

## 2022 Oakridge Christmas Bird Count

*By Joel Geier, Count Coordinator and Compiler*

The Oakridge CBC on December 30 started off with heavy cloud cover but no precipitation, a welcome change from last winter when there was never a dry moment. This good luck lasted for about two hours before varying degrees of drizzle settled in for the rest of the day, making it hard to find songbirds from then on.

Despite exceptionally good access with snow-free roads up to 3,700 feet, large areas of forest appeared remarkably birdless. We saw no forest finch flocks (siskins or crossbills) and relatively few chickadees and kinglets. This was the case both in the Cedar Creek burn areas northeast of town, and areas well away from that burn. Even Pacific Wrens were in short supply, with only seven heard or seen.

Volunteers had better luck around the town areas. Most notably, a flock of 51 Snow Geese turned up on the lawn of the high school, the first Count Day record for this species. We also broke records for Eurasian Collared Dove (125), Black Phoebe (6), California Scrub-Jay (65), and Townsend's Warbler (4).

A Barn Owl roosting in a barn on High Prairie on the day before the Count was the first ever recorded for Count Week. Western Screech-Owls were also heard calling during Count Week in the Hemlock area, but no Great Gray Owls were found this year.

The total of 59 species (plus 5 Count Week species) was below average for recent years. Notable misses besides forest finches included grouse, Mountain Quail, Red-shouldered Hawk, Pileated Woodpecker, and Brown Creeper.