



**From the Desk of Alyson Mack**  
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Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge



# Christmas Bird Count 2011 at Ash Meadows!

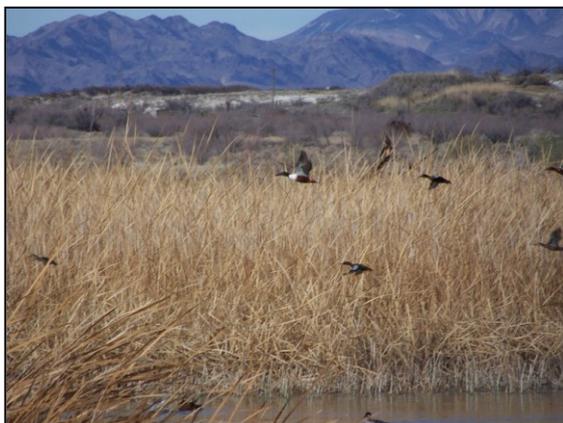
**December 16, 2011**

*By Samuel Skalak & Alyson Mack*

Last Friday, twenty-three volunteers from Pahrump, Las Vegas, Beatty, Death Valley, and Shoshone searched Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge from 6:30am to 5:00pm equipped with bird books, binoculars, spotting scopes, and sheer determination. They had one goal in mind: to detect as many bird species as possible! The volunteers were participants in the Audubon Society's 112th annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC), which is in its 17th year at Ash Meadows NWR. The CBC is a nation-wide count that takes place every year and gives the public a chance to get outside, count wildlife, and participate in conservation.



Loggerhead shrikes were easy to spot with their bright white breast, perched out in the open throughout the refuge.



Peterson Reservoir was literally flocking with hundreds of waterfowl!

Strong winds kept many birds tucked deep in cover for most of the day, forcing the volunteers to search hard even for some commonly expected species. Nonetheless, the volunteers tallied 3,266 individuals of 73 different species during the day-long survey effort. An additional eight species were found during the Audubon's official 'count week' by Refuge Biologist Darrick Weissenfluh, bringing the total count to 81 species at Ash Meadows – just two less than the previous year!

Annual surveys like the Christmas Bird Count are important conservation tools for monitoring the long-term health and status of bird populations on the refuge – and across all of North America. This survey was done in conjunction with a bird count at Death Valley National Park on Saturday and Shoshone, Tecopa, China Ranch, Amargosa Canyon on Sunday. For more information on the refuge's birds, an Ash Meadows bird checklist can be downloaded online or picked up at the refuge visitor center. The staff at Ash Meadows NWR would like to thank all the volunteers who participated and made the count a great success this year! □



With relatively poor eyesight, Northern harriers fly low over the ground to listen for their prey.

## Results from the 2011 Christmas Bird Count at Ash Meadows:

Species	Number
Ross's Goose	1
Tundra Swan	3
Gadwall	1
American Wigeon	31
Mallard	99
Northern Shoveler	12
Northern Pintail	1
Green-winged Teal	47
Canvasback	115
Redhead	57
Ring-necked Duck	2
Lesser Scaup	12
Bufflehead	13
Common Goldeneye	2
Ruddy Duck	115
Gambel's Quail	100
Common Loon	1
Pied-billed Grebe	4
Eared Grebe	1
Great Blue Heron	2
Northern Harrier	22
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3
Cooper's Hawk	3
Red-tailed Hawk	3
Ferruginous Hawk	1
American Kestrel	3
Merlin	1
Prairie Flacon	1
Virginia Rail	2
American Coot	616
Killdeer	3
Ring-billed Gull	1
Herring Gull (probably CA gull)	10
Eurasian Collared Dove	2
Greater Roadrunner	6
Western Screech Owl	1
White-throated Swift	7

Species	Number
Rufous Hummingbird	1
"Red-shafted" Northern Flicker	11
Black Phoebe	5
Say's Phoebe	12
Vermilion Flycatcher	1
Loggerhead Shrike	29
Western Scrub Jay	1
Common Raven	11
Horned Lark	77
Violet-green Swallow	4
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	4
Unknown Swallow spp.	1
Verdin	16
Marsh Wren	18
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	3
Western Bluebird	12
Mountain Bluebird	3
American Robin	6
Northern Mockingbird	5
Crissal Thrasher	3
European Starling	6
American Pipit	2
Phainopepla	59
Yellow-rumped Warbler	13
Brewer's Sparrow	1
Sage Sparrow	35
Savannah Sparrow	9
White-crowned Sparrow	208
Darke-eyed Junco	1
Red-winged Blackbird	407
Western Meadowlark	40
Brewer's Blackbird	815
Great-tailed Grackle	25
Brown-headed Cowbird	4
House Finch	15
Lesser Goldfinch	96
American Goldfinch	3