

## 2020 Eugene Christmas Bird Count Compiler Notes

By Vjera Thompson, Species Compiler

Rain was forecast for Count Day, January 3, 2021, but it held off until 4 pm. The large number of Field Counters who took on the challenge of following COVID-19 safety guidelines were rewarded with birds and sun.

A total of 133 species and 74,642 individual birds were reported by the Field Teams and Home Counters on Count Day. An additional four species were found during Count Week. We re-found an unusual bird, a Snowy Egret. Although not normally found in the Willamette Valley, one is wintering at Fern Ridge this year. The last previous Count report of this species was back in 1965. Other unusual finds were four Trumpeter Swans, found on three previous Counts, and two Soras, found only once previously.

Unusual Count Week additions were a Semipalmated Plover and Tree Swallows, not usually here in the winter. A flock has been present at Delta Ponds for a few weeks. A few expected birds missed on Count Day were found during Count Week: Western Grebe and Black-bellied Plover. Other misses were Osprey, White-tailed Kite, and Canvasback.

The COVID-19 safety precautions led teams to split into smaller groups, which may have resulted in more thorough coverage, especially on foot. One Team Leader covered his area by bicycle, and his careful counts contributed to an astounding record high of 67 Black Phoebes (last year's record was 27), and 247 Bewick's Wrens (the old record was 142).

The spread of Eurasian Collared-Doves continued with another record high: 373 counted in 21 different areas. We also shattered our previous record high of Anna's Hummingbirds, increasing from last year's record of 299 to a glittering 425.

Our record number of Home Counters contributed to the high counts of Eurasian Collared-Doves, Anna's Hummingbirds, and Bewick's Wrens, as well as records for Downy Woodpeckers and Lesser Goldfinches. The weather unexpectedly cleared for a few brave owling teams, allowing us to find all the expected species of owls. One team enjoyed seeing a Barred Owl on a neighborhood roost mid-morning.

Thanks to all the birders that took on the extra challenge of counting 6+ feet apart with masks and fogging glasses, or counted from home to keep teams smaller. You made this a successful count, and one to remember.