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**Columbia Wetlands Waterbird Survey strikes again!**  
***Over 26,500 birds counted this spring***

*For Immediate Release*

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Frozen marshes, few birds and cold temperatures... that's how many people would have felt about the way spring rolled out in the Columbia Valley this year. However, despite there being some truth to this description, the recently completed third round of spring migratory bird counts conducted through Wildsight Golden's Columbia Wetlands Waterbird Survey (CWWS) came off with great success... and with lots of birds! Regardless of the late start to spring this year, the CWWS still managed to count 26,627 birds! This is about 800 more birds than were counted during the same time last year.

The data gathered by the CWWS is collected by dozens of trained and dedicated citizen-scientists. Thanks to 83 volunteers, the CWWS was able to count and identify thousands of birds from 100 different survey sites located in the Columbia Wetlands this spring. "I continue to be astounded by the amazing volunteers that make the Waterbird Survey such a great success," states CWWS Program Biologist Rachel Darvill. "Without such significant volunteer efforts, this program could simply not collect the incredible amount of baseline bird data that it does," said Darvill. "The CWWS is greatly adding to our scientific knowledge on numerous species abundance and distribution patterns in the Columbia Wetlands."

Other than the total count, some of the highlights from this spring's waterbird surveys include the high individual bird species counts. For instance, on April 16<sup>th</sup>, the highest count of individual species was 2,426 American Coots. On April 3<sup>rd</sup>, the second highest count was Mallards, at 1,820 followed by 1,376 American Wigeons seen on April 16. Also with notable numbers this spring were 402 Trumpeter/Tundra Swans seen on April 3<sup>rd</sup> (72 of which were confirmed as Trumpeter Swans), and 456 Common Mergansers identified and recorded on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. In total, the 2017 spring CWWS was able to record 113 different bird species with 291 checklists submitted.

"Our aim is that all this data is contributing to our long-term goal of having the Columbia Wetlands become recognized and designated as an 'Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA),' states Darvill. "Once an area becomes an IBA it is on the global spotlight; it becomes part of an international network, including access to IBA caretakers, scientists, newsletters and reports, and support for communications



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materials. The designation also helps to broaden public knowledge on the value of wetlands and the importance of conserving birds.”

Are you wanting more information or interested in becoming a citizen-scientist on the Waterbird Survey this fall? Free training will be provided in September and optical gear can be lent to those in need. If so, please email [racheldarvill@gmail.com](mailto:racheldarvill@gmail.com) or call 250-344-5530. The fall survey dates will be as follows: Friday September 29th, Thursday October 5th, and Sunday October 15th. Wildsight Golden gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Columbia Basin Trust, Wildlife Habitat Canada, Regional District of East Kootenay’s Local Conservation Fund, and the Ballie Fund - Bird Studies Canada.