

CBC – Oakridge

By Joel Geier, Count Coordinator and Compiler

Ten volunteers enjoyed better-than-usual weather for the Oakridge CBC on December 29, with temperatures rising to 60° F in the afternoon. There was no snow or ice in most of the circle, and less than an inch of snow at the highest elevations (above 3,000 ft). Strong winds from a warm front moving through may have suppressed forest bird activity, especially along the ridge lines. But thankfully, rain held off until 3:30 pm, just a half hour before the Count ended.

Overall species diversity was good with 73 species counted. The most unusual bird was a Mountain Chickadee found by Chad Marks-Fife, Jenna Curtis, and Deb Hill up around 3,100 ft on Forest Road 2110 above Packard Creek, in a flock that also included the only warblers of the day, two Townsend's Warblers.

A record-high 24 Horned Grebes were found on Hills Creek Reservoir, despite a major drawdown to favor fish passage. Both resident grouse species (Ruffed and Sooty) were found, but Mountain Quail were missed, as some regenerating clearcuts on private forest land were closed to hiking this year.

Rock Pigeon numbers were low, perhaps due to a Peregrine Falcon that was seen hunting them around town in late fall. Other species found in most years, but missed this year, included Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, and Hutton's Vireo. We missed Evening Grosbeak on Count Day, but Amy Weih had five at her High Prairie feeder for Count Week.