

2022 Eugene Christmas Bird Count Summary

By Vjera Thompson, Species Compiler

The 81st Eugene CBC, held on January 1, was again fortunate to have no rain despite heavy rain before and after Count Day. Field Counters reveled in the decent weather, and they were rewarded with year birds as well as bursts of sunshine.

A total of 133 species, just above our average for the last five years, and 80,801 individual birds were reported by the Field Teams and Home Counters on Count Day. Two Hermit Warblers were found in neighboring areas, the 4th and 5th records for the count. The 5th record of Swainson's Hawk was seen, but not identified until almost two weeks later. A Lewis's Woodpecker was counted; last time was in 2013. And for the first time since 2016, Canvasback was found: two with a flock of Redheads.

An additional 5 species showed up during Count Week: Snow Goose, Greater Scaup, Northern Pygmy-Owl (found the day before the Count but not on Count Day), Evening Grosbeak, and the 2nd state record Winter Wren (very similar to the more common Pacific Wren). Other misses were Clark's Grebe (often found on Fern Ridge Reservoir), Short-billed Gull (formerly called Mew Gull), Osprey (sometimes one overwinters), Prairie Falcon, and Brown-headed Cowbird.

We broke several high records, including some set last year. We also broke some raptor records: 130 Bald Eagles (120 last year), 45 Red-shouldered Hawks (43 last year), and 36 Cooper's Hawks (the old record was 27) seen by 19 teams. For water and marsh birds, we recorded record highs of Buffleheads (246 up from 185 last year), Wood Ducks (261), Common Goldeneyes (21), Sora (4), Virginia Rails (16), and American White Pelicans (224).

Several records of smaller birds were also broken. Observers commented on the surplus of Western Bluebirds and they were right: we set a new record of 514, up from last year's 302! We also counted 100 Black Phoebe (previous record, 67), 106 White-breasted Nuthatches (the previous record of 88 had stood since 1967), 4 Swamp Sparrows, and 78 White-throated Sparrows (an astounding jump from the old record of 48).

The weather cooperated for a few owling teams, and we were able to find almost all the expected species of owls, including a record high of 3 Barred Owls.

Thanks to all the birders that made this another successful count.