

**Monthly Survey of Birds at Santiam Valley Ranch:  
First Progress Report (May 2021-September 2022)**

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## Survey Context

The private lands along Duckflat and Hunsaker Roads in Turner, Oregon, are well known among local birders as one of the best places to find a large variety and number of wetland birds. The landowners do not allow unrestricted public access so the area's reputation among birders has been founded entirely upon observations made from the adjoining roads, leaving undocumented the birdlife in large portions of this area of which the predominant landowner is Santiam Valley Ranch (SVR). That situation was the impetus for the present survey which began in May 2021 at the request of the SVR owners.

As described on the SVR's website (<https://www.santiamvalleyranch.com>), throughout at least the past 200 years it is likely that much of the SVR was open prairie rather than forest. That was due partly to dense clay soils that retain water for long periods, and partly to fires intentionally set by indigenous tribes prior to arrival of European settlers in the mid-1800's, and subsequently by the settlers' conversion of many remaining wooded portions to agriculture. Beginning around 1935 the owners at that time created, by excavation and impoundment, ponds attractive to waterfowl that they and their friends liked to hunt. Still, most of the land was managed for hay production and grazing. The present owners purchased much of what became SVR in 1980. In 2012, they enrolled nearly 100 acres in a perpetual conservation easement. Similar easements on properties of some adjoining landowners later brought the total contiguous acreage to approximately 400 acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program of the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service. As illustrated extensively on the SVR website, since 2012 the owners in collaboration with federal and state resource agencies have undertaken many projects to restore or enhance wetland and upland prairie habitat. The bird survey described here is the first systematic year-round survey to be undertaken on these private lands and is intended to provide a partial baseline to which broad future changes in the SVR landscape may be compared.

## Methods

During each monthly visit, multiple walking transects were used to estimate all birds detected by sight (binoculars and zoom spotting scope) and sound. Table 1 shows the exact date, duration, distance walked, and observer(s) for each visit. Days when waterfowl hunters were scheduled to be hunting were avoided. Surveys began within 1-2 hours of sunrise and most were concluded by noon. Surveys were done only during hours when wind was predicted to be less than 10 mph and no heavy precipitation was forecasted. During most visits wooded patches were surveyed earliest in the day in order to maximize chances of detecting songbirds. Observations were documented in real time using the eBird mobile app that feeds directly into the publicly-visible global eBird database. Survey transect locations were reported as "SVR (restricted access)" followed by a number for month and sequence, e.g., SVR3-2 indicates March transect #2. To address seasonally-dynamic differences in habitat and species, transect lengths varied among visits but were generally shorter than 1 mile. Aerial images showing the track of every transect during every visit are stored on the eBird pages of the primary observer but are not visible to the public.

**Table 1. Survey dates, observers, and effort**

Month	Date	Duration (minutes)	Miles	Observers
May	5/10/2021	222	2.60	Paul Adamus
June	6/2/2021	210	3.23	Paul Adamus
July	No survey			
August	8/3/2021	109	1.32	Paul Adamus
September	9/29/2021	125	1.91	Paul Adamus, Joy Jensen
October	10/15/2021	103	1.38	Paul Adamus, Joy Jensen
November	11/18/2021	156	1.75	Paul Adamus, Joy Jensen
December	12/2/2021	153	1.84	Paul Adamus, Joy Jensen
December*	12/7/2021	78	0.55	Paul Adamus, Tom Gilg
January	1/11/2022	186	3.31	Paul Adamus, Joy Jensen
February	2/26/2022	172	2.64	Paul Adamus, Joy Jensen
March	3/31/2022	196	2.33	Paul Adamus, Joy Jensen
April	4/24/2022	277	4.91	Paul Adamus, Dominic Valenti
May	5/23/2022	218	3.80	Paul Adamus, Joy Jensen
June	6/7/2022	247	3.91	Paul Adamus, Dominic Valenti
July	7/31/2022	173	3.09	Paul Adamus, Joy Jensen
August	8/12/2022	224	3.51	Paul Adamus, Dominic Valenti
September	9/13/2022	277	3.24	Dominic Valenti, Shane Pruitt

\*SVR was visited twice during December 2021 because disturbances did not allow the entire area to be surveyed properly during the initial visit

## Results and Discussion

See accompanying spreadsheet for all survey results. To date, a total of 167 bird species (Table 2) have been documented from SVR and/or adjoining properties along Duckflat and Hunsaker Roads. That includes not only 132 species found by this survey but also records of 35 species not yet found by this survey but reported to eBird.com by other observers since the first eBird submission from the general area in December 1994. Because of the notable avifaunal richness of this area, several years ago local birders successfully requested the area be recognized by eBird, the world's largest bird database, as an eBird "Hotspot" (<https://ebird.org/pnw/region/US-OR-047?yr=all>).

SVR hosts 10 species that have been designated as Sensitive by ODFW or by the Oregon Natural Heritage Program: Western Meadowlark (many), Willow Flycatcher (a few), Yellow-breasted Chat (a few), Horned Lark (Streaked subspecies, a few individuals), Acorn Woodpecker, Chipping Sparrow, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Purple Martin, Short-eared Owl, Western Bluebird. The first four are known or likely to have nested in the SVR while only a few individuals of the others have occurred sporadically and breeding is unlikely. Additional SVR species of note because of their rarity as breeders in the Willamette Valley are Black-necked Stilt (a few individuals each breeding season, no successful nesting yet confirmed), Blue-winged Teal

(same), Yellow-headed Blackbird (same), Wilson’s Snipe (many pairs confirmed nesting), Wilson’s Phalarope (perhaps a dozen likely nesting), and Ring-necked Pheasant (same). Of the 8581 Marion County locations for which eBird data are available, SVR hosts 43 species that have been reported from fewer than 1% of those locations (Table 2). Also, of the species known or likely to breed at SVR, data from the international Breeding Bird Survey show the following 27 have experienced statistically-significant declines in Oregon as a whole during the past 50 years: Cinnamon Teal, Mourning Dove, Killdeer, Wilson’s Snipe, Northern Flicker, American Kestrel, Western Wood-Pewee, Willow Flycatcher, Horned Lark, Tree Swallow, Violet-green Swallow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Bushtit, Swainson’s Thrush, American Robin, Cedar Waxwing, House Finch, American Goldfinch, Spotted Towhee, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Western Meadowlark, Bullock’s Oriole, Red-winged Blackbird, Brewer’s Blackbird, and Yellow Warbler.

The *abundance* of some regularly-occurring SVR species is also noteworthy for the Willamette Valley. More than 7500 Cackling and Canada Geese as well as 1800 Greater White-fronted Geese have been counted during winter and/or migration, and close to 2000 Dunlin have been counted in SVR’s newly created shallow-water wetlands and mudflats. Up to 70 Great Egrets have been counted foraging in loose flocks during winter, and flocks containing hundreds of swallows occur regularly over the wetlands in migration. As is typical for this region, total abundance of birds was greatest in February-March (owing mainly to the large flocks of geese and shorebirds) while species richness (diversity) was greatest in April-May.

Remarkably, at least 3158 different birders have looked for birds along Duckflat and Hunsaker Roads since 1994. The actual number is likely higher because this includes only the birders who have submitted reports to eBird. Also, the number is increasing such that nearly 1000 are now visiting and submitting eBird reports *each year* (Figure 1). By staying on the adjoining roads they are minimizing disturbance to the many important species that SVR supports.

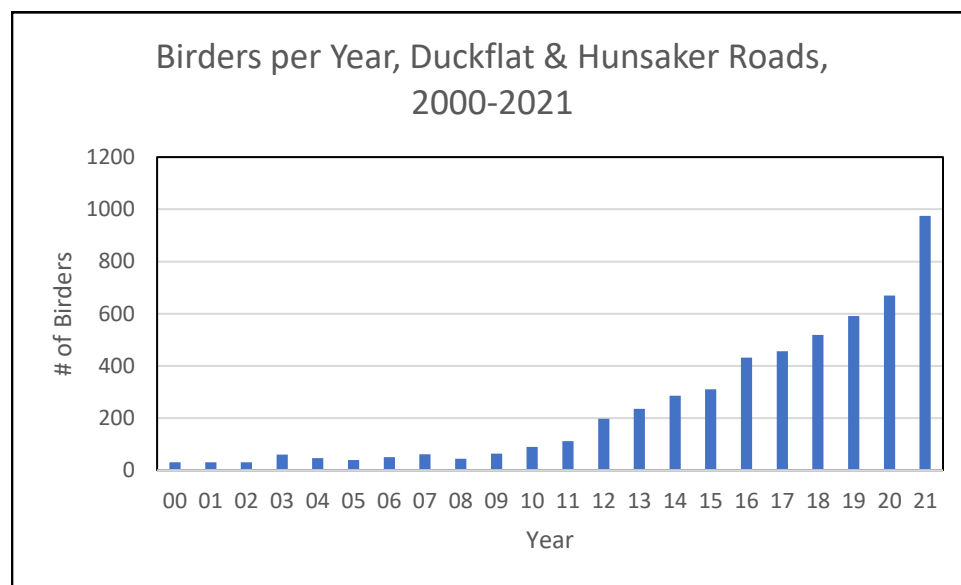


Figure 1. Number of different birders per year in vicinity of SVR, 2000-2021

**Table 2. Temporal and spatial prevalence of species found at Santiam Valley Ranch**

\* ODFW or ORBIC Sensitive Species in the Willamette Valley

<b>Species</b>	<b>% of months (so far)</b>	<b>% of other Marion County eBird locations</b>
Snow Goose	25%	1%
Ross's Goose	6%	0.31%
Greater White-fronted Goose	44%	2%
Cackling Goose	50%	15%
Canada Goose	94%	18%
Tundra Swan	38%	3%
Wood Duck	50%	3%
Blue-winged Teal	25%	1%
Cinnamon Teal	63%	2%
Northern Shoveler	81%	7%
Gadwall	69%	3%
Eurasian Wigeon	25%	1%
American Wigeon	63%	7%
Mallard	100%	21%
Northern Pintail	69%	6%
Green-winged Teal	75%	9%
Ring-necked Duck	56%	5%
Common Goldeneye	13%	1%
Lesser Scaup	38%	3%
Bufflehead	50%	6%
Hooded Merganser	13%	3%
Common Merganser	19%	5%
Ruddy Duck	31%	3%
California Quail	38%	4%
Wild Turkey	13%	1%
Ring-necked Pheasant	69%	1%
Pied-billed Grebe	88%	5%
Horned Grebe	6%	1%
Western Grebe	6%	1%
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	25%	6%
Band-tailed Pigeon	6%	2%
Eurasian Collared-Dove	69%	12%
Mourning Dove	94%	14%
Vaux's Swift	38%	5%
Anna's Hummingbird	81%	18%
Rufous Hummingbird	19%	5%
Virginia Rail	44%	1%
Sora	25%	1%
American Coot	56%	4%
Sandhill Crane	19%	0.43%

<b>Species</b>	<b>% of months (so far)</b>	<b>% of other Marion County eBird locations</b>
Black-necked Stilt	25%	0.17%
Black-bellied Plover	31%	0.49%
Pacific Golden-Plover	6%	0.06%
Semipalmated Plover	13%	0.24%
Killdeer	100%	13%
Whimbrel	13%	0.17%
Long-billed Curlew	19%	0.13%
Hudsonian Godwit	13%	0.06%
Dunlin	56%	2%
Baird's Sandpiper	6%	0.13%
Least Sandpiper	69%	2%
Pectoral Sandpiper	6%	0.28%
Semipalmated Sandpiper	13%	0.09%
Western Sandpiper	31%	1%
Short-billed Dowitcher	6%	0.14%
Long-billed Dowitcher	94%	2%
Wilson's Snipe	81%	4%
Wilson's Phalarope	38%	1%
Red-necked Phalarope	19%	0.26%
Red Phalarope	13%	0.16%
Spotted Sandpiper	44%	3%
Solitary Sandpiper	6%	0.37%
Greater Yellowlegs	88%	4%
Lesser Yellowlegs	13%	1%
Bonaparte's Gull	25%	0.31%
Short-billed Gull	6%	1%
Ring-billed Gull	38%	2%
California Gull	6%	1%
Glaucous-winged Gull	6%	4%
Black Tern	6%	0.09%
Forster's Tern	6%	0.06%
Double-crested Cormorant	25%	4%
American White Pelican	13%	1%
American Bittern	25%	1%
Great Blue Heron	100%	14%
Great Egret	88%	6%
Green Heron	13%	3%
Turkey Vulture	69%	16%
Osprey	38%	7%
Northern Harrier	88%	7%
Sharp-shinned Hawk	6%	3%
Cooper's Hawk	25%	6%
Bald Eagle	75%	9%
Red-shouldered Hawk	50%	2%
Red-tailed Hawk	88%	25%

Species	% of months (so far)	% of other Marion County eBird locations
Rough-legged Hawk	25%	1%
Barn Owl	13%	1%
Great Horned Owl	13%	3%
<b>Short-eared Owl*</b>	13%	0.36%
Belted Kingfisher	50%	6%
Red-breasted Sapsucker	13%	6%
<b>Acorn Woodpecker*</b>	38%	5%
Downy Woodpecker	81%	14%
Hairy Woodpecker	6%	4%
Northern Flicker	88%	27%
American Kestrel	100%	14%
Merlin	13%	2%
Peregrine Falcon	56%	2%
Prairie Falcon	25%	0.22%
Western Wood-Pewee	38%	8%
<b>Willow Flycatcher*</b>	44%	2%
Black Phoebe	94%	3%
Say's Phoebe	25%	0.19%
Western Kingbird	6%	1%
Warbling Vireo	19%	3%
Northern Shrike	19%	0.49%
Steller's Jay	6%	17%
California Scrub-Jay	69%	32%
American Crow	94%	32%
Common Raven	50%	6%
Black-capped Chickadee	88%	28%
<b>Horned Lark (Streaked)*</b>	31%	1%
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	19%	2%
<b>Purple Martin*</b>	25%	0.30%
Tree Swallow	63%	10%
Violet-green Swallow	75%	11%
Bank Swallow	6%	0.13%
Barn Swallow	94%	11%
Cliff Swallow	44%	3%
Bushtit	63%	14%
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	44%	10%
<b>Golden-crowned Kinglet*</b>	6%	6%
Red-breasted Nuthatch	13%	14%
Brown Creeper	6%	9%
House Wren	13%	2%
Marsh Wren	94%	3%
Bewick's Wren	100%	15%
European Starling	100%	33%
<b>Western Bluebird*</b>	13%	4%
Varied Thrush	6%	5%

<b>Species</b>	<b>% of months (so far)</b>	<b>% of other Marion County eBird locations</b>
Hermit Thrush	6%	3%
Swainson's Thrush	38%	6%
American Robin	94%	36%
Cedar Waxwing	56%	10%
House Sparrow	44%	13%
American Pipit	38%	2%
House Finch	94%	18%
Purple Finch	25%	6%
Pine Siskin	13%	7%
Lesser Goldfinch	31%	8%
American Goldfinch	69%	17%
<b>Chipping Sparrow*</b>	6%	2%
Fox Sparrow	31%	6%
Dark-eyed Junco	38%	28%
White-crowned Sparrow	75%	17%
Golden-crowned Sparrow	50%	12%
Savannah Sparrow	100%	6%
Song Sparrow	100%	31%
Lincoln's Sparrow	56%	3%
Swamp Sparrow	6%	0.26%
Spotted Towhee	100%	24%
<b>Yellow-breasted Chat*</b>	31%	1%
Yellow-headed Blackbird	31%	1%
<b>Western Meadowlark*</b>	100%	4%
Bullock's Oriole	31%	2%
Red-winged Blackbird	100%	19%
Tricolored Blackbird	6%	0.08%
Brown-headed Cowbird	56%	6%
Brewer's Blackbird	100%	12%
Orange-crowned Warbler	13%	5%
Common Yellowthroat	69%	9%
Yellow Warbler	44%	4%
Yellow-rumped Warbler	50%	13%
Wilson's Warbler	25%	4%
Western Tanager	6%	6%
Black-headed Grosbeak	44%	8%
Lazuli Bunting	19%	2%



		2021								2022									
#	Species	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	June*	July	Aug	Sept
1	Snow Goose						x			x		1	x			3			
2	Ross's Goose												x						
3	Greater White-fronted Goose					175	50			x		20	110	9	x				
4	Cackling Goose					820	424	910	1300	485	3650	4915	4120						
5	Canada Goose	20	9		6	350	x	x	1	7	92	24	34	28	8		45	36	
6	Tundra Swan	1	1							30	x	x	x						
7	Wood Duck	2	3			1			2					3	3		4		11
8	Blue-winged Teal	x	3											x	2	4			
9	Cinnamon Teal	24	7		1							9	23	10	14	29	24	27	20
10	Northern Shoveler	4					8	61	22	113	2	141	130	19	6	2	2	11	3
11	Gadwall	2						x	3	4	2	2	3	3	3	4		10	2
12	Eurasian Wigeon							x			x	1	1						
13	American Wigeon	8				4	30	15	x	1	205	102	27		1	2			
14	Mallard	144	34		8	68	106	46	16	66	115	66	18	32	32	64	50	29	162
15	Northern Pintail	2				12	50	8	7	28	500	33	1					3	6
16	Green-winged Teal	75				86	210	7	30	551	260	306	192	7	x	6			14
17	Ring-necked Duck	x					5	3		15	84	23	6	x					5
18	Common Goldeneye										2	1							
19	Lesser Scaup	x								x	1	x	x	x					
20	Bufflehead	x						2	2	16	14	2	3	x					
21	Hooded Merganser											x	4						
22	Common Merganser	1									x			1					
23	Ruddy Duck									x	3	x	x	x					
24	California Quail										1		1	1	x		2	1	
25	Wild Turkey			x							x						x		
26	Ring-necked Pheasant	5	7		1			1	3			x	3	x	1	3	x	1	
27	Pied-billed Grebe	x	1			2	2	x	5	1	x	x	2	1	x			2	3
28	Horned Grebe													x					
29	Western Grebe						x												
30	Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)		1		2		3				3								
31	Band-tailed Pigeon														x				
32	Eurasian Collared-Dove		2		1			x			1	2	1	2	2	1	3	2	1
33	Mourning Dove	12	29		19	2	2	x	1		x	12	4	10	13	6	8	7	6
34	Vaux's Swift	x				2								x	1			3	7
35	Anna's Hummingbird	2	1		2	1	x		1		x	1	2	3	1			x	1

36	Rufous Hummingbird										1	x	x		2					
37	Virginia Rail						1	1			1		3	3			2		2	
38	Sora											6	3	7			1			
39	American Coot					16	111	47	51	61	116	77	1						5	
40	Sandhill Crane							x		x	x									
41	Black-necked Stilt	1										3	1	x	38					
42	Black-bellied Plover	1			1		x				x	2								
43	Pacific Golden-Plover												x							
44	Semipalmated Plover											x	x							
45	Killdeer	25	19		3	2	8	1	30	153	32	8	10	15		28	19	15	15	
46	Whimbrel												x	x	5					
47	Long-billed Curlew													x			x			
48	Hudsonian Godwit												x	x						
49	Dunlin					x	250	5	1730	77	483	281	x				5			
50	Baird's Sandpiper																1			
51	Least Sandpiper	30				x	x			2	5	100	x	x	2	60	144	5		
52	Pectoral Sandpiper											x								
53	Semipalmated Sandpiper																1	x		
54	Western Sandpiper										x	1	x	x			x			
55	Short-billed Dowitcher																x			
56	Long-billed Dowitcher	24			1	4	14	59	10	30	14	25	31	x	x	8	5	6	5	
57	Wilson's Snipe	3	13			2	1	6	1		14	19	11	10	17			x	19	
58	Wilson's Phalarope	28	8											18	12		5	3	3	
59	Red-necked Phalarope												x	x					2	
60	Red Phalarope							x	x											
61	Spotted Sandpiper		2				x						x	3	6	1	6	3		
62	Solitary Sandpiper																	x		
63	Greater Yellowlegs	9				2	9	61	23	35	8	147	12	x	1		1	2	16	17
64	Lesser Yellowlegs											4							2	
65	Bonaparte's Gull						x						1	x	x					
66	Short-billed Gull											x								
67	Ring-billed Gull							x		x		x	x	x	x					
68	California Gull													x		1				
69	Glaucous-winged Gull									x										
70	Black Tern														x					
71	Forster's Tern													x						
72	Double-crested Cormorant							3				1	x	x						

73	American White Pelican												1	x			
74	American Bittern	x											x	1		2	
75	Great Blue Heron	7	6	3	5	4	2	3	2	3	2	2	6	6	3	3	3
76	Great Egret	7	3		9	23	78	83	37	12	37	4	19	1	1	5	6
77	Green Heron										x		1				
78	Turkey Vulture	8	27	11	20						3	1	20	38	2	49	23
79	Osprey		1									1	1	4	1	1	4
80	Northern Harrier	1			2	4	6	7	5	3	4	1	1	1	2	2	3
81	Sharp-shinned Hawk													x			
82	Cooper's Hawk	2								1		x					1
83	Bald Eagle	2	1			3	5	5	5	6	6	3	1	2		1	
84	Red-shouldered Hawk				1	4	1	1	1	2			x			1	
85	Red-tailed Hawk	3		3	4	14	10	10	8	8	6	2	3	2	1	1	3
86	Rough-legged Hawk						1	1	1	1							
87	Barn Owl						1				x						
88	Great Horned Owl						1				x						
89	Short-eared Owl*						1		x								
90	Belted Kingfisher				1	5	1	1	1	1				1			1
91	Red-breasted Sapsucker								1		x						
92	Acorn Woodpecker*					x				1		x	x			x	x
93	Downy Woodpecker		1		3	1	2	2	x	x	3	1	2	x		2	3
94	Hairy Woodpecker	1															
95	Northern Flicker	1	1		5	6	5	6	9	4	6	2	2	1		2	2
96	American Kestrel	2	1	2	8	11	8	8	7	2	1	1	x	x		1	3
97	Merlin						x			x							
98	Peregrine Falcon				1	x	x			x	1	x	x	x		1	
99	Prairie Falcon						1	x		x		x					
100	Western Wood-Pewee		2	3									4	3	4	2	2
101	Willow Flycatcher*		5	2							1		1	4	1	4	1
102	Black Phoebe		1	1	3	3	5	2	7	4	2	2	2	3	1	3	5
103	Say's Phoebe							2	1	x						x?	
104	Western Kingbird												x				
105	Warbling Vireo	1										x	1				
106	Northern Shrike								1	x	1						
107	Steller's Jay					x											
108	California Scrub-Jay				3	2	x			x	x	x	2	x		1	x
109	American Crow	8	4	3	2	6	x		5	1	2	4	2	3		1	1

110	Common Raven				2		1	1		1	10	x	1	x	1			
111	Black-capped Chickadee			1	6	x	2	5	2	1	1	1	1	x	1	1	3	3
112	Horned Lark (Streaked)*									x		x	x	1		3		
113	Northern Rough-winged Swallow											x		x	2	2		
114	Purple Martin*											x	x			x	x	
115	Tree Swallow	56	30	14						65	134	246	19	13	33	1	2	
116	Violet-green Swallow		2	131	136	6				3	6	45	8	5	5	3	40	515
117	Bank Swallow																	1
118	Barn Swallow	32	30	195	170	110		1	1	2	18	31	29	14	8	63	82	383
119	Cliff Swallow	9									x	x	x	x		8	3	
120	Bushtit	4	5	8				22		8	2	x	2	2	2	9		
121	Ruby-crowned Kinglet					1	1	8	2	3	7	x						
122	Golden-crowned Kinglet*									4								
123	Red-breasted Nuthatch										x						x	
124	Brown Creeper																x?	
125	House Wren													x	1	1		
126	Marsh Wren	21	40		6	14	19	10	7	5	20	15	16	19	10	10	3	2
127	Bewick's Wren	9	5	5	2	4	2	5	6	3	7	2	4	4	2	5	3	2
128	European Starling	18	56	374	66	19	20	48	64	10	25	11	35	69	13	56	55	651
129	Western Bluebird*								x	x								
130	Varied Thrush					x												
131	Hermit Thrush										x							
132	Swainson's Thrush		1									x	1	1	2	1	x	
133	American Robin	17	18	2	5	2	9		2	1	5	9	13	20	8	10	24	3
134	Cedar Waxwing		13	13	45	6							11	13	14	30	20	24
135	House Sparrow					x					1	x	1	x		1	x	
136	American Pipit				7	10		3		x	1	x						
137	House Finch	2	7	13	8	1	14	6	15	2	7	5	3	9	2	19	5	
138	Purple Finch							2	1			x	3					
139	Pine Siskin									x							x	
140	Lesser Goldfinch					3	5	1					x			1		
141	American Goldfinch	16	20	25	290	57						10	19	23	10	19	23	78
142	Chipping Sparrow*					x												
143	Fox Sparrow					x	9	6	3	1								
144	Dark-eyed Junco				4	7	3	9	24	4								
145	White-crowned Sparrow	1		1	40	14	x		x	4	x	5	1	x	1			24
146	Golden-crowned Sparrow				4	74	36	44	24	12	6	5						

[illegible]