

2017 Oakridge Christmas Bird Count

by Joel Geier, Count Coordinator and Compiler

With Christmas Bird Counts, sometimes you get lucky on the weather, and sometimes you don't. This year's Oakridge CBC, on December 28, was one of those lucky ones, as the predicted rain held off until 3:30 p.m. By then, most of the ten volunteers were headed to the pub for the Countdown anyway! Dry weather and temperatures well above freezing in the preceding days combined to allow good access to upper elevations.

The tally of 66 species on Count Day was the third highest tally since this count restarted in 2009, despite no nocturnal owling effort. Three parties did spot Northern Pygmy-Owls in the daytime, plus a somewhat low diversity of waterfowl and sparrows.

Unusual species included an Osprey near Greenwaters Rest, an immature Band-tailed Pigeon near Office Bridge, and an adult Northern Goshawk near the north edge of the circle. Twenty-six Western Bluebirds were the highest number tallied since 1979. Other highlights included four Mountain Quails (on Kwis-Kwis Butte), four Ruffed Grouse (multiple parties), a Peregrine Falcon, a Merlin, and four American Dippers. A pair of Wrentits spotted in manzanita bushes near the 3,500-foot elevation level along Larison Rock Rd. was surprising for that elevation.

Thanks to Lion Mountain Bakery for opening early to host our morning meeting at their new location along Hwy 58. The Oakridge Lodge graciously stayed open to offer lodging for out-of-town volunteers. The town pub, Brewer's Union Local 180, once again provided a comfortable venue for the Countdown.