

## Roaring Fork Christmas Bird Count 2010 Snowy and Surprising by Dave Clark

The Roaring Fork Audubon Christmas Bird Count took place on Saturday, December 18, 2010. The day started with an inch of new snow on the ground, and it snowed lightly off and on all day. The temperature rose from about 21 to 32 degrees Fahrenheit during the day.

Sixteen counters saw sixty species during the count and the additional count week, a low number compared with similar counts in the past that usually found 75-82 species.

Unusual birds for the 15 mile diameter circle this year were a young Rose-breasted Grosbeak and an Osprey. The Rose-breasted Grosbeak is occasionally seen in the spring (it is an eastern species) during migration season. The latest time the Rose-breasted Grosbeak was seen previously in the Roaring Fork Valley was Nov. 11, 2001, seen by Dave Clark in Carbondale. Luckily, Robin Henry, of Robin Henry Photography, robinhenry.org, was able to go back and get an excellent picture of the bird later. His patience is remarkable, as he spent a day and a half waiting to get the photo.

The Osprey was seen in Glenwood twice in the week prior to the count and again on January 4<sup>th</sup> from Dave Clark's backyard. This, too, is an historic late date for the valley.

Many thanks to all who participated. The species seen during the count were:

Canada Goose	American Kestrel	Juniper Titmouse
Gadwall	Peregrine Falcon	White-breasted
American Wigeon	American Coot	Nuthatch
Mallard	Wilson's Snipe	Brown Creeper
Green-winged Teal	Rock Pigeon	American Dipper
Ring-necked Duck	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Townsend's Solitaire
Lesser Scaup	Belted Kingfisher	American Robin
Common Goldeneye	Lewis's Woodpecker	European Starling
Barrow's Goldeneye	Downy Woodpecker	Spotted Towhee
Hooded Merganser	Hairy Woodpecker	American Tree Sparrow
Common Merganser	Northern Flicker	Song Sparrow
Wild Turkey	Gray Jay	Dark-eyed Junco
Pied-billed Grebe	Steller's Jay	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Great Blue Heron	Western Scrub Jay	Red-winged Blackbird
Osprey	Pinyon Jay	Brewer's Blackbird
Bald Eagle	Clark's Nutcracker	Common Grackle
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Black-billed Magpie	House Finch
Cooper's Hawk	American Crow	Lesser Goldfinch
Red-tailed Hawk	Common Raven	American Goldfinch
Rough-legged Hawk	Black-capped Chickadee	House Sparrow
	Mountain Chickadee	

## Eagle Valley First Ever Christmas Bird Count



**Great Horned Owl**  
*Courtesy Steve Damato*

Over 1,500 individual birds of all species were documented in the first annual Eagle Valley Christmas Bird Count, held on a snowy Sunday morning, Dec. 19, 2010. Organized by the U.S. Forest Service and the Roaring Fork Audubon Society, about 25 binocular-wielding bird enthusiasts turned out to help in the effort.

Although this was the first such survey in the Eagle Valley, the National Audubon Society has been conducting the bird counts for over 100 years. The count, conducted across the United States, in Canada, and numerous Western Hemisphere countries is actually an early-winter bird census of sorts, focusing on specific geographic areas within a 24-hour period. Wildlife biologist Lara Duran of the Forest Service led the Eagle Valley event.

All birds that are seen or heard are counted, regardless of species. Volunteers are assigned a specific area within a 15-mile “count circle.” The local volunteers spent half a day scouting for birds along the Eagle River, Brush Creek, Salt Creek, Bruce Creek, Spring Gulch, Bellyache, Sylvan Lake, Hardscrabble, Eagle and Gypsum.

The most commonly sighted bird was the European Starling, with 483 of the little feathered critters reported. Also reported were four Bald Eagles, two Golden Eagles, a Great Horned Owl, a Rough-legged Hawk and numerous jays, chickadees and finches. A total of 51 different species was noted. More detailed results for the Eagle Valley count may be found at [http://cbc.audubon.org/cbccurrent/current\\_table.html](http://cbc.audubon.org/cbccurrent/current_table.html).

Jan and Jerry Fedrizzi hosted a luncheon for the birders after the count.

The data collected by the volunteers, when compared on a year-to-year basis, allows researchers and biologists to study long-term health and status of bird populations across North America.

Hopefully, the Eagle Valley Christmas Bird County will continue to be a holiday tradition for many years to come.

*Adapted from a report by Kathy Heicher. Thanks to the Eagle Valley Enterprise for this report.*