



2025 SEATTLE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Sunday, December 14

2025 Christmas Bird Count Report

Species tallied (count day + count week)	130 species
Count Day	119 species
Count Week	11 additional species
Individual Birds:	54,086 [52,322 in-field, 1,754 at-home]
Observers:	322 [281 in field + 46 from home]

Overview

The 2025 Seattle CBC was held on December 14, 2025. We had warm weather and a nice break from the atmospheric rivers of rain that came soon after. Our species total of 130 was a bit above the 10-year average of 127. Our overall count of 54,086 birds likewise was our second highest number of birds recorded of the past decade of counts, and over 1,000 more than we found in 2024. With 322 observers including 46 at feeders and 281 in the field, we had over 300 participants for only the third time in our 100+ years of Seattle CBCs.

Highlights

The highlight birds of this year's count included a Seattle CBC first Summer Tanager near Discovery Park, a Short-tailed Shearwater in the Puget Sound (only the third time we've had them on the CBC), and our first Green Heron on the count in a decade. Count-week-only highlights included American Bittern, Lesser Goldfinch and Red Crossbill.

Notable misses

We always miss a few, and this year was no exception. Notable misses included: Snow Goose, Greater White-fronted Goose (missed once in the last decade of CBCs), Tundra Swan, Spotted Sandpiper (first time missed in 25 years!), Marbled Murrelet, Great Horned Owl (first miss in a decade), Evening Grosbeak and Western Tanager.

Record high counts

For the modern period (1972-present), high counts were recorded for six species. We set record highs for: Short-tailed Shearwater [1], Pelagic Cormorant [153], Cooper's Hawk [44], Pileated Woodpecker [26], Pacific Wren [331] and Summer Tanager [1].

Trends

Looking at trends over time, here's how a few groups fared.

[numbers in brackets indicate the total number seen and the percentage as a ratio of the 10-year average on the count. Species with a record-high count are noted with an *. For example, a note of “[100, 50%]” would indicate that 100 individuals were seen, and that this is just 50% of the norm for the past 10 years (the average # seen from 2014-2024 has been 200).]

Ducks & geese

Goose & swan numbers were mixed. On the one hand, we totally missed Snow Geese, Greater White-fronted Geese and Tundra Swans this year. But numbers for the geese and swans that were found came in with above-average numbers: Brant [99, 107%], Cackling Geese [389, 160%], Canada Geese [1782, 148%] and Trumpeter Swans [34, 204%].

Dabbling ducks, in general came in below their 10-year average once again this year. The only dabblers above average were Mallard [2094, 144%] and Northern Pintail [221, 302%]. Species with lower-than-average numbers included Wood Duck [36, 57%], Northern Shoveler [50, 37%], Gadwall [456, 82%], Eurasian Wigeon [5, 54%], American Wigeon [2026, 86%] and Green-winged Teal [37, 35%].

Diving ducks showed totals close to average overall, with a few a bit higher and a few a bit lower. Coming in higher than average: Ring-necked Duck [624, 121%], Greater Scaup [130, 118%] and White-winged Scoter [6, 125%]. Noticeably below-average numbers were reported for Canvasback [67, 46%], Lesser Scaup [78, 42%], Black Scoter [Count Week only], Bufflehead [531, 82%] and Red-breasted Merganser [265, 82%].

Grebes, hummingbirds and coots

For the third year running, Western Grebes [655, 167%] were found in strong numbers. In contrast all other grebes came in below their usual numbers. Most notably Pied-billed Grebe [150, 75%] and Horned Grebe [218, 78%] were well below average and we found Eared Grebe only as a count week bird. Anna's Hummingbird [823, 148%] were out in force in the good weather, and American Coot [7081, 94%] did about average for the count.

Shorebirds, alcids & gulls

Killdeer [84, 200%] numbers were high, while Surfbird [23, 48%], Sanderling [3, 3%], and Wilson's Snipe [5, 52%] numbers were below average. As an added bonus, we found Long-billed Dowitcher as a count-week bird, the first time that species has made the Seattle CBC since 1980. Our alcid numbers were decent this year, except for missing murrelets. After only 14 last year, we saw 119 Common Murre [119, 380%] this year. Pigeon Guillemot [47 100%] were right on their average, and Rhinoceros Auklet [62, 152%] were a little high. Bonaparte's Gulls were out in force [94, 463%], our highest count in over 30 years. We had a late Heerman's Gull for only our sixth time in the last 40 years. Other gulls were mostly a bit low – notably, both American Herring Gull and Western Gull were only picked up as count week birds and we had only one Iceland Gull [1, 38%].

Loons & cormorants

Loons were found in decent numbers this year, with both Red-throated Loon [33, 210%] and Common Loon [12, 154%] appearing at their best total of the past ten years. The cormorant story was split, much like last year: One species came in very low: Brandt's Cormorant [57, 34%]. One came in right on average: Double-crested Cormorant [815, 99%]. And one came in at record high levels: Pelagic Cormorant [153*, 221%]

Raptors and owls

With the exception of Cooper's Hawk [44*, 177%], and Merlin [16, 150%], raptors numbers were a bit low this year: Bald Eagle [99, 89%], Sharp-shinned Hawk [6, 81%], Red-tailed Hawk [26, 68%], and Peregrine Falcon [1, 12%]. Owl numbers were low this year, with only Barred Owl [11, 122%] coming in above average. Besides that, we found just one American Barn Owl [1, 31%], one Northern Saw-whet Owl [1, 37%] and no Great Horned Owls.

Woodpeckers

With the exception of Red-breasted Sapsucker [1, 11%, our lowest # since 1999], woodpeckers were present and found in above-average numbers, including Downy Woodpecker [106, 127%], Hairy Woodpecker [16, 184%], Northern Flicker [453, 126%] and Pileated Woodpecker [26*, 157%].

Chickadees, wrens & kinglets

Our totals for some of the 'little' species remained close to their normal totals. Those doing well above average included: Chestnut-backed Chickadee [559, 133%], Brown Creeper [160, 147%] and Pacific Wren [331*, 171%].

Thrush & waxwing

As discussed on Tweeters and elsewhere, the slow arrival of snow and freezing temperatures up high seems to have allowed the Varied Thrush [21, 17%] to remain largely absent down here this year and we tallied our lowest total in over 30 years as a result. Hermit Thrush [15, 98%] and American Robin [3592, 135%] were doing fine, and it was great once again to have a Townsend's Solitaire on the count, a species we see at about half of our CBCs. After setting a record last year in the count, Cedar Waxwing [67, 33%] were scarce this year.

Finches

A few finch species were largely absent this year, while others seemed present in normal numbers. We missed Evening Grosbeak completely and only added Red Crossbill as a count-week bird. We've only had this few Pine Siskin [49, 4%] three times in the last 40 years of the survey. On the other side, House Finch [784, 100%] and American Goldfinch [504, 103%] were right at their normal numbers. A count week Lesser Goldfinch was an added bonus, only our third time we've found that species on the Seattle CBC.

Sparrows

The good weather made sparrow-finding easier this year, and many species tallied above-average numbers including Dark-eyed Junco [2438, 126%], White-crowned Sparrow [120, 138%], White-throated Sparrow [9, 159%] and Song Sparrow [1077, 121%]. Only Fox Sparrow [82, 72%] and Lincoln's Sparrow [4, 39%] came in well below average.

Warblers

Orange-crowned Warblers [7, 119%] and Yellow-rumped Warblers [341, 112%] were a little above average, and Townsend's Warblers [16, 86%] came in a little low this year. A count week Wilson's Warbler rounded out our warbler tally for the year.

All in all, it was once again a fun day seeing what can be found when over 300 participants come together in a small circle for a day of birding. Thanks to all the participants who contributed to this year's count.

At-Home Count

Count Day: 46 species
Individual Birds: 1754 birds
Observers: 46
Feeder Locations: 35

This year we had more observers and more birds observed at feeders than last year, with 46 observers finding 1754 birds on count day.

The top five species found at feeders by number were: American Crow (257), Dark-eyed Junco (211), American Robin (182), Bushtit (161) and House Finch (100).

Thanks to everyone who participated and made this another great count.

Matt Bartels
Seattle CBC compiler

All Species Recorded During the 2024 Seattle CBC

Brant (99)	Long-billed Dowitcher (CW)	Hutton's Vireo (18)
Cackling Goose (389)	Wilson's Snipe (5)	Steller's Jay (226)
Canada Goose (1782)	Common Murre (119)	California Scrub-Jay (12)
[goose sp. (40)]	Pigeon Guillemot (47)	American Crow (7288)
Trumpeter Swan (34)	Rhinoceros Auklet (62)	Common Raven (17)
Wood Duck (36)	Bonaparte's Gull (94)	Black-capped Chickadee (1587)
Northern Shoveler (50)	Heermann's Gull (1)	Chestnut-backed Chickadee (559)
Gadwall (456)	Short-billed Gull (786)	Barn Swallow (1)
Eurasian Wigeon (5)	Ring-billed Gull (39)	Bushtit (1061)
American Wigeon (2026)	Western Gull (CW)	Ruby-crowned Kinglet (403)
Mallard (2094)	California Gull (68)	Golden-crowned Kinglet (814)
Northern Pintail (221)	American Herring Gull (CW)	Cedar Waxwing (67)
Green-winged Teal (37)	Iceland Gull (1)	Red-breasted Nuthatch (191)

Canvasback (67)	Glaucous-winged Gull (1647)	Brown Creeper (160)
Redhead (1)	[Western x Glaucous-winged Gull (448)]	Bewick's Wren (296)
Ring-necked Duck (624)	[gull sp. (465)]	Pacific Wren (331)
Greater Scaup (130)	Red-throated Loon (33)	Marsh Wren (7)
Lesser Scaup (78)	Pacific Loon (13)	European Starling (2133)
[scaup sp. (37)]	Common Loon (12)	Townsend's Solitaire (1)
Harlequin Duck (41)	Short-tailed Shearwater (1)	Hermit Thrush (15)
Surf Scoter (563)	Brandt's Cormorant (57)	American Robin (3592)
White-winged Scoter (6)	Pelagic Cormorant (153)	Varied Thrush (21)
Black Scoter (CW)	Double-crested Cormorant (815)	House Sparrow (188)
Long-tailed Duck (1)	[cormorant sp. (6)]	House Finch (784)
Bufflehead (531)	American Bittern (CW)	Purple Finch (25)
Common Goldeneye (447)	Green Heron (1)	Red Crossbill (CW)
Barrow's Goldeneye (161)	Great Blue Heron (41)	Pine Siskin (49)
[goldeneye sp. (4)]	Sharp-shinned Hawk (6)	Lesser Goldfinch (CW)
Hooded Merganser (97)	Cooper's Hawk (44)	American Goldfinch (504)
Common Merganser (466)	[Accipiter sp. (1)]	Fox Sparrow (82)
Red-breasted Merganser (265)	Bald Eagle (99)	Dark-eyed Junco (2438)
Ruddy Duck (3)	[Bald Eagle adult (79)]	[Dark-eyed Junco (Slate-colored) (1)]
[duck sp. (63)]	[Bald Eagle immature (8)]	[Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon) (1463)]
Pied-billed Grebe (150)	[Bald Eagle unspecified (12)]	[Dark-eyed Junco (undifferentiated) (974)]
Horned Grebe (218)	Red-tailed Hawk (26)	White-crowned Sparrow (120)
Red-necked Grebe (74)	[hawk sp. (1)]	Golden-crowned Sparrow (295)

Eared Grebe (CW)	American Barn Owl (1)	White-throated Sparrow (9)
Western Grebe (655)	Barred Owl (11)	Savannah Sparrow (1)
Mourning Dove (CW)	Northern Saw-whet Owl (1)	Song Sparrow (1077)
Band-tailed Pigeon (13)	Belted Kingfisher (29)	Lincoln's Sparrow (4)
Eurasian Collared-Dove (CW)	Red-breasted Sapsucker (1)	Spotted Towhee (370)
Rock Pigeon (2984)	Downy Woodpecker (106)	Western Meadowlark (1)
Anna's Hummingbird (823)	Hairy Woodpecker (16)	Red-winged Blackbird (146)
Virginia Rail (5)	Northern Flicker (453)	Orange-crowned Warbler (7)
American Coot (7081)	[Northern Flicker (Red-shafted) (199)]	Yellow-rumped Warbler (341)
Killdeer (84)	[Northern Flicker (not differentiated) (254)]	[Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's) (112)]
Black Turnstone (54)	Pileated Woodpecker (26)	[Yellow-rumped Warbler (Myrtle) (8)]
Surfbird (23)	[woodpecker sp. (1)]	[Yellow-rumped Warbler (unspecified) (221)]
Sanderling (3)	Merlin (16)	Townsend's Warbler (16)
Dunlin (40)	Peregrine Falcon (1)	Wilson's Warbler (CW)
[passerine sp. (14)]	Summer Tanager (1)	