

2015 Florence Christmas Bird Count

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The 32nd Florence Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, December 19. The weather was mixed, with clear skies in some areas and rain—sometimes heavy—and even hail in other areas. Water levels were high because of abundant rain during the days leading up to the CBC.

A total of 35 people put in about 90 hours, walking 33 miles and driving 205 miles. We received nine Home Counter reports, representing about 20 hours of observations. The Home Counters turned in the only reports of Bullock's Oriole, Purple Finch, and American Goldfinch.

We found 131 species, which is a little above average for the Florence CBC. We saw some uncommon birds, including Northern Mockingbird (second sighting for the CBC), Bullock's Oriole (second sighting), Turkey Vulture (third sighting), Osprey (fourth sighting), Barred Owl (sixth sighting), Short-eared Owl (sixth sighting), Townsend's Solitaire (sixth sighting), Clark's Grebe (eighth sighting), Red-shouldered Hawk (eighth sighting), and Glaucous Gull (eighth sighting).

Some of the species that we usually find, but didn't see this year, include Tundra Swan, Black-bellied Plover, Dunlin, and American Dipper.

We counted unusually high numbers of Gray Jay (eight found, previous years' average is two), Red-shouldered Hawk (eight found, average one), American Pipit (100 found, average 20) and Anna's Hummingbird (40 found, average 19). Water birds were plentiful too, with Green-winged Teal (827 found, average 169), Ruddy Duck (136 found, average 33), Northern Pintail (170 found, average 84), Northern Shoveler (101 found, average 34), Ring-necked Duck (214 found, average 88), Common Merganser (122 found, average 49), and American Coot (302 found, average 92).

The following species were found in low numbers—less than half the previous years' average: American Wigeon, Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, Brandt's Cormorant, Killdeer, Surfbird, Mew Gull, Common Murre, Rock Pigeon, American Crow, Common Raven, European Starling, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Red-winged Blackbird.

The number of Eurasian Collared Doves seems to have leveled off. We counted 99, which is a little below the high of the last few years.