

Results of the 2005 Eugene Christmas Bird Count

by Dick Lamster

It was a dark and stormy morning on January 1, 2006 when ten groups of birdwatchers braved the rain and wind to look for owls and to launch the 64th Annual Eugene Christmas Bird Count! It was nasty and cold until late morning. Then the sun appeared, the wind died down and it almost got hot! Counters who continued into the afternoon were rewarded with temperatures in the mid-50s.

Ultimately, 113 birders in 27 teams plus 42 counters at home feeders participated in one of the largest Christmas Bird Counts in the country. We saw 139 species, shattering the old record of 134. We counted 73,998 individual birds, about 7,000 fewer than last year. This may have been due to high winds and cold rain in the early part of the day. Fifteen species were found in record high numbers ("RH" on the list below) and fifteen species were found in very low numbers ("low" on the list below). There were no species new to the Count. We sighted a number of unusual species including Ross's goose, brant, black-crowned night-heron, Swainson's hawk, red phalarope, snowy owl, black phoebe, tree swallow, northern mockingbird, common yellowthroat and vesper sparrow. Cinnamon teal, prairie falcons and hermit warblers were seen during Count Week, but they are not included in the totals for the actual Count. Other species that have been seen with some regularity on previous Counts, but which were not seen on this Count, include western sandpiper, least sandpiper, mountain quail, American bittern and red crossbill. The falcated duck which was seen earlier in the month was not seen on Count Day or during Count Week.

The team led by Dennis Arendt (Fisher Butte-Royal Ave.) saw the highest number of species at 80, while the team led by Noah Stryker (N.FRR) saw the highest number of birds at 17,004. The 42 home feeder counters saw 47 species and 1,927 birds.

At the end of the day, we gathered for a chili feed sponsored by Lane Audubon, with participants bringing desserts. Allison Mickel made the chili at home, and it was delicious! Sandy Poinsett and Doris Bakshi assisted Allison with the chili feed. Approximately 86 Count participants came to eat chili, see old friends and discuss the day's activities. It was a fun way to end a great day out watching birds!

One interesting note about our team leaders is that this year the oldest team leader was Wilbur Jessen who is 91 years old. The youngest team leader was Noah Stryker who is 19 years old. This is proof that birdwatching is a life long activity that appeals to people of all ages.

Congratulations for orchestrating a successful Count and a big thank you go to the Eugene Christmas Bird Count Committee: Dick Lamster served as official

Compiler, handled publicity, and coordinated with national Audubon; Barbara Gleason coordinated the Team Leaders and volunteers, worked on area maps and entered results; Dan Gleason confirmed unusual and rare species, compiled and analyzed the results and helped with maps; Herb Wisner worked on the packets, coordinated all the home feeder Counters and gave valuable advice to the rest of us; Allison Mickel coordinated the chili feed, including food prep and serving, set up and clean up.

A big thank you goes to the 27 Team Leaders and all the Counters who braved the elements to add valuable information to this 106-year-old national research project. I hope to see you all again next year!