

## **Johnson Bayou, LA Christmas Bird Count, December 14, 2016**

### **Sponsored by Golden Triangle Audubon Society**

On Wednesday, December 14, 2016, the Johnson Bayou Christmas Bird Count found 119 species and 9,835 individual birds. The number of species is close to the average for the current series of counts going back to 2002. The number of individuals is below the median. The highlight find was a Bell's Vireo, an addition to the area list. A flock of Wild Turkeys has also appeared in the east side of the circle, which are likely released birds but we don't know their story. A Say's Phoebe, found last year, was seen again. Twelve observers, including one itinerant birder from Oregon and one first-time counter from our club, enjoyed a very nice day in the 50s to low 60s, cloudy with a northerly breeze blowing behind a wet cold front. We have great cooperation from area landowners and would like to thank the owners and managers of The Gray Estate, Dore' Energy, and Crain Brothers for graciously allowing access to their property for the CBC and for help in the field with gates and directions.

Daybreak at the convenience store in Johnson Bayou greeted us with the usual chorus of Red-winged Blackbirds, Boat-tailed and Great-tailed Grackles, Common Grackles and European Starlings. A few flights of Snow Geese included one or two Ross's Geese, and Greater White-fronted Geese also flew over, not seen on the count day since 2012.

Steve Mayes found the Bell's Vireo about mid-day in small trees and brush on the edge of a pasture, just east of a tract of large Live Oaks on Gray Estate. Our guest Jeff Harding confirmed the ID, as the bird was very shy and did not present a good photo op.

Of the ducks that were missed last year, about two dozen each of Mallards and Pintails were counted this year, and a single Redhead and single Bufflehead. Ruddy Ducks were way down from the past two years. Other ducks included American Wigeon, Gadwalls, Green-winged Teal, Canvasbacks, Mottled Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shovelers, Ring-necked Ducks, and Lesser Scaup. Red-breasted and Hooded Mergansers were found, and a single Common Loon.

Both Cormorant species were present, along with a good number of Pied-billed Grebes.

White Pelicans were seen in their remarkable circling flights, but fewer this year. There were a few dozen Brown Pelicans, about the same as the past few years. The common herons and egrets were all found, along Roseate Spoonbills and an American Bittern.

White Ibis and White-faced Ibis were recorded, with about 100 Plegadis ibis species.

Raptor numbers were similar to the past few years, with Red-shouldered Hawk and White-tailed Hawk missing and Merlins up to 4 and Cooper's Hawks up to 10. A Krider's Red-tail seen last year was back. White-tailed Kites were easily found along the highway east of the high school.

King Rails were not too hard to find, and one Virginia Rail was flushed. Common Gallinules were up, and American Coots, while plentiful, continued a down trend since their irruption in 2013.

We found most of the expected shorebirds, with the addition of small flocks of Dowitcher sp. and Western Sandpipers.

White-winged Doves, Eurasian Collared Doves and Inca Doves appeared after absence last year. We recorded no owls this year, though we seldom find more than a few. The usual Belted Kingfishers and woodpeckers were present. Eastern Phoebe's were plentiful, and it was nice to find three Vermilion Flycatchers. A Couche's/Tropical Kingbird was found early in the count week, only the 2<sup>nd</sup> occurrence for the Johnson Bayou count. Our newest counter, Craig Geoffroy, spotted the Say's Phoebe, back for the second year. Bluebirds were missed. There were a few each of Hermit Thrush, Robin, and Gray Catbird, lots of Northern Mockingbird, and no Brown Thrashers for the third year. The expected wrens, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Tree Swallows, and both kinglets were there in usual numbers. The expected winter warblers – Orange-crowned, Yellow-rumped, Pine, and Common Yellowthroat – were found, while Palm Warbler was missed.

In somewhat lower numbers, we found Song, Lincoln's, Swamp, White-crowned, White-thoated, and Savannah Sparrows. LeConte's Sparrow was missed while Northern Cardinal was found again after an unusual absence last year. No goldfinches or House Sparrows were observed.

GOOSE, Greater White-fronted (15); GOOSE, Snow (540); GOOSE, Ross's (2); WIGEON, American (53); GADWALL (922); TEAL, Green-winged (26); CANVASBACK (55); REDHEAD (1); MALLARD (23); DUCK, Mottled (42); PINTAIL, Northern (25); TEAL, Blue-winged (120); SHOVELER, Northern (571); DUCK, Ring-necked (14); SCAUP, Lesser (217); BUFFLEHEAD (1); DUCK, Ruddy (15); MERGANSER, Red-breasted (3); MERGANSER, Hooded (2); TURKEY, Wild (15); LOON, Common (1); GREBE, Pied-billed (44); CORMORANT, Neotropic (69); CORMORANT, Double-crested (90); PELICAN, American White (121); PELICAN, Brown (23); HERON, Tri-colored (32); HERON, Little Blue (15); EGRET, Snowy (143); HERON, Great Blue (44); EGRET, Great (74); EGRET, Cattle (30); HERON, Green (2); NIGHT-HERON, Black-crowned (21); BITTERN, American (2); IBIS, White (148); IBIS, White-faced (53); IBIS, Plegadis sp. (102); SPOONBILL, Roseate (21); VULTURE, Black (5); VULTURE, Turkey (31); OSPREY (9); KITE, White-tailed (3); HARRIER, Northern (27); HAWK, Sharp-shinned (2); HAWK, Cooper's (10); HAWK, Red-tailed (33); HAWK, Red-tailed (Kridler's) (1); CARACARA, Crested (4); KESTREL, American (30); MERLIN (4); FALCON, Peregrine (2); RAIL, King (8); RAIL, Virginia (1); SORA (3); GALLINULE, Common (106); COOT, American (2914); WOODCOCK, American (5); SNIPE, Wilson's (21); YELLOWLEGS, Greater (17); YELLOWLEGS, Lesser (6); WILLET (5);

TURNSTONE, Ruddy (10); DOWITCHER sp. (20); SANDERLING (62); SANDPIPER, Western (20); STILT, Black-necked (5); AVOCET, American (393); PLOVER, Black-bellied (5); KILLDEER (51); GULL, Ring-billed (108); GULL, Herring (6); GULL, Laughing (129); TERN, Caspian (13); TERN, Royal (1); TERN, Forster's (23); PIGEON, Rock (22); DOVE, Eurasian Collared (39); DOVE, Mourning (13); DOVE, White-winged (3); DOVE, Inca (6); KINGFISHER, Belted (32); SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bellied (1); WOODPECKER, Downy (6); FLICKER, Northern (Yellow-shafted) (5); PHOEBE, Eastern (35); PHOEBE, Say's (1); FLYCATCHER, Vermilion (3); KINGBIRD, Couch's/Tropical (cw 1); JAY, Blue (1); VIREO, Bell's (1); VIREO, Blue-headed (1); SHRIKE, Loggerhead (52); THRUSH, Hermit (2); ROBIN, American (4); CATBIRD, Gray (4); MOCKINGBIRD, Northern (33); STARLING, European (148); WREN, Sedge (3); WREN, Marsh (16); WREN, Carolina (1); WREN, House (23); GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray (18); SWALLOW, Tree (228); KINGLET, Golden-crowned (5); KINGLET, Ruby-crowned (31); WARBLER, Orange-crowned (10); WARBLER, Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) (35); WARBLER, Pine (2); YELLOWTHROAT, Common (15); SPARROW, Song (12); SPARROW, Lincoln's (2); SPARROW, Swamp (36); SPARROW, White-crowned (7); SPARROW, White-throated (13); SPARROW, Savannah (120); CARDINAL, Northern (5); BLACKBIRD, Red-winged (291); MEADOWLARK, Eastern (35); GRACKLE, Common (59); GRACKLE, Boat-tailed (359); GRACKLE, Great-tailed (249); COWBIRD, Brown-headed (8).

SPECIES, total (120); INDIVIDUALS, total (9,835); Observers (12); Parties (4); Party-hours total (35.9); Party-miles total (103.7); Party-hours on foot (8.5); Party-miles on foot (7); Party-hours by car (27.4); Party-miles by car (96.7).

Observers: Howard Davis, Girish Doshi, Craig Geoffroy, Sherry Gibson, Jeff Harding, Gary and Denise Kelley, Steve Mayes, Christine Sliva, Harlan Stewart, John and Jana Whittle.