

The 52nd Nacogdoches, TX Christmas Bird Count (December 19, 2021)

It's hard to believe, but this was our **52nd Nacogdoches Christmas Bird Count**, held on Sunday **December 19, 2021**. A big thank you goes to all who helped to make it a success! We had the best participation in years and we welcome you first-timers to this count. Our final **species total** was **110**, about average for the last 6 years, but below our 20-year average of 114. The **weather** on count day was **ideal**, with 38 deg. F. and a few light clouds at daybreak turning sunny in the late morning as a weak cold front pushed through with a light north/northwest wind at 6-8 mph. The high was 53 deg.

Unfortunately, **bird activity was not ideal**. For weeks now it has been clear that many birds are in **low numbers** and for a lot of the day it was very quiet and hard to find much of anything. Given the record-setting warm temperatures over much of eastern North America it is perhaps not surprising that **most winter residents were down in numbers**. The optimist in me hopes that this is because it has been too mild to push them southward and they are still "somewhere to the north of us". However, **some of our typical year-round residents were also in lower-than-expected numbers**, begging the pessimistic question: Are we seeing the after-effects of last February's severe winter storms? Did they impact populations of both residents and winter birds more than we realized? I am not the first to ask this and other observers around the state are wondering the same thing. Likely the low numbers are a combination of these and other factors, including food and habitat availability.

Extremely low totals were noted for Wood Duck, Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Cedar Waxwing, American Goldfinch and Yellow-rumped Warbler. Not as extreme, but still **down significantly**, were Killdeer, Red-bellied and Downy woodpeckers; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, Brown Creeper, Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Brown Thrasher, Northern Mockingbird, Pine Warbler, almost all sparrows, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark and Northern Cardinal. Completely **missed** were Mallard, Northern Harrier, Greater Roadrunner, Loggerhead Shrike (3rd year in a row to miss it), Sprague's Pipit, Purple Finch, Pine Siskin and LeConte's Sparrow. The only species in notably **high numbers** were Red-breasted and Brown-headed Nuthatches, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and Golden-crowned Kinglet.

The only extreme rarity was a female Western Tanager found and photographed by Liam Wolff and Clint Robinson, but also noteworthy were 40 Snow Geese (Tyson and Taylor Hart); a Neotropic Cormorant (nicely documented by the Cliff Shackelford team); and a Herring Gull (Gary Hunter). There were also many "**good birds**" that aren't always found, including Virginia Rail, Common Gallinule, Anhinga, Merlin (count week), White-eyed Vireo, Marsh Wren, Gray Catbird, Henslow's Sparrow, Rusty Blackbird and Common Yellowthroat.

What does all of this mean? Well, find out more by visiting the National Audubon Society website. There is a wealth of information to be found there.

It was great to see all of you at our fun count-down dinner (what a great age span we had!) and thanks again for your participation. Keep those winter sightings coming in as the season develops -- David & Mimi Wolf, compilers (dewolfnac@gmail.com) phone: (936) 645-8894 or (936) 569-6531

Species List: (cw = count week, but not on count day).

Snow Goose – 40; Wood Duck – 35 (low); Gadwall – 7; American Wigeon - 3; Northern Shoveler – 154; Am. Green-winged Teal - 62; Canvasback – 201; Redhead – 76; Ring-necked Duck - 182; Lesser Scaup - 41; Bufflehead - 66; Hooded Merganser – 56; Red-breasted Merganser – 1; Ruddy Duck - 203; duck sp? – 2; Pied-billed Grebe - 122; Horned Grebe – 5; Rock Pigeon - 151; Eurasian Collared-Dove – 9; Inca Dove – 6; Mourning Dove - 149; Virginia Rail – 3; Common Gallinule - 1; American Coot - 4369; Killdeer - 48; American Woodcock – 3; Wilson's Snipe – 7; Ring-billed Gull - 3; Herring Gull - 1; Forster's Tern - 1; Common Loon - 3; Anhinga – 1; Neotropic Cormorant - 1; Double-crested Cormorant - 95; American White Pelican – 10; Great Blue Heron - 8; Great Egret - 8; Black Vulture – 287; Turkey Vulture - 201; Sharp-shinned Hawk -1; Cooper's Hawk - 2; *Accipiter sp?* – 1; Bald Eagle – 5; Red-shouldered Hawk - 38; Red-tailed Hawk – 33 (including 1 "Harlan's"); Eastern

Screech-Owl - 3; Great Horned Owl - 3; Barred Owl - 1; Belted Kingfisher - 13; Red-headed Woodpecker - 4; Red-bellied Woodpecker - 118; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker - 32; Downy Woodpecker - 35; Hairy Woodpecker - 10; Northern Flicker - 52; Pileated Woodpecker - 30; American Kestrel - 19; Merlin - cw; Eastern Phoebe - 70; White-eyed Vireo - 3; Blue-headed Vireo - 18; Blue Jay - 167; American Crow - 395; Carolina Chickadee - 267; Tufted Titmouse - 160; Red-breasted Nuthatch - **18** (high); White-breasted Nuthatch - 11; Brown-headed Nuthatch - **26** (high); Brown Creeper - 8; House Wren - 31; Winter Wren - 4 (low); Sedge Wren - 2; Marsh Wren - 4; Carolina Wren - 164; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher - 17; Golden-crowned Kinglet - **83** (high); Ruby-crowned Kinglet - 183; Eastern Bluebird - 152; Hermit Thrush - 21 (low); American Robin - 132 (low); Gray Catbird - 1; Brown Thrasher - 18; Northern Mockingbird - 46; European Starling - 183; American Pipit - 155; Cedar Waxwing - 182 (low); House Finch - 4; American Goldfinch - 194 (low); Henslow's Sparrow - 1; Chipping Sparrow - 847; Field Sparrow - 18; Fox Sparrow - 2; Dark-eyed ("Slate-colored") Junco - 198; White-crowned Sparrow - 6; White-throated Sparrow - 622; Vesper Sparrow - 13; Savannah Sparrow - 244; Song Sparrow - 98; Lincoln's Sparrow - 10; Swamp Sparrow - 77; Eastern Towhee - 8; towhee sp? - 1; Red-winged Blackbird - 13,452; Eastern Meadowlark - 45; Rusty Blackbird - 4; Common Grackle - 332; Brown-headed Cowbird - 2; blackbird sp? - 229; Common Yellowthroat - 2; Orange-crowned Warbler - 28; Pine Warbler - 174; Yellow-rumped Warbler - 204 (low); **Western Tanager** - 1; Northern Cardinal - 407; House Sparrow - 47. **Total Species:** 110 (plus 1 count week).

38 Observers in 16-18 Field Parties: Marlys Baldwin; Abigail Bell, David Bell, Aaron Bradley, Thelma Dalmas, Charles Dean Fisher, Kathy Griffin, Taylor Hart, Tyson Hart, Phillip Hight, Gary Hunter, Susie Lower, Elke Lyons, Fred Lyons, Ryan Phelps, Robert Reeves, Dave Richardson, Clint Robinson, Tim Scallon, Rick Schaefer, Maggie Schaefer, Cliff Shackelford, Julie Shackelford, John Smelser; Dennis Stovall, Sarah Stovall, Ron Thill; Anne Tindell, Robert Truss, Ashley Wahlberg, Scott Wahlberg, Dave Wallace, Vickie Wallace, Carol Wells, Laura Wilson, David Wolf (compiler), Mimi Wolf (co-compiler), Liam Wolff = **38 observers in 16-18 parties, plus 5 feeder-watchers** (Heinz Gaylord; Steve & Billie Kinnaid; Michelle Schaefer; Howard Williamson). **Compilers:** David & Mimi Wolf (936) 645-8894 or (936) 569-6531; e-mail: dewolfnac@gmail.com