

# 2014 Eugene Christmas Bird Count Tally

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Mild and generally clear weather greeted the birders conducting this year's Eugene Christmas Bird Count (ECBC) and helped us get some good numbers. For Count Day, 133 species were reported by the teams in the field and the Feeder Watchers. One additional species (Western Sandpiper) was reported during Count Week for a total of 134 species and 120,698 individual birds.

Record high numbers were reported for eight species: Wild Turkey, American White Pelican, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Rufous Hummingbird, Gray Jay, and Golden-crowned Sparrow. Wild Turkeys continue to increase in numbers in the Willamette Valley, as do Eurasian Collared-Doves. The Rufous Hummingbird is a first for the ECBC and a very rare bird for Oregon during the winter.

The good weather that enabled the teams to see raptors more clearly may have been a factor in the relatively high numbers seen this year for most species. One notable exception is Rough-legged Hawk. Only one of these birds was seen on Count Day. The average number seen is six and as many as 44 have been reported (1973). In recent years, the number of Rough-legged Hawks have decreased locally during the winter months, when they are typically present.

The large number of Feeder Watchers contributed to the high numbers for several species. In particular, the majority of Anna's Hummingbirds were seen by folks who counted at home. This year, 182 Anna's Hummingbirds were reported. That's a high number, but still short of the record 204 reported last year. The wide use of hummingbird feeders in recent years has contributed to the northward spread of this species, which is now found in southern Canada.

Turkey Vultures continue to remain in high numbers throughout the year here in the southern Willamette Valley. Fifty vultures were reported on the ECBC this year, which is higher than usual. We have no way of knowing if these individual birds are breeding birds that did not migrate or if they are northern birds that did not move further south than our area. Turkey Vultures in the winter are rare anywhere else in the state, even just a few miles north of here, and it's rare to find wintering vultures south of the Eugene area. This year was an exception because some Turkey Vultures were seen in the Roseburg area and one or two were reported in southwestern Oregon. Our winter Turkey Vulture population is typically the highest and often the only winter population of Turkey Vultures in the state.

The 2014 ECBC was enjoyed by all the participants. Thanks to everyone who helped make this a great count!