

2018 Eugene Christmas Bird Count

Compiler Notes

by Vjera Thompson, Species Compiler

Count Day, December 30, 2018, was mostly overcast with a few rain showers. But the field observers rejoiced in how mild and sunny it was compared to the last several Eugene Christmas Bird Counts.

On Count Day, 131 species were reported by the field teams and Home Counters. An additional three species were seen during Count Week. We had one first count record, 4 Willets, which are unusual in our area. They were seen at Fern Ridge, which is where they've showed up when found previously in Lane County. Other unusual birds were a Blue-winged Teal, a Glaucous Gull, an American Dipper, and a Black-throated Gray Warbler.

Count week additions were Rough-legged Hawk, Canvasback, and an out-of-season Black-headed Grosbeak. We didn't see any Short-eared Owls or Evening Grosbeaks. This year was not a good year for the winter finches—crossbills, siskins, and Evening Grosbeaks, although thanks to the feeder counters, we did identify a few Pine Siskins.

Eurasian Collared-Doves have continued to increase in numbers in our area. First found on the count in 2008, this year they reached another record high, with 266 counted in 18 different areas. We also had a record high of 622 Wild Turkeys, another bird that is increasing locally. We also had a record high of 526 White-crowned Sparrows. The 24 Black Phoebes was one short of a record.

Thanks to good visibility, we had high counts of several raptors: Cooper's Hawks, Bald Eagles, Red-shouldered Hawks, and a record high of 194 Red-tailed Hawks. Unfortunately, we missed seeing a Rough-legged Hawk that was found the day before the count, and only had one White-tailed Kite. Many duck and woodpecker species had higher counts than normal, including a record high 133 Downy Woodpeckers.

Our Home Counters contributed to the high counts of woodpeckers, Eurasian Collared-Doves, and Wild Turkeys.

We had calm pre-dawn hours for owling. The teams that owled were very successful, finding 9 Barn Owls, 4 Western Screech-Owls, 25 Great Horned Owls, 3 Northern Pygmy-Owls, 1 Barred Owl, and 1 Northern Saw-whet Owl.

Another successful count thanks to all the birders that participated on field teams and from homes.