

2017 Florence Christmas Bird Count Summary

by Vjera Thompson, Count Coordinator and Compiler

The 34th Florence Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, December 16, 2017. The weather was mellow, with a few light showers in the morning and calm in the afternoon. We had 42 participants in the field and at least one Home Counter report. Our Home Counter got three species missed by teams in the field: White-throated Sparrow, Purple Finch, and Mountain Quail.

We recorded 123 species, plus 4 for count week, which is close to our average of 126. One of the count week birds was a Bullock's Oriole that visited a feeder on Friday, avoided it all day on Saturday, and then showed up a couple blocks away on Sunday. The other count week birds were Barred Owl, Glaucous Gull, and Northern Pygmy Owl.

We had two unusual birds, both in the south jetty area. We had a surprise Gyrfalcon for the 2nd count record and found the wintering Northern Mockingbird for the 3rd count record.

We had Red-shouldered Hawks for the 5th year in a row. Another bird that has increased is Black Phoebe. We had a record high of 21 this year; last year was also a record at 18.

We had a high count of 6 Red-breasted Sapsuckers, plus a hybrid Red-breasted x Red-naped Sapsucker. Other high counts were 5 Northern Shrikes, 4 California Scrub-Jays, 74 Marsh Wrens, 9 Lincoln Sparrows, and 6 Pigeon Guillemots.

Most ducks and gulls were lower than average. Western Gulls increased from last year's low count but were still lower than normal. Bewick's Wren was a record low of just 2 birds.

Species not found included most owls, Gadwall, White-tailed Kite, Brewer's Blackbird, Surfbird, Dunlin, Pileated Woodpecker, and American Goldfinch.