

# 2019 Florence Christmas Bird Count

by Vjera Thompson, Count Coordinator and Compiler

The Florence Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, December 14, 2019. The weather was mellow, with no rain until later afternoon and fairly calm winds, although the ocean was turbulent. We had 40 participants in the field and three Home Counter reports. For the second year, counters enjoyed the hospitality and delicious food of Best Thai Cuisine at our countdown dinner gathering.

We recorded 132 species, plus 2 for count week, which is higher than our average of 126. Count Week birds were Snowy Plover and Brewer's Blackbird, which were both found during follow-up visits to enjoy one of our best findings: a flock of 20+ Snow Buntings, a new high record for the count.

During the count, we also found two first-time species. One, a Golden Eagle, was observed harassing some ducks in a pond along the North Fork Road. Another new sighting was two Lapland Longspurs seen at the South Jetty. Other unusual sightings include a Bullock's Oriole at a feeder, a Barn Swallow, and two Ospreys.

We got more owls than usual thanks to Tim Rodenkirk, who went owling for four hours, plus a couple of daylight sightings of owls.

Record high counts included Mallard (802), Red-winged Blackbird for the second year (408), Red-necked Grebe (23), Sharp-shinned Hawk (8), Merlin (7), Rhinoceros Auklet (6), Eurasian Collared-Dove (121), and Brown Creeper (21). Marsh Wren (109) beat last year's record with another thorough survey of Waite Ranch, and 22 were added from the South Jetty area. Most surprising was the new record for Anna's Hummingbird. The old record was 66 and the new record is 143, with 51 observed in just one area! Species not found included Black Oystercatcher, Common Goldeneye, Ruddy Duck, White-tailed Kite, and Great Horned Owl.

Thanks to my fellow team leaders: Alan Contreras, Peter Ralph, Kit Larsen, Tom Mickel, Linda Gilbert, Vjera Thompson, Tom Cable, John Sullivan, Pat Blue Heron, Adele Dawson, Magnus Persmark, and Daniel Farrar. Thanks also go to Ellen Cantor for doing the upfront coordination.