



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Great Sand Dunes
National Park and
Preserve

11500 Highway 150
Mosca, Colorado
81146

719-378-6300 phone
719-378-6310 fax

Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve News Release

For Immediate Release
January 5, 2010

Phyllis Pineda Bovin (719) 378-6363

Christmas Bird Count Yields 27 Wintering Bird Species at Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve

Dedicated volunteers enjoyed mild weather conditions and light snow cover on January 2 to encounter 27 different bird species at Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve during the Annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC), announced Superintendent Art Hutchinson. Sixteen registered volunteers participated in the count, one of the highest turnouts for this local event. Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve has coordinated this event since 1992.

Numbers of species observed were about on par with those of past CBCs, with a total of 27 species reported. However, numbers of individual birds sighted were down compared to other counts, about 293 counted. Townsend's Solitaires, American Robins and Mountain Chickadees were among those most commonly observed. Results of the count will go into a national database managed by the Audubon Society, and will be available nationally in book form titled "American Birds: The 110th Annual Christmas Bird Count".

Skies were partly cloudy to cloudy, temperatures were mild, and it was a nearly windless day with light snow early in the afternoon. Outdoor temperatures ranged from a minimum temperature of 21 F and a high of 34 F during the count time.

The CBC is sponsored by Friends of the Dunes, Inc., a non-profit group dedicated to education and research at the park. The Friends group also supports the Junior Ranger program, geomorphology research at the park, and co-sponsored a multi-year archaeological survey of the park and preserve area.

The CBC began on Christmas Day, 1900, when 27 conservationists in 25 localities, led by scientist and writer Frank Chapman, posed an alternative to the "side hunt," a Christmas day activity in which teams competed to see who could shoot the most birds and small mammals. Instead, Chapman proposed to identify, count, and record all the birds they saw, founding what is now considered to be the world's most significant citizen-based conservation effort – and what has become a more than century-old institution.

--NPS--

**110th Christmas Bird Count Results
Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve**

Species	Number
Red-tailed Hawk	2
Ferruginous Hawk	1
Rough-legged Hawk	2
Golden Eagle	2
American Kestrel	1
Merlin*	1
Northern Pygmy-Owl	2
Downy Woodpecker	1
Hairy Woodpecker	2
Northern Flicker	2
Gray Jay	9
Steller's Jay	2
Western Scrub-Jay	3
Pinyon Jay	22
Clark's Nutcracker	19
Black-billed Magpie	8
American Crow	2
Common Raven	7
Mountain Chickadee	45
Red-breasted Nuthatch	4
White-breasted Nuthatch	9
Pygmy Nuthatch	1
Townsend's Solitaire	37
American Robin	88
American Tree Sparrow	1
Dark-eyed Junco	18
Pine Grosbeak	2

TOTAL INDIVIDUALS COUNTED: 293

TOTAL SPECIES REPORTED: 27

*Flagged as an unusual species

-NPS-