 21 in 2014. Only 4 th time in count.
Great Horned Owl	cw
Northern Pygmy-Owl	7 Record high count. Previous high was 2 in 1995.
Barred Owl	cw
Short-eared Owl	3 Record high count with 2 in 2001 and 2008. Rare in winter.
Northern Saw-whet Owl	3 First time on count day, with cw in 2014 being the first time in the count.
Belted Kingfisher	4
Downy Woodpecker	1
Hairy Woodpecker	1
Northern Flicker	cw Rare in winter.
Northern Shrike	4 Record high count. Previous high was 3 in 1972 and 2006.
Steller's Jay	29 Record high count. Previous high was 26 in 2014 and 2005.
Black-billed Magpie	36
Northwestern Crow	304
Common Raven	40
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	162 Second highest count with 171 in 2007.
Red-breasted Nuthatch	cw
Brown Creeper	4
Pacific Wren	6
American Dipper	cw
Golden-crowned Kinglet	31
Mountain Bluebird	3 Third time in count with 3 in 1974 and 2004. Very rare in winter.
American Robin	1 Rare in winter.

European Starling	5	Second highest count with 20 in 2000. Rare in winter.
Bohemian Waxwing	2	
Snow Bunting	110	
American Tree Sparrow	16	
Song Sparrow	25	Second highest count with 26 in 2013.
Red-winged Blackbird	2	Third time in count with 2 in 2013 and 1 in 1996. Only third winter record.
Dark-eyed Junco	53	
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch	1	First time in count. Rare in winter.
Pine Grosbeak	8	
Red Crossbill	1	
White-winged Crossbill	2	
crossbill sp.	5	
Common Redpoll	7	
Pine Siskin	91	
siskin/redpoll	10	
passerine sp.	8	

Total Number of Species on Count Day = 71

Total Number of Species for Count Week = 83



Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch on count day about 1 mile east of Point Gustavus. –NKD



One of 3 Mountain Bluebirds on count day less than two miles east of Point Gustavus. -NKD