

Edmonton's Christmas Bird Count

Chasing 50 species! How do we get there?



Section 1: the basics

Preparing for the Count

Aids to birding

Keys to identifying birds

Section 2: the birds

Top 20 Birds for FWs, and more

Top 20 Birds for BBs, and more

Section 3: beyond the basics

Raptor review

Counting rare birds

How you can help us reach 50

Prepare:

- Become familiar with our common birds.
- If you're new to the Edmonton Count, register online in advance for your zone.
- FW: Offering a variety of different foods may attract more variety of species.
- .



Aids to birding: binoculars or camera may reveal that those little birds are not all the same.



**Black-capped
Chickadee**

Abundant year-round



**NOT Black-capped
Chickadee**

Binoculars:

Magnification x lens diameter

- More magnification=more detail, but narrower field of view
- Wider lens diameter = more light = clearer details, but also more weight
- Lower power is easier to hold steady and has a wider field of view, making it easier to find the bird

Sweet spot for most is 8x42

Waterproof may be a good choice



Links on how to choose binoculars are found on our Bird Count website participation page.

edmontonchristmasbirdcount.ca/participate



No binoculars?
No problem!



What about
identifying the
birds??



4 keys to visual identification

Size & Shape:

Plumage Pattern:

Behavior:

Habitat:



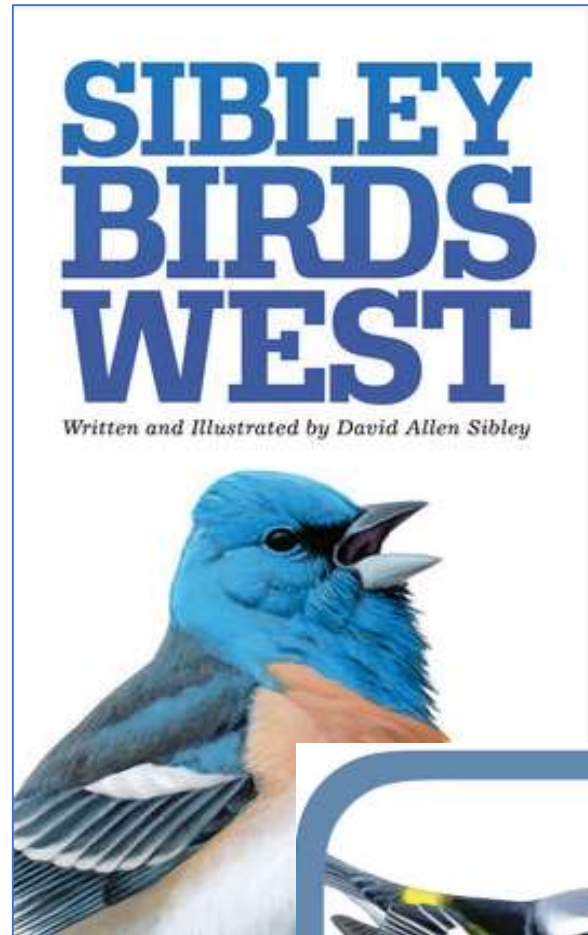
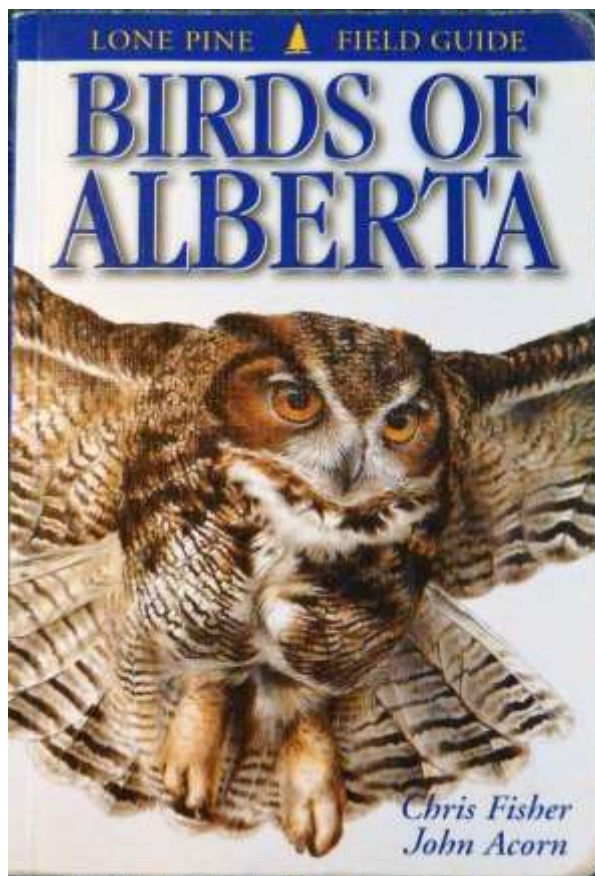
Identification Gallery of common winter species

Small Birds Group: 7 species, all found year-round in Edmonton (both male and female House Sparrow pictured)

Click on each photo, and similar species link, for details.



Similar species: A few of our summer [White-throated Sparrow](#) may over-winter here.



Merlin App



Sibley's App



What birds are
found in the Edmonton
area in December?

ABC LIST and RARITIES

A

the expected
43 species
we see on the
Count almost every
year

B List

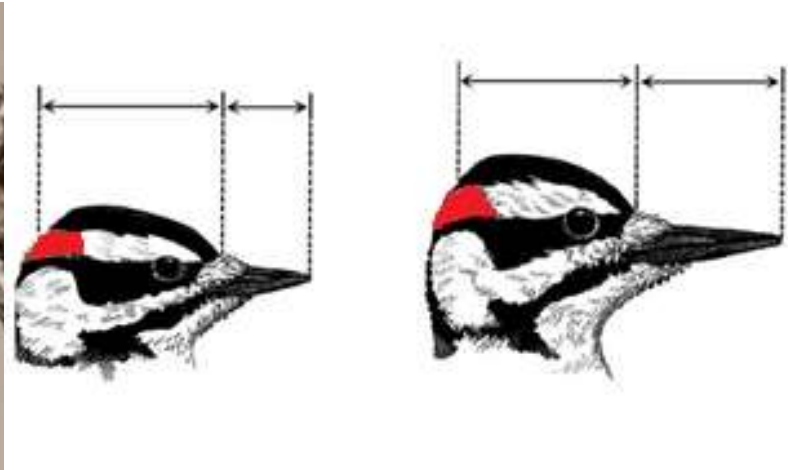
20 species

C List

26 species

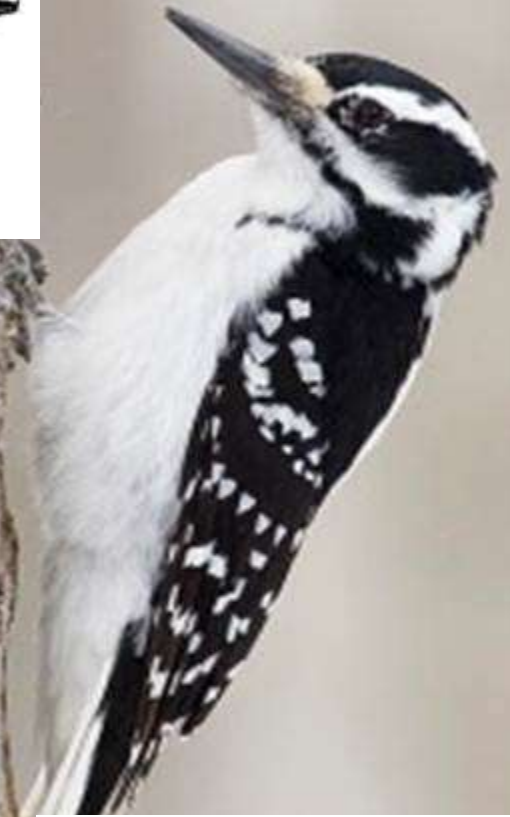
**20 Bird Species
for Feeder Watchers
to know.**

Most are here year-round!



**1. Downy
Woodpecker**

abundant



**2. Hairy
Woodpecker**

common

Males have red on the back of their head, females don't. ¹⁴

**3. Northern
Flicker**

**4. Pileated
Woodpecker**



5. Red-breasted Nuthatch

Note the eye stripe!



6. White-breasted Nuthatch

Plain face 16



7. Brown Creeper



One of the most abundant birds counted in
Edmonton last year.





8. House Sparrow

Female, left

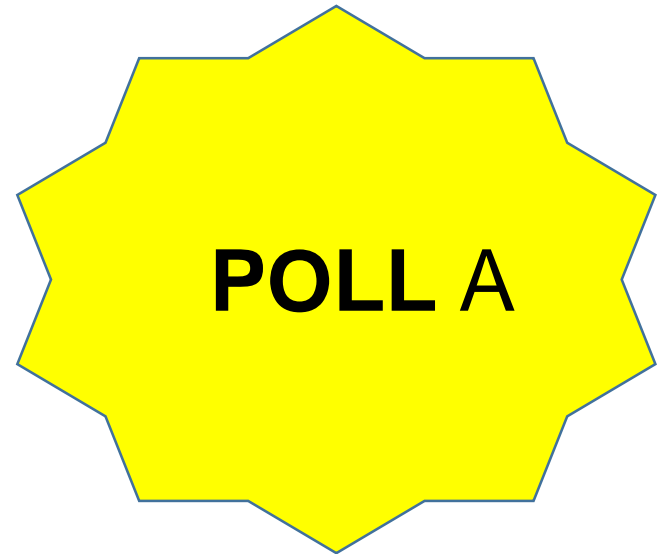
Male, right

Abundant year-round



Only 1 species has been seen on every
Edmonton Christmas Bird Count!

- Black-billed Magpie
- Black-capped Chickadee
- House Finch
- Blue Jay







9. Black-capped Chickadee

Abundant year-round



10. Boreal Chickadee

Uncommon year-round

How would you describe this bird?

Identification exercise



How would you describe this bird?



By comparing to the spruce branch, it's a small bird.

11. Dark-eyed Junco

Some overwinter here



12. House Finch

common

year-round residents



One of these things is not like the others



Winter Finches! (tourists)



House Finch = resident !



Common Redpoll



Red Crossbill



Pine Grosbeak



White-winged Crossbill

13. Common Redpoll



Small nomadic winter finch
= some years

- Red cap,
- Small yellow bill with black bib
- Males wear a red vest
- Often on a group
- Some stripes



14. Pine Grosbeak

- Winter Nomad
- Robin size
- Prominent wing bars**
- Heavy , plain finch bill**
- Body not striped



15. White-winged Crossbill



Winter nomad

Check out that bill!

Prominent wing bars



★ 16. Red Crossbill ★
(B List)

Winter Nomad

Yes, the crossed bill

No wing bars



17. Pine Siskin

Small

Nomadic = larger winter groups

Very striped!

Very pointy bill

Yellow markings on males





Birds you already recognise!



18. Blue Jay



19. BB Magpie

20. Rock Pigeon



How many of these
Top 20 for FWs
do you
already know?

POLL B

- Less than 10
- 11 to 15
- 16 to 19
- All 20

1. Downy Woodpecker
2. Hairy Woodpecker
3. Northern Flicker
4. Pileated Woodpecker
5. White-breasted Nuthatch
6. Red-breasted Nuthatch
7. Brown Creeper
8. House Sparrow (male & female)
9. Black-capped Chickadee
10. Boreal Chickadee
11. Dark-eyed Junco
12. House Finch
13. Common Redpoll
14. Pine Grosbeak
15. White-winged Crossbill
16. Red Crossbill
17. Pine Siskin
18. Blue Jay
19. Black-billed Magpie
20. Rock Pigeon

**Which ones
could you
learn to
recognise
or identify?**

1. Downy Woodpecker
2. Hairy Woodpecker
3. Northern Flicker
4. Pileated Woodpecker
5. White-breasted Nuthatch
6. Red-breasted Nuthatch
7. Brown Creeper
8. House Sparrow (male & female)
9. Black-capped Chickadee
10. Boreal Chickadee
11. Dark-eyed Junco
12. House Finch
13. Common Redpoll
14. Pine Grosbeak
15. White-winged Crossbill
16. Red Crossbill
17. Pine Siskin
18. Blue Jay
19. Black-billed Magpie
20. Rock Pigeon

Feeder Watchers able to recognise all top 20 feeder birds

“BOLO”

More A Listers:

White-throated Sparrow (winter plumage)
Purple Finch (specifics required)

B List Birds:

Am. Goldfinch (winter plumage)
Other Sparrow species



American Goldfinch



House Finch

Common year-round



★ Purple Finch ★

A very few may overwinter



During the spring breeding season, feathers are fresh with bright colour.
As the year progresses into winter,
feathers become worn and colours have faded away.
They can be quite a challenge to identify!

★ **White-throated Sparrow** ★



Any sparrow that isn't a House Sparrow is a very good bird for the Count!

American
Am. Tree
Sparrow



Feeder Watchers often have the best sightings of the day!



Eurasian Collared-Dove

2020, 2021 and 2022



Yellow-rumped Warbler
2020

Birds for Bush Beaters



Birds winter where there is food and shelter!

Discover a new world of birding...

Learn more

Get started



Red-throated Loon © David Turgeon / Macaulay Library / eBird

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>>Start with location!<<



A free, easy way to report the birds you find anywhere in the world

Upland Goose (Bar-breasted) © Dominic Garble-Hall / Macaulay Library (ML536003)

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Males wear a yellow cap



Three-toed Woodpecker

A List, Markings not as clean looking
as Hairy Woodpecker

Black-backed Woodpecker

B List
Both M & F have the black back

?



GR

Golden-crowned Kinglet





Cedar Waxwing

Common in summer,
A small number may overwinter



Bohemian Waxwing

This is our common winter waxwing! Note the rufous colour under-tail feathers.

American Robin

Abundant in summer,
a few overwinter



European Starling



~~Townsend's~~
Solitaire



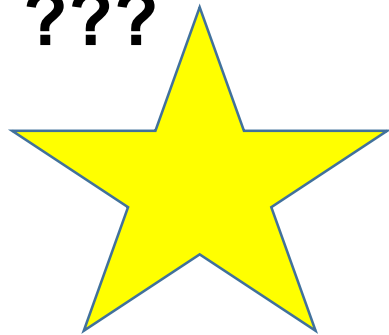
SK

Gray Partridge



Ruffed Grouse

???



Recognise these...

Canada Goose



Mallard



Recognise or Identify?



Common Goldeneye pair



Any additional waterfowl species is
very good for our Count!

Common Merganser

B List



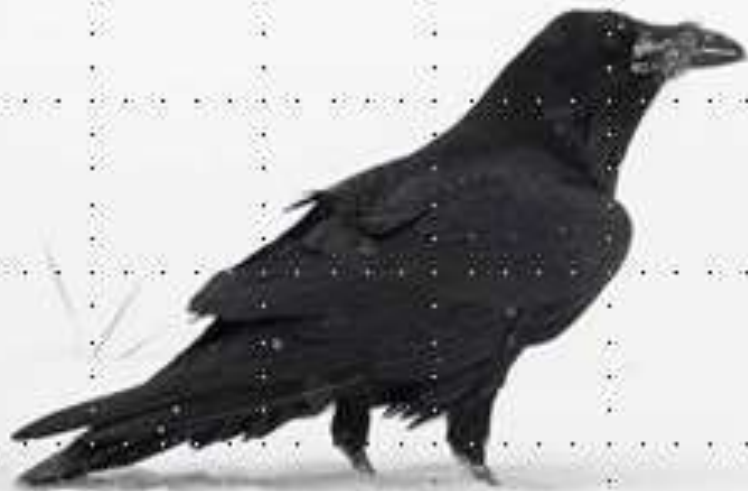
Bald Eagle

Remember to note details



What are 2 commonly
misidentified birds

?



Common Raven

common in winter

(heavier bird with
wedge-shaped tail)

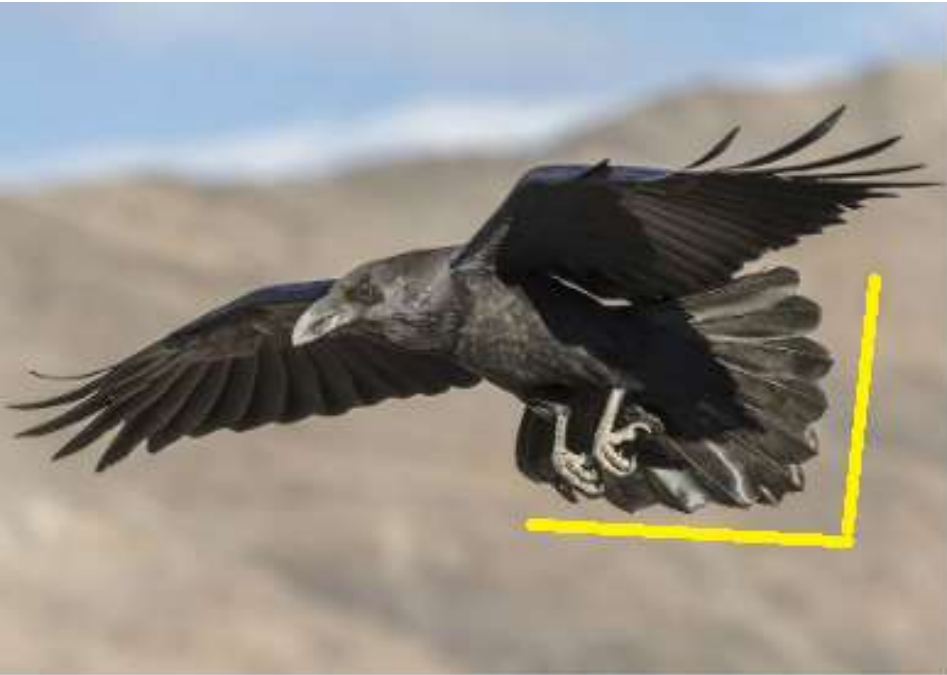


Am. Crow

very common in summer,
some over-winter

(slimmer bird with rounded tail)

C. Raven: probably what you see



Am. Crow: maybe



Croak Croak



Caw Caw



Pine Grosbeak



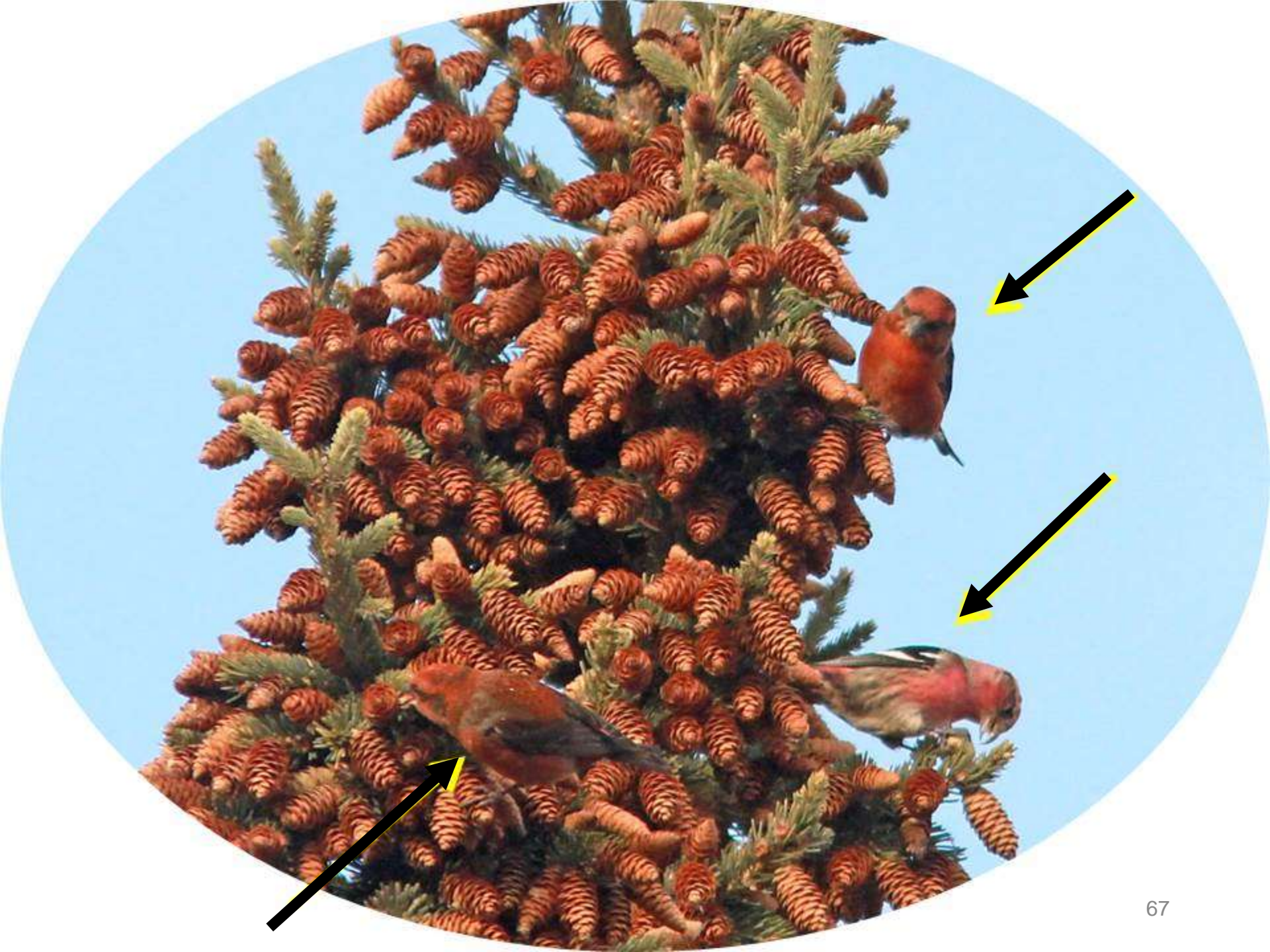
White-winged Crossbill



Red Crossbill (B List)







Bush Beater Birds

How many of these
do you
already know?

POLL C

- Less than 10
- 11 to 15
- 16 to 19
- All 20

1. Three-toed Woodpecker
2. Black-backed Woodpecker
3. Townsend's Solitaire
4. Bohemian Waxwing
5. Cedar Waxwing
6. Am. Robin
7. European Starling
8. Canada Goose
9. Mallard
10. Common Goldeneye
11. Common Merganser
12. Lesser Scaup
13. Northern Pintail
14. Golden-crowned Kinglet
15. Gray Partridge
16. Ruffed Grouse
17. Northern Shrike
15. Bald Eagle
16. Rough-legged Hawk
17. Common Raven
18. Am. Crow
19. Snow Bunting
20. Any additional raptor

Bush Beaters:

Choose a couple you don't know well, and try to become more familiar with them.

1. Three-toed Woodpecker
2. Black-backed Woodpecker
3. Townsend's Solitaire
4. Bohemian Waxwing
5. Cedar Waxwing
6. Am. Robin
7. European Starling
8. Canada Goose
9. Mallard
10. Common Goldeneye
11. Common Merganser
12. Lesser Scaup
13. Northern Pintail
14. Golden-crowned Kinglet
15. Gray Partridge
16. Ruffed Grouse
17. Northern Shrike
15. Bald Eagle
16. Rough-legged Hawk
17. Common Raven
18. Am. Crow
19. Snow Bunting
20. Any additional raptor

Brown Creeper



FW: What if I watch my feeder but don't see any birds?

Fill out a report to document your effort (time watching)
Note in the "Other birds seen" section: No birds today

Your participation matters!



Reasons you may not see any birds at your feeder on Count day:



Northern Shrike



Merlin

Male



Female



Sharp-shinned Hawk



American (Northern) Goshawk

Pale underside with light grey pattern



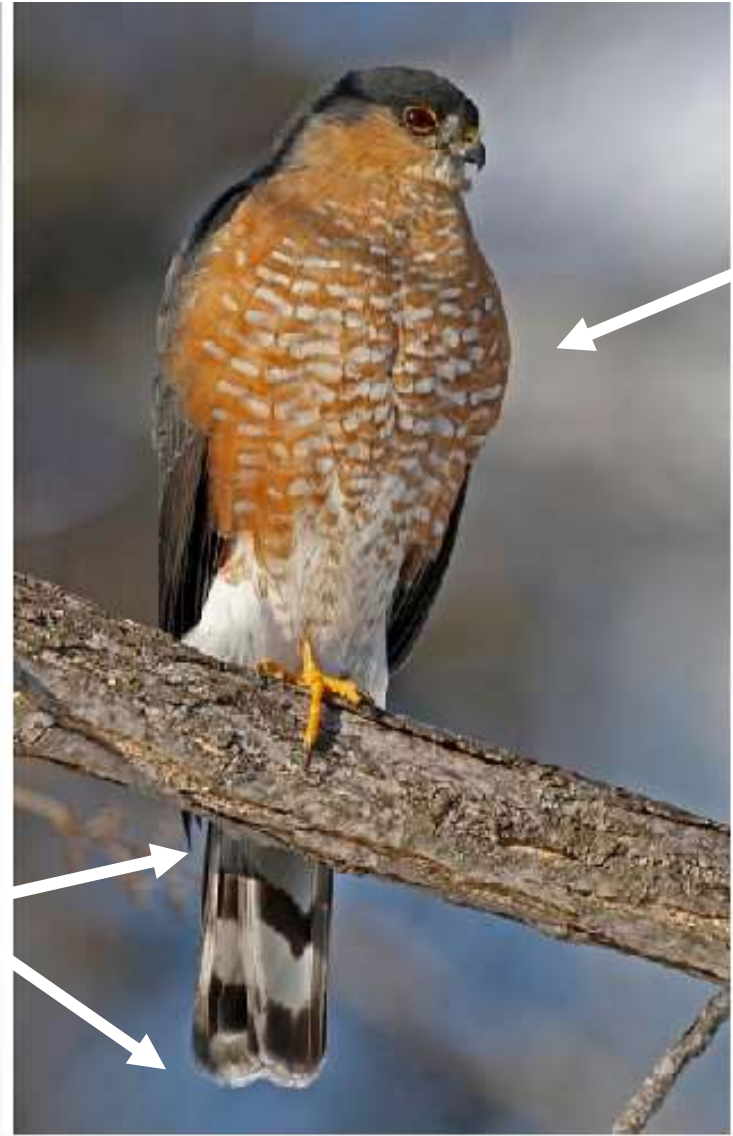
Cooper's Hawk



Merlin

vs

Sharp-shinned Hawk



Note tail length extending past wing tips, and the belly pattern

Cooper's Hawk vs

Sharp-shinned Hawk



Proportion! Large blocky head on COHA.
Barrel-shaped body

Smaller head on SSHA
Wide shoulder

Falcons, including Merlin, have **pointed wings** that they **frequently flap** for bursts of speed in open areas.

Look for that combination of pointed wings and (typically) steady flapping.

Merlin



Accipiter hawks are forest dwellers with short, rapid, bursting **flaps, punctuated by a glide.**

Sharp-shinned Hawk

Cooper's Hawk

American (Northern) Goshawk



SSHA = lots of wing!

Can we find 50 species?



The more birds you recognise, the fewer you need to identify, *and the easier it is to know you're seeing something different!*

Accept that you won't always identify every bird!



Nature Alberta

is offering a Christmas Bird Count for Youth
and New Birders on Count day

Details at: naturealberta.ca/cbc4kids-yeg-2023

Registration required, limited spaces available.





GHOW



NSWO



AS

Any owl is a great Count bird!

Owls are sensitive!



MR



Look for the unusual!



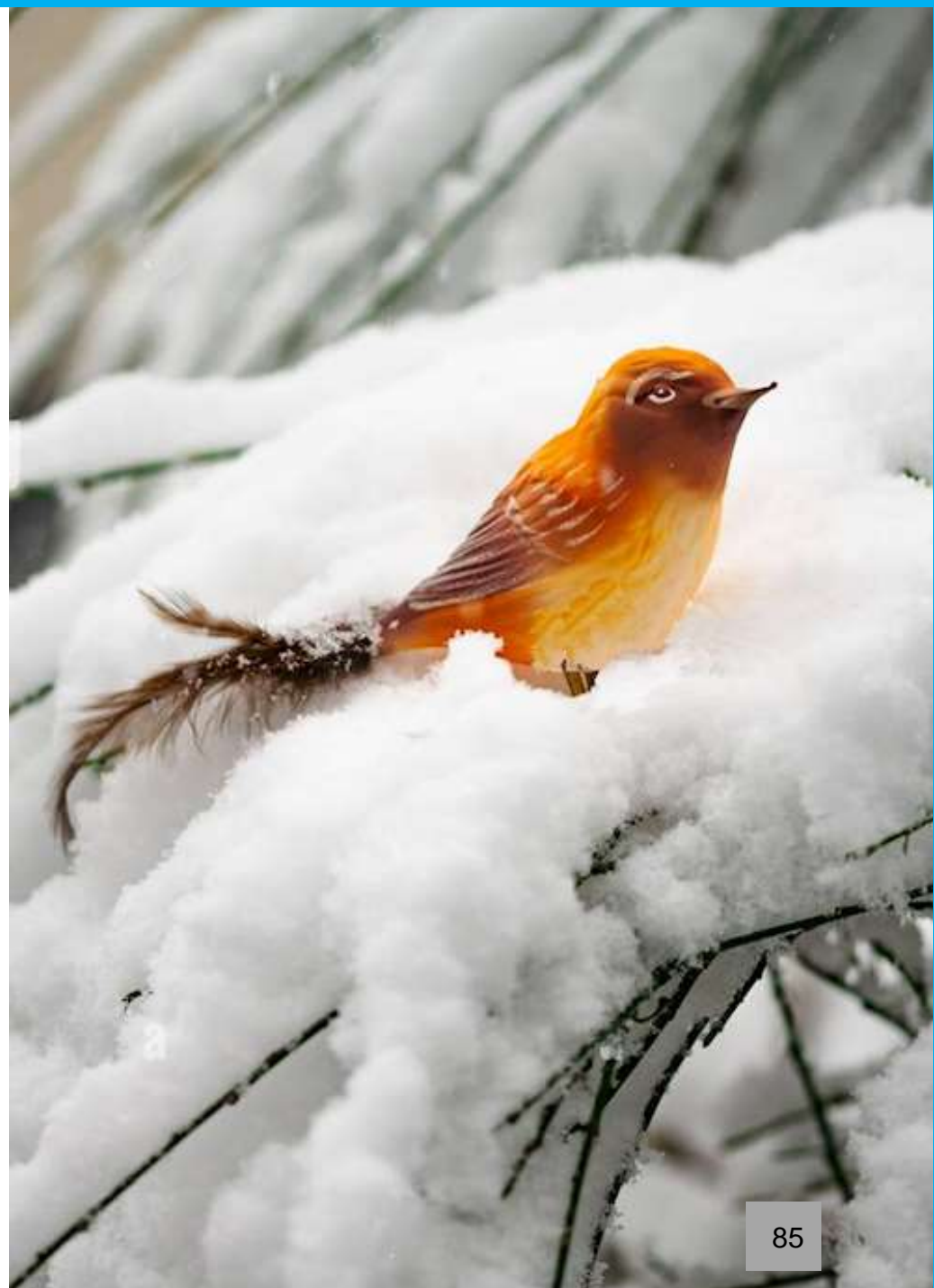
Consider Bonus Birds

What should I do if I see something unusual on Count day or during Count week (3 days before the Count and 3 days after) ?

If you think it's unusual, let us know.

Try to get a photo/make a detailed note.

We may ask you for a Rare Bird Report.



YEAR	A LIST (43)	B LIST (20)	C LIST (26)	TOTAL
2022	40	7	NONE	47
2021	42	3	6 (7)	48
2020	40	6	3	49
2019	37	7	4	48
2018	39	8	NONE	47



Feeder Watchers:

Prior to Count day have your feeders/birdbaths ready and keep an eye on your birds (recognise them?)

A variety of seed may encourage more species

Keep your camera close

Consider going for a short walk down your street on Count day, if there are fruit trees there.

Bush Beaters:

Stop, look and listen often, especially near food sources, evergreens or water

When in a group, face different directions when you stop

A noisy group of birds might lead you to a raptor or owl

Visit food sources in your neighbourhood, or an open water viewpoint (in addition to your zone assignment)



Cedar Waxwing, Zone 4 by Bob Bowhay



08.12.2022

Northern Goshawk, Zone 1 by Vivek Dabral

Share your Count day/week photos

birdcountenc@gmail.com

edmontonchristmasbirdcount.ca/participate



Can we find 50 species?

Sharing photos:

Chris Rees

Gerald Romanchuk

Janice Hurlburt

Michael Ross

Dan Stoker

Ann Carter

Steve Knight

Don Delaney

Terry/Susan Sly

Ethan Denton

Alfred Scott

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