

The 53rd Nacogdoches, TX Christmas Bird Count (December 18, 2022)

It's hard to believe, but this was our **53rd Nacogdoches Christmas Bird Count**, held on Sunday **December 18, 2022**. A big thank you goes to all who helped to make it a success! We had good participation, with 32 observers in the field in 13 parties plus 7 feeder-watchers. Our final **species total** was **109**, two below the average for the last 10 years. The **weather** on count day **was nice**, though a cold and frosty 24 deg. F. at dawn. Temperatures warmed to a pleasant 54 deg. F. through the day, skies were clear and the wind was calm. Overall conditions were still dry, with lakes and ponds low and ephemeral marshes non-existent.

This was a very "ordinary" count, with few discernible trends. Birds were not as scarce as last winter, but for weeks now it has been clear that most winter resident birds are relatively **low in number**, everything from ducks and waterbirds to hawks and songbirds. This isn't surprising given the warm temperatures over most of eastern and central North America prior to the count. The birds have not been pushed south yet! Also, for much of the day the weather was simply "too nice" and under these conditions the birds were very quiet and hard to find. They just seemed to vanish!

The only species notably **high in number** was Golden-crowned Kinglet (84); they have been widespread since late October. It was great to see Purple Finch back on the count (4), hinting that this irregular invader may yet appear more widely. (PS Jan 10 -- They have and are now being reported at feeders). Only one Red-breasted Nuthatch was seen and this is clearly an "off" winter for this irruptive species. **The only rarity** was a female-plumaged Summer Tanager found by the Shackelfords in their back yard in the late afternoon, but also noteworthy were 4 Snow Geese (Ron Thill and Cliff Shackelford), a Common Goldeneye at the Nacogdoches ponds (Rick Shaefer) and a Merlin at the Nacogdoches Airport (Anne Tindell and Robert Reeves). Other scarce species that were found included Inca Dove, Greater Roadrunner, Common Gallinule, Northern Harrier, Sedge and Marsh wrens, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Gray Catbird, Henslow's Sparrow and Common Yellowthroat. Completely **missed** were American Wigeon, Loggerhead Shrike (4th year in a row to miss it), White-eyed Vireo, Sprague's Pipit, Pine Siskin, Harris's Sparrow and Rusty Blackbird.

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 - 4; Wood Duck - 133; Gadwall - 11; Mallard - 8; Northern Shoveler - 85; Am. Green-winged Teal - 22; Canvasback - 188; Redhead - 9; Ring-necked Duck - 26; Lesser Scaup - 22; Bufflehead - 57; Common Goldeneye - 1; Hooded Merganser - 69; Ruddy Duck - 12; duck sp? - 29; Pied-billed Grebe - 67; Horned Grebe - 5; Rock Pigeon - 144; Eurasian Collared-Dove - 5; Inca Dove - 6; Mourning Dove - 35; Greater Roadrunner - 2; Common Gallinule - 3; American Coot - 5931; Killdeer - 54; American Woodcock - 11; Wilson's Snipe - 5; Ring-billed Gull - 6; Forster's Tern - 1; Common Loon - 2; Neotropic Cormorant - cw; Double-crested Cormorant - 88; American White Pelican - 11; Great Blue Heron - 12; Great Egret - 1; Black Vulture - 135; Turkey Vulture - 150; Northern Harrier - 3; Sharp-shinned Hawk - 1; Cooper's Hawk - 1; Bald Eagle - 8; Red-shouldered Hawk - 27; Red-tailed Hawk - 12; Eastern Screech-Owl - 5; Great Horned Owl - 1; Barred Owl - 7; Belted Kingfisher - 8; Red-headed Woodpecker - 11; Red-bellied Woodpecker - 120; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker - 56; Downy Woodpecker - 38; Hairy Woodpecker - 10; Northern Flicker - 79; Pileated Woodpecker - 30; American Kestrel - 11; Merlin - 1; Eastern Phoebe - 114; Blue-headed Vireo - 13; Blue Jay - 222; American Crow - 345; Carolina Chickadee - 197; Tufted Titmouse - 138; Red-breasted Nuthatch - 1; White-breasted Nuthatch - 9; Brown-headed Nuthatch - 12; Brown Creeper - 7; House Wren - 26; Winter Wren - 12; Sedge Wren - 1; Marsh Wren - 1; Carolina Wren - 140; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher - 6; Golden-crowned

Kinglet – 84 (high); Ruby-crowned Kinglet - 141; Eastern Bluebird - 233; Hermit Thrush – 74; American Robin – 3050; Gray Catbird – 6; Brown Thrasher - 20; Northern Mockingbird - 49; European Starling - 301; American Pipit -50; Cedar Waxwing – 549; House Finch - 10; Purple Finch – 4; American Goldfinch – 298; Henslow’s Sparrow – 1; Le Conte’s Sparrow – 7; Chipping Sparrow - 305; Field Sparrow – 45; Fox Sparrow – 7; Dark-eyed (“Slate-colored”) Junco – 134; White-crowned Sparrow - 2; White-throated Sparrow – 534; Vesper Sparrow – 7; Savannah Sparrow – 164; Song Sparrow – 181; Lincoln’s Sparrow – 6; Swamp Sparrow – 64; Eastern Towhee - 6; towhee sp? – 1; Red-winged Blackbird – 1537; Eastern Meadowlark - 15; Common Grackle – 4052; Brown-headed Cowbird – 20; blackbird sp? – 70; Common Yellowthroat – 3; Orange-crowned Warbler - 11; Pine Warbler – 149; Yellow-rumped Warbler – 338; **Summer Tanager** – 1; Northern Cardinal – 307; House Sparrow – 41. **Total Species:** 109 (plus 1 count week).

31 Observers in 13 Field Parties: Abigail Bell, David Bell, Aaron Bradley, Kristin Bradley, Liz Dennis, Kathy Griffin, Taylor Hart, Tyson Hart, Gary Hunter, Kathy Li, Frank Ohrt, Ryan Phelps, Aster Real, Luna Real, Robert Reeves, Tim Scallon, Maggie Schaefer, Owen Schaefer, Rick Schaefer, Cliff Shackelford, Julie Shackelford, Dennis Stovall, Sarah Stovall, Ron Thill; Anne Tindell, Robert Truss, Ashley Wahlberg, Rhoann Wallace, Vickie Wallace, Carol Wells, David Wolf (compiler), Mimi Wolf (co-compiler) = **32 observers in 13 parties, plus 7 feeder-watchers** (Heinz Gaylord; Amy Gaylord-Beaver; Steve & Billie Kinnaird; Dave Richardson; Jack Rohrer; Howard Williamson). **Compilers:** David & Mimi Wolf (936) 645-8894 or (936) 569-6531; e-mail: dewolfnac@gmail.com