

## The 44<sup>th</sup> Angwin Christmas Bird Count

This year's count was a pleasure. We enjoyed fine weather once again (although the Putah Creek kayakers began their day at 19° above zero.), with plenty of good birdwatchers in the field finding lots of birds. We enjoyed a record turnout of observers. The count circle does need one or two more areas of coverage to fit everyone more comfortably. The species total of 134 was typical. Total numbers of individuals is low due to the low tally of starlings, and fewer robins than expected. The table below describes nine recent counts. Complete results of past CBCs—  
<http://netapp.audubon.org/CBCObservation/>

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Participants	43	40	57	49	60	57	61	57	62
Party Hours	71	77	98	94	125	114	118	112	99
Species	131	130	134	126	148	135	139	133	134
Low Temp	37	38	49	32	32	33	30	32	25
High Temp	53	52	56	45	67	59	68	56	53
Weather	Fair	Prtly cldy	Occ'l rain	Occ'l rain- snow	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair

A Eurasian Wigeon in Pope Valley highlighted the waterfowl, perhaps the bird seen in St. Helena earlier in the week. Overall, ducks were average or below. Birders found Canvasback in good numbers, the highest since 1990; but scaup notably maintained their decline within the circle. L. Hennessey is currently not the place to go to see lots of ducks in the fall and early winter. Tallying a single bird, Wild Turkey has bottomed out. Where have they gone and will they return? They did rid my neighborhood of garden snails, but beyond that, *c'est la vie*. Mountain Quail (and California Thrasher) are resident in Pope Canyon but, as usual, refused to call out on New Year's Day. A Common Loon was in Pope Valley; the count week Pacific Loon was the first since a count day bird in 1984. Seventy-one Eared Grebes is by far the highest count in 20 years. Pelicans were on the wrong side of Berryessa this year. The night-heron in St. Helena was only the second in the past 20 years.

The several resident pairs of Bald Eagles each continue at their usual places. The three common *Buteo* species were right on average. Band-tailed Pigeons were overhead all day. They probably pass between or back and forth across areas and there is a little double-counting, but not too much. The hills of Napa seem to be a stronghold of wintering pigeons. Owls were down significantly, partly due to windy conditions early, partly a result of not looking for them. N. Pygmy-Owl is quiet this winter. The Burrowing Owl continues in Pope Valley, and up to four are scattered on the Berryessa shorelines this year—outside the count circle. Six White-throated Swifts were in Pope Valley, only the ninth record on count day. Birdwatchers always appreciate finding a Lewis's Woodpecker. Hennessey's Red-naped Sapsucker did not return this year, but one at a

persimmon tree in St. Helena arrived for count week. Encouraging is the small increase in kestrels.

Following the irruption of Steller's Jay last winter, resulting in our highest count, this year jays tallied in the fifth lowest number ever. Good coverage of Berryessa canyons give us lots of Rock Wrens. With the low lake level, the extensive exposed shore of the northwestern part of the lake is an easy place to find this wren in winter. First recorded on this CBC in 1999, House Wren is now found each year. Conversely, Bewick's Wren made a very weak showing. Perhaps we caught them on a day they chose silence. Following an unprecedented absence a year ago, Cedar Waxwing did return, but just 98 birds. Too far to travel on count day, a Phainopepla is wintering in the hills north of Hennessey. A Western Tanager was in the Zinfandel subdivision of St. Helena.

Thank you to the 62 birders in the field and especially to those that coordinated and led all or part of one of the nine count areas. We welcomed six first time participants this year and I'm sure they can't wait for the next one. Laurie's chili added spice to the compilation dinner put on by Helen and Ava. We always have room for more birders to come to St. Helena after the long day in the field. Don't miss it next year.