



United States Department of Agriculture  
Forest Service

# NEWS RELEASE

Dakota Prairie Grasslands

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*For Immediate Release*

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## **Denbigh Christmas Bird Count yields over 1,600 birds**

The third annual Denbigh Christmas Bird Count was held Tuesday, December 29. Birders from Sawyer and Bismarck spotted a total of 1,683 individual birds of 36 different species.

Christmas Bird Counts are held throughout North America each holiday season. During the one-day counts, birders attempt to record as many bird species, and as many individual birds as possible within a 15-mile diameter circle. The Denbigh Christmas Bird Count encompassed Denbigh Experimental Forest, as well as the cities of Denbigh and Towner.

Christmas Bird Counts are often considered the social highlight of the year for the birding community, as they are typically followed by a potluck dinner at which participants recount their day's adventures. The count tradition dates to 1900 when a total of 25 "CBCs" were held. Last year, a total of 2,124 CBCs were held world-wide, including one in Antarctica. Scientists use the data collected during CBCs to monitor changes in winter bird populations. CBCs now constitute the world's largest and longest-running wildlife monitoring program.

Highlights of the Denbigh CBC included three short-eared owls and two snowy owls. The 275 sharp-tailed grouse and 645 snow buntings were new high counts. The most unusual find, however, was a western meadowlark that has been hardy enough to survive the winter to date.

For more information on Christmas Bird Counts, or anyone wishing to participate in next year's event, should contact Dan Svingen, Dakota Prairie Grasslands Biologist, US Forest Service, Bismarck, at (701) 250-4443.

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