

## 2005 GBBC Summary

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During the 2005 Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), tens of thousands of people had a great time counting birds, provided some fascinating information, and broke a few records. During the four-day count of February 18-21, birders across North America reported more than 6.5 million birds, shattering the previous record of 4.8 million set in 2002. Participants submitted nearly 52,000 checklists, up 22 percent from last year, and tallied 613 bird species, surpassing the previous record of 567. More than 1,000 photos were considered for the new online photo gallery, which features birds seen from around the continent during the count. At the GBBC web site, you can visit the photo gallery, explore the results, and view the top-10 lists.

Participants recorded birds in all 50 states and all but one Canadian province and territory, capturing the tremendous geographic variation in birds across the continent, from the 10 species reported in the Northwest Territories to the 377 species reported from Texas.

This year, the **Northern Cardinal** earned the title as the species most frequently reported on checklists (nearly 30,000), bumping last year's top species, **Mourning Dove**, to second place. **Snow Goose** was the most numerous (835,369 individuals), with huge flocks reported in Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Nebraska. On the other end of the spectrum, 59 species were reported on just one checklist, including a number of birds from Hawaii.

In Gautier, Mississippi, the mayor issued an official proclamation for his citizens to go out and count birds. The result? Gautier ranked number one as the town that submitted the most checklists this year: 433. New York earned the highest state total, with 2,983 checklists submitted. Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge in Missouri reported the most individual birds, a whopping 291,246 (260,000 of which were Snow Geese). Blessed with bird diversity, birders in Corpus Christi, Texas, found 165 species--more than in any other locality.

Below, are a few this year's highlights from the GBBC:

Green-breasted Mangos reported

Fourteen species of hummingbirds

Red-bellied Woodpeckers: GBBC documents northward advance

Blue Jays: The fourteen-year invasions?

Eurasian Collared-Doves: Rapid expansion and two GBBC state records

Great Gray Owls: Unprecedented numbers

Bohemian Waxwings: Largest southward movement in GBBC history

Common Redpolls: An unexpected irruption

Sandhill Cranes: GBBC captures dynamic migrations

Pine Siskins: High numbers recorded in the West

We thank everyone who participated in the Great Backyard Bird Count; the results shown here are your observations. We also appreciate the 50 regional experts who reviewed data submissions during the count, helped those newer to birding with identification challenges, and keep the database as clean as possible. Thanks to our new partnerships with the National Park Service, National Forest Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, many participants entered their counts for specific locations on national lands throughout the United States and Canada. Additionally, an innovative educational program by Audubon Mississippi took the Great Backyard Bird Count into schools in many states this year.

We've barely scratched the surface with Great Backyard Bird Count results, and we hope that you will do some more exploring on your own. We hope to greatly increase participation for next year's event (February 17-20, 2006) and we look forward to hearing your ideas about how we can promote the GBBC within your community.

*The Great Backyard Bird Count is a joint program of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon.*