# The 103rd Christmas Bird Count

December 14, 2002, to January 5, 2003

*Geoffrey S. LeBaron*

Imagine if you can 73,137,928 birds. Now picture looking down on planet Earth from somewhere high over Central America. The area of interest includes an expanse from Baffin Island in the Canadian Arctic to the cold, productive waters near Tierra del Fuego at the southern tip of South America, and from the Mariana Islands in the Pacific Ocean to St. Johns, Newfoundland (a scope that probably exceeds your view). Then think about 55,994 observers in 1981 different locations. Those are big numbers. That's a *huge* region—perhaps one-third of the planet's surface. And, of course, there are a lot more than 73 million birds living there; those are just the ones counted on a series of census days during a particular three-week period. In addition, the area contained within those 1981 count circles is only the tip of the total geographic iceberg. Still, the totals are extraordinarily impressive and represent literally hundreds of thousands of hours by participants who took time from their busy holiday schedules to count birds during the 103rd Christmas Bird Count.

So, why do we do it? Dedication? The love of birds and nature? Tradition? Or, could it be that as some might say—and a fair number of us have probably been told—it's because we're just plain nuts?

Whatever the catalyst that first draws bird watchers into the Christmas Bird Count, the majority of them (That's us!) become hooked for life. About half the total pool of observers goes on more than one CBC, and lots of people go on three or more counts. That's three days (plus travel) out in the field, counting birds. And the numbers generated by all that human effort truly aid in conserving the birds themselves—as we're recognizing more and more each year.

The weather during the 103rd Christmas Bird Count period was even more of a mixed bag than in some seasons. While the northeastern United States had experienced a brutally cold fall (with much early snow cover) prior to the count period, temperatures moderated somewhat during the period itself. This moderation, however, allowed for some significant precipitation, in the form of both rain and snowstorms, which fell frustratingly frequently during the crucial weekend days. Severe storms also pounded the West Coast, from California to British Columbia, during the CBC period. In contrast, the weather across much of the middle portion of the United States and across most of Canada was unusually mild. And while the East Coast has recovered from its dry spell, thanks to the wet late summer and fall of 2002, the drought conditions continue in the Southwest.

**Always a special treat anywhere in eastern North America, this Mountain Bluebird *(Sialia currucoides)* was both discovered and beautifully photographed on the Long Pine Key, Florida, CBC. An especially exciting find, the bird provided the first state record for this lovely western thrush species. Photo/Larry Manfredi**

All told, while the total of **1981** individual counts in the 103rd CBC represents a record, participation—55,994 observers—remained at essentially the same level as during the 102nd Count, quite probably due to the weather. The participant breakdowns were 47,213 field observers (38,236 in the United States, 7796 in Canada, and 1181 in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Pacific) and 8781 feeder watchers (4875 United States, 3888 Canada, and 18 elsewhere). But with all those observers in nearly 2000 CBC circles (Will that number be reached next season?), of course there is a plethora of far-flung new counts. The full list of 46 new Christmas Bird Counts (15 in Canada, 20 in the United States, 10 in Latin America, and 1 in the Pacific) is presented in Table 1.

As far as the birds themselves, of those 73 million-plus winged creatures, 284,988 were tallied in Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Pacific; 3,396,593 in Canada, and the rest (69,456,347) in the United States. Of course these numbers do not represent the relative abundance of *birds* in those areas, but rather the relative abundance of Christmas Bird Counts (1585 in the United States, 334 in Canada, and 62 elsewhere). In terms of species tallied, the

numbers are significant as well. In the United States and Canada, totals of 660 official, A.O.U.-accepted species and 40 forms, plus 22 exotic species, were tallied—a respectable, though normal, set of numbers. Outside the United States and Canada, roughly 2000 species were tallied (some of which were also seen "north of the border")—all told approximately 20 percent of the world's species of birds!

While this is a very significant proportion of the world's avifauna, the two benchmarks by which some measure of Christmas Bird Count results are often quantified are "how many species on our count" and "how many people on our count" in a given season. The average number of species tallied on a North American count is often somewhere in the 70s or 80s, and many counts are able to tally 100 species on a regular basis. But the 150 mark in Canada and the United States is significant, and the list of Christmas Bird Counts in the 103rd CBC tallying 150 or more species is presented in Table 2. In Latin America, which has a much higher diversity of birds, the 150 species tally is more reachable, and totals can often exceed 200 species.

Yet there are two very significant record numbers included in Table 2 this year. In the 103rd Count, the site-specific species totals in both North America and Latin America reached new record tallies, with the North American bar being pushed ever higher to **243** by now-perennial topper Matagorda County-Mad Island Marsh, Texas, and with a stunning **400** species tallied on count day at the brand new Rain Forest Aerial Tram CBC in Costa Rica. Both of these counts are fortunate to have what it takes to produce these lofty results: great diversity of habitat, excellent participation, and impeccable organization by compilers. Who can say what the future will bring—250 in North America, and someday 450 in the neotropics?

Once again, new species to the cumulative Christmas Bird Count list in North America were found—**Falcated Duck** at Honey Lake, California (quite likely a returning bird from last year, but not tallied on the count then), and **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** at Creole, Louisiana. Of course, other rarities were uncovered, as detailed in this issue in the regional summaries (beginning on page 45), in Richard J. Cannings' article on Canadian high counts (page 120), and in Brent Ortego's article on high counts in the United States (page 123)—as well as in the online database.

Additionally, some old friends are back—Wilson's Snipe is the "new" name for Common Snipe in the Western Hemisphere, as the birds on this continent have been recently recognized as a separate species from the Common Snipe in Eurasia, and the taxon here reverts to the "old" name. And great news for birders in Texas: The Black-crested Titmouse has been split (again) from Tufted and is now recognized as a full species. There was almost another naturally occurring species added to the cumulative Christmas Bird Count—**Eurasian Bullfinch** at Nome, Alaska—but the bird could only be found during count week!

And with every new count in Latin America (or, for that matter, future new counts on different Caribbean or Pacific islands), new species outside North America are welcomed into the cumulative Christmas Bird Count database. Feel free to peruse the online database (www.audubon.org/bird/cbc) for the new counts to discover each and every new avian gem reported.

For counts less diverse in habitat, the participation level, rather than species tally, can be the challenge. Organizing and shepherding a large field of observers is another commendable trait in CBC compilers, and most do it extraordinarily well. Table 3 lists counts in the 103rd CBC with 100 or more total participants, and once again North Bay, Ontario, and Edmonton, Alberta, delivered the one-two punch, followed this season by Concord, Massachusetts. Congratulations to all!

Often the crux of the overall summary for a given Christmas Bird Count is a major avian event—a "winter finch" irruption, a large movement of frugivores into one area or another, or a major influx of some sort of northern raptor southward. In the 103rd Count, crossbills, redpolls, siskins, and Pine and Evening grosbeaks stayed away from most areas in droves. In

**Table 1. New counts in the 103rd (2002-2003) Christmas Bird Count**

| Count Name | Count Code |
|---|---|
| **CANADA** | |
| Boyle, Alberta | ABBO |
| Camrose, Alberta | ABCM |
| D'Arcy-Birken, British Columbia | BCDA |
| Lake Country, British Columbia | BCLC |
| Lasqueti Island, British Columbia | BCLQ |
| Nanoose Bay, British Columbia | BCNB |
| Morden, Manitoba | MBMO |
| Stanley, New Brunswick | NBST |
| White Point, Nova Scotia | NSWP |
| Collingwood, Ontario | ONCO |
| Hilliardton, Ontario | ONHI |
| Mashkinonje-North Monetville, Ontario | ONMK |
| Beauce sud, Quebec | QCBS |
| Ile-du-Grand-Calumet, Quebec | QCIC |
| Vaucluse, Quebec | QCVA |
| **UNITED STATES** | |
| Eagle Community, Alaska | AKEC |
| Skagway, Alaska | AKSW |
| Blythe, California | CABY |
| Lincoln, California | CALC |
| Sterling, Colorado | COSL |
| Kendall Area, Florida | FLKD |
| Mason City, Iowa | IAMC |
| Rathbun Lake, Iowa | IARL |
| Eastern Knox County, Illinois | ILEK |
| Hennepin, Illinois | ILHP |
| Red Hills, Kansas | KSRH |
| Daviess County South, Kentucky | KYDS |
| New Iberia, Louisiana | LANI |
| Hartland, Maine | MEHL |
| Clarence Cannon N.W.R., Missouri | MOCC |
| Pearl River, Mississippi-Louisiana | MSPR |
| Balsam, North Carolina | NCBL |
| Grafton-Bristol, New Hampshire | NHGB |
| Napatree, Rhode Island-Connecticut-New York | RINT |
| Omak-Okanogan, Washington | WAOO |
| **LATIN AMERICA, PACIFIC ISLANDS** | |
| Omora Park, Navarino Island, Chile | CHOP |
| Rio Blanco, Caldas, Colombia | CLRB |
| Reserva de Planalto, Caldas, Colombia | CLRP |
| Santa Catalina, Bolivar, Colombia | CLSC |
| Centro del Valle del Cauca, Colombia | CLVC |
| Tinian, Commonwealth of N. Marianas Is. | CNTI |
| La Merced, Costa Rica | CRLM |
| Rain Forest Aerial Tram, Costa Rica | CRRF |
| Rancho Las Carreras, Tamaulipas, Mexico | MXRA |
| Posada Amazonas, Peru | PEPA |
| Tambopata Research Center, Peru | PETR |

**Table 2. Counts with 150 or more species recorded on the 103rd (2002-2003) CBC**

**Table 2a: Counts north of the United States-Mexican border**

| Count Code | Rank | Count Name | Species Recorded |
|---|---|---|---|
| TXMM | 1 | Matagorda County-Mad Island Marsh, TX | 243 |
| TXFR | 2 | Freeport, TX | 231 |
| TXCC | 3 | Corpus Christi, TX | 223 |
| CASB | 4 | Santa Barbara, CA | 210 |
| CAOC | 5 | Orange County (coastal), CA | 206 |
| CAMD | 6 | Moss Landing, CA | 200 |
| TXSB | 7 | San Bernard N.W.R., TX | 199 |
| CAMR | 8 | Morro Bay, CA | 192 |
| CASD | 9 | San Diego, CA | 190 |
| TXBP | 10 | Bolivar Peninsula, TX | 187 |
| CAPR | 11 | Point Reyes Peninsula, CA | 181 |
| CAMP | 12 | Monterey Peninsula, CA | 180 |
| CATO | 13 | Thousand Oaks, CA | 179 |
| CACS | 14 | Crystal Springs, CA | 177 |
| CARS | 14 | Rancho Santa Fe, CA | 177 |
| CAAN | 15 | Año Nuevo, CA | 176 |
| TXPA | 16 | Port Aransas, TX | 175 |
| LASA | 17 | Sabine N.W.R., LA | 174 |
| CASC | 18 | Santa Cruz County, CA | 173 |
| CAVE | 18 | Ventura, CA | 173 |
| CAWS | 18 | Western Sonoma County, CA | 173 |
| CAMC | 19 | Marin County (southern), CA | 171 |
| NCSB | 19 | Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands, NC | 171 |
| TXAP | 19 | Attwater Prairie Chicken N.W.R., TX | 171 |
| CACB | 20 | Centerville Beach to King Salmon, CA | 170 |
| CAOA | 20 | Oakland, CA | 170 |
| FLJA | 20 | Jacksonville, FL | 170 |
| TXGA | 20 | Galveston, TX | 170 |
| TXHO | 20 | Houston, TX | 170 |
| CAOV | 21 | Oceanside-Vista-Carlsbad, CA | 167 |
| CAPP | 22 | Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA | 166 |
| FLNR | 22 | West Pasco (New Port Richey), FL | 166 |
| CAMU | 23 | Malibu, CA | 165 |
| CASF | 23 | San Francisco, CA | 165 |
| TXRO | 23 | Rockport, TX | 165 |
| CAHF | 24 | Hayward-Fremont, CA | 164 |
| NCMC | 24 | Morehead City, NC | 164 |
| SCLP | 24 | Litchfield-Pawleys Island, SC | 164 |
| ALGS | 25 | Gulf Shores, AL | 163 |
| CALU | 25 | La Purisima, CA | 163 |
| TXCK | 25 | Choke Canyon, TX | 163 |
| CALB | 26 | Long Beach-El Dorado, CA | 162 |
| CASU | 27 | San Juan Capistrano, CA | 161 |
| CASJ | 28 | San Jose, CA | 160 |
| NJCM | 28 | Cape May, NJ | 160 |
| FLMI | 29 | Merritt Island N.W.R., FL | 159 |
| GASV | 29 | Savannah, GA-SC | 159 |
| NCWI | 29 | Wilmington, NC | 159 |
| TXCF | 29 | Corpus Christi (Flour Bluff), TX | 159 |
| TXKI | 29 | Kingsville, TX | 159 |
| CAON | 30 | Orange County (northeastern), CA | 158 |
| CASS | 30 | Salton Sea (south), CA | 158 |
| TXSR | 30 | Sea Rim S.P., TX | 158 |
| CABE | 31 | Benicia, CA | 157 |
| CAPA | 31 | Palo Alto, CA | 157 |
| LALT | 31 | Lacassine N.W.R.-Thornwell, LA | 157 |
| TXSA | 31 | Santa Ana N.W.R., TX | 157 |
| CAAR | 32 | Arcata, CA | 156 |
| ORCB | 32 | Coos Bay, OR | 156 |
| TXLA | 32 | Laguna Atascosa N.W.R., TX | 156 |
| TXAR | 33 | Aransas N.W.R., TX | 155 |
| VACC | 33 | Cape Charles, VA | 155 |
| CASL | 34 | San Jacinto Lake, CA | 154 |
| FLCO | 34 | Cocoa, FL | 154 |
| SCMC | 34 | McClellanville, SC | 154 |
| AZNO | 35 | Nogales, AZ | 153 |
| CAPS | 35 | Pasadena-San Gabriel Valley, CA | 153 |
| CARC | 35 | Rio Cosumnes, CA | 153 |
| MSJC | 35 | Jackson County, MS | 153 |
| TXHG | 36 | Harlingen, TX | 152 |
| AZRC | 37 | Ramsey Canyon, AZ | 151 |
| LACR | 37 | Creole, LA | 151 |
| LANO | 37 | New Orleans, LA | 151 |
| MSSH | 37 | Southern Hancock County, MS | 151 |
| FLAB | 38 | Aripeka-Bayport, FL | 150 |
| FLSB | 38 | South Brevard County, FL | 150 |
| LABR | 38 | Baton Rouge, LA | 150 |
| LANS | 38 | Northshore-Slidell, LA | 150 |
| MDOC | 38 | Ocean City, MD | 150 |
| TXAU | 38 | Austin, TX | 150 |

fact, many regional totals were representative of a single CBC's numbers from a flight year. Purple Finch numbers were unusually low across much of the continent. For the fringillids, only American Goldfinches were found in above-average numbers. While there was a fair movement of Gyrfalcons (including the return of the "famous" adult female that spent the winter of 2001-2002 in downtown Boston—see last season's report), no other raptors or owls staged a major invasion southward. And while American Robins continue to increase their winter presence in the central and northern portion of the continent, waxwings and other fruit-eating birds were found in low, or at best average, numbers.

However, several vagrant or invading species were tallied in interesting patterns on a continental basis. Pacific Loons were found in many surprising locations in the interior and eastern portions of North America, and the Eurasian Collared-Dove continues its rapid colonization of the Southwest and Midwest. Cave Swallows staged another major flight northward during mid- and late fall, with the result that as they drifted southward during the Christmas Bird Count season they were located on quite a number of counts along the mid-Atlantic, southeastern, and Gulf coasts, providing many first count (and regional) records along the way.

Trumpeter Swan has become a species to watch—through Christmas Bird Count results as well as other methods of reporting bird sightings. Many reintroduction programs are under way, several with major success. These regal waterfowl are showing up in various locations in the eastern and central portions of the continent, well away from their expected areas in the west. So while any distant swan seen on a CBC in an unusual location could formerly be "assumed" to be an introduced or escaped Mute Swan, observers now need to be aware that there is another increasingly frequent option! The Christmas Bird Count will prove to be very useful in tracking the reintroduction success of this species in the next decades.

**Table 2b: Counts south of the United States-Mexican border**

| Count Code | Rank | Count Name | Species Recorded |
|---|---|---|---|
| CRRF | 1 | Rain Forest Aerial Tram, Costa Rica | 400 |
| ECNM | 2 | Mindo-Tandayapa, Ecuador | 389 |
| CRMO | 3 | Monteverde, Costa Rica | 379 |
| CRLS | 4 | La Selva, Lower Braulio Carillo N.P., Costa Rica | 356 |
| CRLM | 5 | La Merced, Costa Rica | 340 |
| RPAC | 6 | Atlantic Canal Area, R.P., Panama | 295 |
| RPPC | 7 | Pacific Canal Area, R.P., Panama | 266 |
| BLPG | 8 | Punta Gorda, Belize | 255 |
| RPVC | 9 | Volcan, Chiriqui, Panama | 242 |
| RPCC | 10 | Central Canal Area, R.P., Panama | 211 |
| PETR | 11 | Tambopata Research Center, Peru | 206 |
| MXES | 12 | Ensenada, Baja California, Mexico | 195 |
| BLGJ | 13 | Gallon Jug, Belize | 188 |
| CRGR | 14 | Grecia, Costa Rica | 185 |
| TRTR | 15 | Trinidad, W.I. | 173 |
| PEPA | 16 | Posada Amazonas, Peru | 168 |
| MXOJ | 17 | Oaxaca de Juarez, Oaxaca, Mexico | 165 |
| MXGF | 18 | Gomez Farias, Tamaulipas, Mexico | 162 |
| PERO | 19 | Rio Orosa, Loreto, Peru | 161 |

With the shifting patterns of weather and birds, it can be difficult for observers on any individual Christmas Bird Count to predict their species total prior to the count. But, as always, the regional challenge is on, with the hope of topping the species total list for a given region. Table 4 is the complete list of all regional high counts in the 103rd Christmas Bird Count.

The movements of birds often provide the "meat and potatoes" of any CBC analysis. But often those patterns are due to other events, not necessarily weather-induced. West Nile virus was first detected in North America in the New York City area four years ago this summer. A naturally occurring virus in the Old World, the method of its transmission to the Western Hemisphere is unknown. However, its potential effect on the avifauna of North America was immediately apparent, as corvids (crows and jays) and birds of prey began succumbing in significant numbers. The virus seemed to spread slowly from the epicenter of the introduction at first, but the summer of 2002 saw a tremendous spread of West Nile virus across the central regions of North America. In some areas, there were anecdotal accounts of large die-offs of birds, especially American Crows, Great Horned Owls, Red-tailed Hawks, and Black-capped Chickadees.

As CBC compilers are well aware, the Christmas Bird Count provides a logical and easily accessible pool of data to look at what's happening to bird populations on a large scale over time. The interesting and somewhat unusual potential during the 103rd CBC was to be able to get a quick indication of the magnitude of the effects of West Nile virus on populations of birds known to be highly susceptible to the disease. The natural tendency of birders when they become concerned about a species could be to focus on the birds of interest—but the critical aspect of the 103rd Count was to run all CBCs in a "business as usual" fashion to provide the best possible snapshot of the effects of the virus on bird populations in the area of CBC coverage. Then rapid analyses of key sets of data from the 103rd Count as compared to CBC results over time in the same areas could provide an early insight into the potential effects of this new pathogen in North America.

**Among the exciting finds on the 103rd Christmas Bird Count were these Trumpeter Swans *(Cygnus buccinator)* at Camp Verde, Arizona, one of very few records for this species in the state. The banded individual in this flock should provide clues as to whether these birds are vagrant wild swans or part of one of several reintroduction projects for this formerly Threatened species. Photo/Roger Radd**

Several papers on West Nile virus and bird populations in North America are included in the pages that follow. While thus far the effects of the virus on certain birds do not seem as severe as feared, only time will tell what happens in the long run. Of special concern is the unknown susceptibility of species of very low population (such as Whooping Crane), highly restricted range (such as Florida Scrub-Jay), or both (Kirtland's Warbler). The Christmas Bird Count will continue to provide both the historical and up-to-the-minute data for many species involved. Whooping Cranes and Florida Scrub-Jays are well monitored each season by the CBC; while there as of yet is no record of a Kirtland's Warbler in the CBC database, continuing (and potentially increased) coverage of this species' wintering grounds in the Bahamas could well provide new information on its wintering status, to complement the thorough and highly successful work on its breeding grounds in Michigan.

As the number of Christmas Bird Counts increases across the hemisphere, partnering with regional and local organizations to facilitate the CBC program "on the ground" will continue. Based upon the continuing and highly successful model of Bird Studies Canada as the Canadian partner of the CBC, this season two new organizations have jumped on board in Latin America—the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory for the Caribbean coast of Mexico, and Instituto Humboldt in Colombia. Five of the new CBCs in the 103rd Count—one in Mexico and four in Colombia—provide evidence of the initial success of these relationships. In fact, Colombia has adopted the Christmas Bird Count as a major protocol for monitoring birds and other wildlife across the country, and it seems likely that many new counts will be included there in the future. It is hoped that future partnering organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean will help increase coverage of the Christmas Bird Count—and grow key local participation—in new areas in

**Table 3. Counts with 100 or more participants in the 103rd (2002-2003) CBC**

| Code | Count Name | # Observers | (Field + Feeder) |
|---|---|---|---|
| ONNB | North Bay, ON | 803 | (28 + 775) |
| ABED | Edmonton, AB | 596 | (230 + 366) |
| MACO | Concord, MA | 315 | (200 + 115) |
| ABCA | Calgary, AB | 184 | (86 + 98) |
| SCHH | Hilton Head Island, SC | 181 | (175 + 6) |
| CASB | Santa Barbara, CA | 180 | (176 + 4) |
| BCVI | Victoria, BC | 178 | (175 + 3) |
| CTHA | Hartford, CT | 173 | (141 + 32) |
| WASE | Seattle, WA | 165 | (163 + 2) |
| CAOA | Oakland, CA | 164 | (146 + 18) |
| VAFB | Fort Belvoir, VA | 158 | (152 + 6) |
| SCSC | Sun City-Okatie, SC | 151 | (138 + 13) |
| ABSA | St. Albert, AB | 144 | (79 + 65) |
| CAWS | Western Sonoma County, CA | 144 | (144 + 0) |
| OREU | Eugene, OR | 143 | (114 + 29) |
| LABR | Baton Rouge, LA | 142 | (48 + 94) |
| PAPI | Pittsburgh, PA | 140 | (87 + 53) |
| MBWI | Winnipeg, MB | 139 | (70 + 69) |
| OHCF | Cuyahoga Falls, OH | 137 | (92 + 45) |
| COBO | Boulder, CO | 137 | (111 + 26) |
| TXBF | Buffalo Bayou, TX | 136 | (97 + 39) |
| BCNN | Nanaimo, BC | 135 | (100 + 35) |
| CAPR | Point Reyes Peninsula, CA | 132 | (132 + 0) |
| BCVA | Vancouver, BC | 130 | (127 + 3) |
| NSWO | Wolfville, NS | 129 | (50 + 79) |
| NSHD | Halifax-Dartmouth, NS | 129 | (78 + 51) |
| TXMM | Matagorda County-Mad Island Marsh, TX | 123 | (121 + 2) |
| AKAN | Anchorage, AK | 122 | (72 + 50) |
| SKSA | Saskatoon, SK | 121 | (64 + 57) |
| FLSC | Sanibel-Captiva, FL | 120 | (120 + 0) |
| ONOH | Ottawa-Hull, ON | 116 | (105 + 11) |
| VAMB | Manassas-Bull Run, VA | 116 | (116 + 0) |
| MANO | Northampton, MA | 115 | (96 + 19) |
| ABSR | Strathcona, AB | 114 | (38 + 76) |
| CAOC | Orange County (coastal), CA | 112 | (111 + 1) |
| MIPO | Pontiac, MI | 111 | (66 + 45) |
| NYIT | Ithaca, NY | 109 | (95 + 14) |
| QCQU | Quebec, QC | 109 | (105 + 4) |
| CAMC | Marin County (southern), CA | 109 | (106 + 3) |
| MDSE | Seneca, MD | 108 | (105 + 3) |
| NJLH | Lower Hudson, NJ | 107 | (107 + 0) |
| DCDC | Washington, DC | 106 | (104 + 2) |
| CASD | San Diego, CA | 106 | (105 + 1) |
| CODE | Denver, CO | 104 | (69 + 35) |
| AKFA | Fairbanks, AK | 103 | (69 + 34) |
| ILWA | Waukegan, IL | 103 | (25 + 78) |
| PACH | Chambersburg, PA | 101 | (72 + 29) |
| WASD | Sequim-Dungeness, WA | 100 | (89 + 11) |

the decades to come. Additionally, during the 103rd CBC, Nature Saskatchewan coordinated with Bird Studies Canada to help facilitate the CBC in Saskatchewan. Many thanks to all, and welcome!

With all this talk of analyses of Christmas Bird Count data, your appetite may be whetted to have a bit of fun with the database yourself. While Audubon is no longer printing the full results of every CBC in *American Birds*, the complete data—and now in a new "printable report" that provides all the data, including weather, effort, participant lists, and the regional editor's comment codes— are available on the web to all interested. Given the vast volume of information contained in the CBC database, it can be a challenge at first to find what you're seeking. I heartily recommend that you take a look at Greg Butcher's tutorial feature in this issue on how to peruse the CBC database online (page 32)—you may well discover elements you had no idea were available!

Another feature you'll find in the pages that follow is the story of the Christmas Bird Count marathon undertaken by CBC "iron man" Kelly McKay in the Midwest this past season (see "Diary of a Mad Counter," page 36). The key to the longevity and importance of the Christmas Bird Count is our devotion (some might say fanaticism) to the count. It is a true holiday tradition to many, and that is one major reason for the continuing success of the program. Kelly's article is important on several levels. It will, of course, illustrate to many readers just how important the CBC is to the people involved, and it may provide incentive to others to participate on more counts in their own personal marathons. But I also hope it will inspire more compilers and observers to share their stories with the rest of us.

The first cadre of Christmas Bird Count participants is now gone; the CBC has continued far longer than the average human lifespan. In fact, the second core of long-time participants is beginning to retire as well. (And it's amazing that it's only the second set!) Relatively young participants and compilers (like Kelly McKay) are often spurred on by CBC mentors whom they have encountered over the years; two of those are Chandler Robbins and Paul W. Sykes Jr. Fear not, both Chan and Paul are still *very* active on their respective counts! But they illustrate well how inspirational CBC enthusiasts can be.

Chan, by many measures, could be considered the current dean of the CBC. His Christmas Bird Count history was well documented in a special feature in the 100th CBC issue of *American Birds*. He still compiles and participates on multiple counts annually. And anecdotally, Chan was the *very first person* to enter CBC data over the web! But Paul Sykes may be less familiar to many of you. Paul was part of the original group of regional editors; until the early 1970s, one person—Allan Cruickshank—was responsible for editing

**Table 4. Regional high counts for the 103rd (2002-2003) Christmas Bird Count**

| Region | # of CBCs | Highest Count (species total) |
|---|---|---|
| St.-Pierre et Miquelon | 2 | St.-Pierre et Miquelon (55) |
| Newfoundland | 13 | Cape Race (61) |
| | | St. John's (61) |
| Nova Scotia | 20 | Halifax-Dartmouth (110) |
| Prince Edward Island | 3 | East Point (63) |
| New Brunswick | 10 | Grand Manan Island (73) |
| Quebec | 29 | Quebec (73) |
| Ontario | 103 | Kingston (109) |
| Manitoba | 18 | Winnipeg (42) |
| Saskatchewan | 19 | Saskatoon (46) |
| Alberta | 38 | Calgary (64) |
| British Columbia | 70 | Ladner (136) |
| Northwest Territories | 3 | Fort Simpson (18) |
| Nunavut | 1 | Rankin Inlet (1) |
| Yukon Territory | 5 | Haines Junction (18) |
| | | Marsh Lake-Yukon River (18) |
| | | Whitehorse (18) |
| Alaska | 34 | Kodiak (79) |
| Maine | 27 | Bath-Phippsburg-Georgetown (90) |
| | | Greater Portland (90) |
| New Hampshire | 16 | Coastal New Hampshire (88) |
| Vermont | 16 | Burlington (76) |
| Massachusetts | 33 | Cape Cod (136) |
| Rhode Island | 4 | South Kingstown (122) |
| Connecticut | 16 | Old Lyme-Saybrook (122) |
| New York | 70 | L.I.: Sagaponack (134) |
| New Jersey | 27 | Cape May (160) |
| Pennsylvania | 66 | Southern Bucks County (91) |
| | | Southern Lancaster County (91) |
| | | Upper Bucks County (91) |
| Delaware | 7 | Cape Henlopen-Prime Hook (141) |
| Maryland | 23 | Ocean City (150) |
| District of Columbia | 1 | Washington (122) |
| Virginia | 38 | Cape Charles (155) |
| North Carolina | 45 | Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands (171) |
| South Carolina | 18 | Litchfield-Pawleys Island (164) |
| Georgia | 20 | Savannah (159) |
| Florida | 61 | Jacksonville (170) |
| Ohio | 55 | Cincinnati (87) |
| West Virginia | 16 | Ona (77) |
| Kentucky | 10 | Land Between the Lakes (93) |
| Tennessee | 25 | Reelfoot Lake (116) |
| Alabama | 12 | Gulf Shores (163) |
| Mississippi | 17 | Jackson County (153) |
| Michigan | 54 | Rockwood (78) |
| Indiana | 38 | Lake Monroe (90) |
| Wisconsin | 41 | Madison (85) |
| Illinois | 55 | Cypress Creek (105) |
| Minnesota | 45 | Bloomington (69) |
| Iowa | 30 | Keokuk (79) |
| Missouri | 27 | Mingo N.W.R. (96) |
| Arkansas | 20 | Holla Bend N.W.R. (110) |
| Louisiana | 22 | Sabine N.W.R. (174) |
| North Dakota | 20 | Garrison Dam (56) |
| South Dakota | 15 | Yankton (67) |
| Nebraska | 9 | Lake McConaughy (108) |
| Kansas | 27 | Quivira N.W.R. (95) |
| Oklahoma | 20 | Oklahoma City (122) |
| | | Tishomingo N.W.R. (122) |
| Texas | 98 | Matagorda County-Mad Is. Marsh (243) |
| Montana | 31 | Bigfork (83) |
| Idaho | 22 | Lewiston-Clarkston (91) |
| Wyoming | 18 | Cody (54) |
| Colorado | 38 | John Martin Reservoir (111) |
| New Mexico | 29 | Bosque del Apache N.W.R. (127) |
| | | Caballo (127) |
| Utah | 17 | Logan (99) |
| Nevada | 13 | Henderson (99) |
| Arizona | 31 | Nogales (153) |
| Washington | 43 | Sequim-Dungeness (146) |
| Oregon | 41 | Coos Bay (156) |
| California | 117 | Santa Barbara (210) |
| Hawaii | 9 | Honolulu, O'ahu (53) |
| Northern Mariana Islands | 2 | Saipan (40) |
| Mexico | 12 | Ensenada, Baja California (195) |
| Belize | 2 | Punta Gorda (255) |
| Costa Rica | 5 | Rain Forest Aerial Tram (400) |
| Panama | 4 | Atlantic Canal Area (295) |
| Colombia | 6 | Rio Blanco, Caldas (148) |
| Ecuador | 2 | Mindo-Tandayapa (389) |
| Peru | 3 | Tambopata Research Center (206) |
| Chile | 2 | Omora Park, Navarino Island (53) |
| Brazil | 2 | Itirapina, Sao Paulo (143) |
| Trinidad | 1 | Trinidad (173) |
| Bahamas | 3 | New Providence Island (112) |
| Dominican Republic | 2 | Salinas-Bani (63) |
| Puerto Rico | 3 | Fajardo (106) |
| Virgin Islands | 4 | St. Croix (63) |
| Bermuda | 1 | Bermuda (99) |

and reviewing all the counts submitted to Audubon. After Allan's death, a team of regional editors took over the formidable task of reviewing the rapidly increasing volume of data received by Audubon. Paul reviewed all the counts in North Carolina and South Carolina from 1975 through 1986, and in Georgia and Florida from 1975 until retiring in 2001. He is still active (to say the least) as a multiple compiler (of three counts) and participant (usually more than ten counts) each season. As of the end of the 103rd CBC he had participated on 335 Christmas Bird Counts and had compiled 152.

*Wow!*

Chan, Paul, and Kelly are only three examples of the dedication people feel for the Christmas Bird Count. Many others of you out there have similar CBC achievements. Now that the Christmas Bird Count database of *birds* is fully developed online, it will be critical to document the *human* aspects of the count as well. While no one from the first pool of CBC participants is around to tell us of their Christmas Bird Count exploits, the current generations can fill us in on the here and now—and what they remember from the past. If you are, or know of, an example of extraordinary CBC accomplishment, we'd love to hear about your experiences—before the unheralded lore and untold tales have disappeared forever.

**Across much of North America, hummingbirds are being found more frequently on Christmas Bird Counts, and Allen's Hummingbirds *(Selasphorus sasin)* can be tallied in the hundreds on counts in California. However, even by West Coast standards, it was a treat to find this female Allen's feeding young at her nest just prior to the Santa Barbara, California, CBC. Photo/Jim Greaves**