

Española Christmas Bird Count

30 December 2012

Number of species: 81

New to count: Common Yellowthroat

Unusual: Barrow's Goldeneye, Rough-legged Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, Peregrine Falcon

High numbers: Wood Duck, Eur. Collared-dove, Williamson's Sapsucker, Great-tailed Grackle

Low numbers: Dark-eyed Junco and sparrows

Missed birds: Am. Dipper, E. Bluebird, Black Phoebe, Canyon Towhee

This year's count followed on a stretch of cold weather, although the count day itself was favorable. We got the fifth highest total in 59 years, at 81 species. Raptors were the stars of the program: we sighted all of the usual hawks, and a few unusual ones. A Rough-legged Hawk was the best of the "winter raptors" (photo on e-bird). A Peregrine Falcon appeared for the second year in a row, after a long period of absence -- one wonders if it might be the same individual. (A Harlan's Red-tail was in the count week.) We had relatively good luck with the ducks, considering that much of the still water in the area was frozen. One group of 60 Wood Ducks on the Rio Grande, 0.7 km below the highway bridge, was remarkable. This duck has been on the increase in the past 15 years. Also after a long absence, one fabulous Barrow's Goldeneye appeared in swiftly moving water on the river in Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo.

In this era of general climate warming, many CBC count circles have found passerines and other species that are far north of their usual wintering grounds. Espa ola this year was no exception: an astounding Common Yellowthroat, a first-winter male, appeared on the river bank, also at the Pueblo. These birds are rare even in southern NM. Eurasian Collared-doves continued their steady increase. Great-tailed Grackles were high near the center of the circle, along with one Hitchcockian swarm of Eurasian Starlings.

There was scant evidence of winter finches or northerly sparrows -- in fact, the Juncos made the poorest showing in many years. However, it was gratifying to find 3 American Tree Sparrows working the sunflower on Pueblo lands, since they have been sporadic since the early 1990s. Am. Dipper and Black Phoebe, usually found as singles, both eluded us. It's not all bad news, though: for the first time in over a decade, we found both species of Shrike (one of each). Williamson's Sapsuckers seem to prefer the Rio Pojoaque area, and 3 were found on count day. They have also been sighted in Los Alamos and Santa Fe (in my front yard). A Roadrunner was in Nambe.

We had some of the best "birding talent" on the count this year, and that is something that I hope will be part of a continuing trend! Join us next year for the 60th count.

Remember that you can view these results, and past results, at this website:

<http://netapp.audubon.org/cbcobservation/>

Areas:

1. La Mesilla, Santa Clara Pueblo, Rio Santa Cruz (Steve Fettig, Martin MacRoberts, Steve Wickliffe, Chris Chappell, Joe Fitzgibbon, Keith Wilkinson)
2. Ohkay Owingeh, El Guique (Bernard Foy, Robert Templeton, Roger Clark, Jim Black, Andrew Rominger, Steve Petrakis, Dawn Foy, Larissa Foy)
3. Jacona area, Rio Pojoaque (Mike Williams, Robin Gurule, Eric Smith)
4. Nambe feeder (Carl Berney)

Espanola Christmas Bird Count results, 30 Dec 2012

	La Mesilla	Ohkay	Jacona	Nambe	Total	
1	Great Blue Heron	1	6		7	
2	Canada Goose	40	55		95	
3	Wood Duck	64			64	
4	Green-winged Teal	8			8	
5	Mallard	75	36	84	195	
6	Gadwall	2	9		11	
7	American Wigeon	1	8		9	
8	Canvasback		1		1	
9	Redhead	1	18		19	
10	Ring-necked Duck			11	11	
11	Common Goldeneye	65	63		128	
12	Barrow's Goldeneye		1		1	Unusual
13	Bufflehead	15	14		29	
14	Hooded Merganser	13	4		17	
15	Common Merganser	5	10	1	16	
16	Bald Eagle	1	1	1	3	reduced total to avoid overcounting
17	Northern Harrier	1	2		3	
18	Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	2	1	4	
19	Cooper's Hawk		1	1	2	
20	Red-tailed Hawk	5	4	5	14	
21	Ferruginous Hawk		1		1	Unusual
22	Rough-legged Hawk	1			1	Unusual
23	American Kestrel		3	1	4	
24	Merlin	1	1		2	
25	Peregrine Falcon		1		1	Unusual
26	Ring-necked Pheasant	1	1		2	
27	Virginia Rail		2		2	
28	American Coot		7	1	8	
29	Sandhill Crane	16	3		19	
30	Killdeer			1	1	
31	Spotted Sandpiper		2		2	
32	Wilson's Snipe			1	1	
33	Rock Pigeon	195	39	86	320	
34	Eurasian Collared-Dove	56	26	16	98	High
35	White-winged Dove			10	11	
36	Mourning Dove	4	6	30	44	
37	Greater Roadrunner				1	Unusual
38	Great Horned Owl			1	1	
39	Belted Kingfisher	1	1		2	
40	Lewis's Woodpecker	5	4	2	14	
41	Williamson's Sapsucker			3	3	High
42	Ladder-backed Woodpecker	1	4		5	
43	Downy Woodpecker		2	2	4	
44	Hairy Woodpecker	3			1	4
45	Northern Flicker	42	50	37	129	
46	Say's Phoebe	1		2	3	
47	Western Scrub-Jay	2		1	3	
48	Pinyon Jay	45		42	87	
49	Black-billed Magpie	15	5	6	26	
50	American Crow	38	1	100	139	
51	Common Raven	35	23	55	113	
52	Black-capped Chickadee	9	3	3	15	
53	Mountain Chickadee	2	2	3	7	
54	White-breasted Nuthatch	10	9	3	22	
55	Brown Creeper		2	1	3	
56	Bewick's Wren	2			2	
57	Marsh Wren		2		2	
58	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2	3	2	7	
59	Western Bluebird	34	35	51	120	
60	Mountain Bluebird	14		3	17	

61	Townsend's Solitaire	9	3	5		17	
62	Hermit Thrush	1		1		2	
63	American Robin	74	34	48		156	
64	Curve-billed Thrasher		1		1	2	
65	American Pipit		4			4	
66	Northern Shrike		1			1	
67	Loggerhead Shrike			1		1	
68	European Starling	615	1350	145		2110	
69	Common Yellowthroat		1			1	
70	Spotted Towhee	3	3	3		9	
71	American Tree Sparrow		3			3	
72	Song Sparrow	18	55	31		104	
73	White-crowned Sparrow	69	66	39		174	
74	Dark-eyed Junco	81	50	62	1	194	
	(Oregon)	[16]	[12]			[28]	
	(Pink-sided)	[3]	[13]			[16]	
	(Gray-headed)	[4]				[4]	
	(unspecified)	[58]	[25]	[62]	[1]	[146]	
75	Red-winged Blackbird	341	104	198		643	
76	Western Meadowlark			10		10	
77	Great-tailed Grackle	21	116			137	
78	House Finch	73	33	66	8	180	
79	Pine Siskin	1	15			16	
80	American Goldfinch	7	10	8		25	
81	House Sparrow	2	18	3		23	
81	Species total:	55	62	46	9	81	
	Total individuals:	2148	2340	1145	62	5695	
	Party hours:	11.5	11.5	9.5	1.5	34	
	Hours on foot:	7.6	10.5	7.5		25.6	
	Miles total:	58	25	31	feeder	114	
	Miles walked:	5	3	7		15	
	Date:	30-Dec				30-Dec	
	Hours owling:		1.75	0.25		2	
	Hours in car:	3.9	1	2		6.9	

Temperature: 19 to 48 F

Still Water partly open

Cloudy most of day

No Wind

Snow cover 0-2 in.

Accipter, sp.

1

Notes on unusual species:

Common Yellowthroat (new to count)

First-winter male was seen at the Ohkay Owingeh Lakes, at the water's edge of the Rio Grande. In flight, noted overall olive color, uniform on wings, tail and body on the flying bird. On perched bird, had fairly bright yellow color on breast. The face was dull olive, with a dark streak on malar area, forming an abrupt edge of the yellow area on breast. Short, dark bill. Nearly identical to the illustration of first winter male in the Sibley guide. The illustration in the Peterson Field Guide to the Warblers is somewhat different, because the black is more extensive on the cheek in the illustration. Accompanying a small flock of juncos foraging in brushy vegetation beside the river. It responded to the song by perching in view momentarily. Viewed in flight as it moved from perch to perch at a distance of about 30 feet. Also viewed perched for several seconds at range of about 20 feet, after which it descended into the vegetation. In streambank vegetation of mostly willow, shrubs, and forbs. Distinguished from Kentucky Warbler by lack of yellow "spectacles." The other Oporornis females have either pronounced eye rings or lack black markings on head.

Barrow's Goldeneye (first since 1984, second ever on count)

Adult male in breeding plumage. On the Rio Grande, in the Ohkay Owingeh Lakes area. In a flock of Common Goldeneyes. The white facial spot was distinctly crescent shaped, not rounded as in Common. The upper sides were dark with a row of well separated white spots. The head was distinctly different from Common Goldeneyes: the forehead was nearly vertical, with the "corner" of the head well forward. The top of the head was fairly flat, not peaked as in Common. The bill appeared somewhat stubbier than Commons. Viewed in scope for about 5 minutes as it moved about in the rapidly moving waters of the river. Distance was about 100 yards, perhaps more. There may have been a female also present, but we didn't get a sustained look.

Rough-legged Hawk (first since 2007)



The excellent photo by Steve Fettig makes this an unmistakable identification. Adult light-morph, probably a male. Found south of the main bridge in Espanola, west of the Rio Grande.

Ferruginous Hawk (first since 2006)

Light-morph adult bird. It was perched facing away from us, and remained motionless for most of an hour, except for head turns. The back of the bird was a rich red color with brown flecks. There were no light scapulars as one expects for Red-tail. Head was overall medium in color, between light and dark. Post-ocular dark line. Cere yellow and yellow of gape extended below eyes.

Spotted Sandpiper

Shorebird on sand and mud alongside river. Adult non-breeding plumage: uniform brown above, and uniform white below. No spots in front. Almost constant bobbing up and down white foraging. Flew in distinctive manner with shallow, fluttering wingbeats, flying a few inches above the water. Present on the Rio Grande at the Ohkay Owingeh Lakes area. Historically, this species occurs on about 1/5 of the counts, so it is not rare, but probably close to the northern extent of its winter range on the Rio Grande. It also occurs on the Dixon and Orilla Verde CBCs.

Peregrine Falcon

Seen flying near the Rio Grande at the Ohkay Owingeh Fishing Lakes. Pointed wing tips indicated a falcon, and the large size, head markings, and wingbeat and manner of flight convinced the experienced observer that it was a Peregrine. It lacked the dark axillaries of a Prairie Falcon, the only possible source of confusion.

Wood Duck

An exceptional number was found at 64. One group of 60, males and females, were on the Rio Grande, 0.7 km south of the new highway bridge in Espanola.

Merlin

Both birds were Prairie subspecies, female/juvenile. At Ohkay Owingeh Lakes.

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