

# 2018 Oakridge Christmas Bird Count

by Joel Geier, Count Coordinator and Compiler

Ten volunteers enjoyed uncommonly pleasant weather on the Oakridge CBC, December 28. Participants had reasonably good access, even though forest roads above 2,500 feet or so had about four inches of snow.

We wound up with 59 species, which is close to average for recent years, considering that we spent no effort on nocturnal owling. Two parties did find Northern Pygmy-Owls during daylight.

The tally of 43 Buffleheads was the highest for the 22 years in which data was gathered for this count, including 1972-1985, before this count was revived in 2009.

Grouse, doves, kinglets, chickadees, nuthatches, creepers, and corvids were well represented. “Kettles” of 20-plus Common Ravens were seen by two separate parties, at widely separated locations, leaving us thinking that our total of 85 for the circle might be reasonable.

Raptors were surprisingly scarce, even though the day started auspiciously with a Red-shouldered Hawk perched high in a tree right outside our morning meeting place at the Lion Mountain Bakery. Beyond that, we found only one accipiter, 7 Red-tailed Hawks, and 5 Bald Eagles.

Finches were also scarce—just 13 House Finches and 3 American Goldfinches, although Lesser Goldfinches and a Purple Finch were seen during count week. No siskins, crossbills, or Evening Grosbeaks were detected. Juncos, however, were abundant, and White-crowned Sparrows were found for the first time since 1985.

We found one Marsh Wren, but Pacific Wren numbers were surprisingly low, and we didn't find a single Bewick's Wren. They are never easy to find on this count, but still we do expect to find a few.

Thirteen Western Bluebirds turned up on High Prairie, and three teams recorded a total of 6 American Dippers, always a welcome feature of this count. Notable Count Week birds included Virginia Rail, Cedar Waxwing, and White-breasted Nuthatch, none of which have been detected in recent years.