

The 45th Angwin Christmas Bird Count

Our 45th count was a success. Except for some persistent fog at a few locations, the weather was great. There was a mix of interesting and unexpected species. The number of observers (48) was the lowest since 2009, but I believe that coverage did not suffer due to the lower turnout. However, it is always better to have more people looking for birds. The species total of 137 was high average. The total number of birds is average for a year with low tallies of either, or both, starlings and robins. The table below describes nine recent counts. Complete results of past CBCs—
<http://netapp.audubon.org/CBCObservation/Historical/ResultsByCount.aspx>

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Participants	40	57	49	60	57	61	57	62	48
Party Hours	77	98	94	125	114	118	112	99	114
Species	130	134	126	148	135	139	133	134	137
Low Temp	38	49	32	32	33	30	32	25	37
High Temp	52	56	45	67	59	68	56	53	55
Weather	Prtly cldy	Occ'l rain	Occ'l rain- snow	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair

Except for the “Eurasian” Green-winged Teal at the Angwin Airport, there were few waterfowl surprises. While the British consider this teal a full species, the AOU have yet to grant it such lofty status. Perhaps it will someday. The perception among birders was of few ducks; however, it was a normal year with the usual highs and lows among the species. There were low numbers at some key sites, but the smaller lakes and ponds made up for those missing birds. I haven’t checked to be certain, but the tally of Western/Clark’s Grebe was the lowest ever. However, the couple of thousand outside the count circle continues on Lake Berryessa this winter. Herons and egrets were common, with the reliable Black-crowned Night Heron found again in St. Helena.

We’ve found 12 or 13 Bald Eagles in five of the past six years. This seems to be how many fit inside the circle. Eleven were adults. The eight Golden Eagles is the most ever, and ten harriers was the third-highest total. Gulls were scarce and we missed Bonaparte’s Gull. This happens. Owling coverage of Ink Grade Rd added significantly to the screech-owl total; and all four of the N. Saw-whet Owls called from that location. For the first time since 2002, a Spotted Owl called early. This bird was in the forests below Linda Falls. Pope Valley produced its usual Burrowing Owl.

Drought is kind to the Acorn Woodpecker. Numbers during the last four years are the highest ever. A rarity at the lowland location was the Lewis’s Woodpecker along the Napa River at Zinfandel Lane. A beautiful Red-naped Sapsucker at Putah Canyon was foraging in olive and Chinese elm; to me, unusual species choices. It has since departed. Due mainly to coverage of Putah Canyon by the kayakers, we recorded a record 14 Rock Wrens. Regionally, Varied Thrush is essentially absent this winter. We found two. The

continued increases in California Thrasher are birds found in the canyons of Putah and Pope.

The warbler highlight was a count first Black-throated Gray Warbler in a mixed flock a Lake Hennessey. Regionally, scattered counts found this warbler this season. Among Dark-eyed Juncos were three “Slate-colored,” and a form that is poorly understood, a “Cassiar Junco” at Hennessey. A Western Tanager enjoyed persimmons in St. Helena, and we lucked out with 20 Tricolored Blackbirds in Pope Valley. Two of the sometimes irregular occurring finches, Purple Finch and Pine Siskin, were essentially absent this year.

Thank you to everyone: all of the area coordinators; to the ragtag group that were mostly newbies at covering Angwin; and Helen, Ava and Laurie for the great dinner at the Carnegie Building.



Red-naped Sapsucker ~ Putah Creek ~ 1/5/17

