

## **Orange County Christmas Bird Count, January 1 2017**

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

The 2016 Orange County Christmas Bird Count, held on Sunday, January 1, 2017, found 125 species in the TXOC count circle and recorded 6988 individual birds. These are an average number of species and a low number of individuals for the count and follow last year's 136 species, a high for the count since it was re-started in 2002 by Ken Sztraky. The data may be making a sudden recursion to the mean or reflecting a bit less area covered (4 parties in the field this year vs. 5 last year, and less miles driving).

The day was overcast, mild in the upper 60s to lower 70s, with southerly breeze and much standing water from rain in the prior week. We have great cooperation from landowners and would like to thank the owners of two large private parcels, Odum Interests and Hawk Club, on the southeast edge of the circle, for the third year. We also thank Mr. G. Langham for access to his property north of Bessie Heights.

One species were recorded for the first time on this count: Yellow-crowned Night Heron. And a White-tailed Kite had not been recorded since 2006.

The addition of the Hawk Club and Odum Interests properties for the last three counts may help explain our duck numbers. Northern Pintails and Green-winged Teal were plentiful, and Mallards, Mottled Ducks, Blue-winged Teal, and Shovelers seen in good numbers. Two each of Canvasbacks, Redheads, and Wood Ducks were a nice addition. Gadwalls and Lesser Scaup were down and several less common species were missed, along with all of the geese. As the geese are usually seen in large flyovers, data from nearby circles will tell if our lack of sightings is significant.

Both Pelican species increased.

Data from all the wading birds looks normal, with addition of the Night-heron mentioned above and missing Tri-colored Herons. A healthy number of Plegadis ibis species was reported as White-faced Ibis this year.

Birds of prey including the vultures and Osprey were found in typical numbers, and a White-tailed Kite was a nice surprise, flying over my neighborhood. Crested Caracaras and a single Merlin and Peregrine Falcon were added in the SE sector.

Fewer Coots were seen than in recent counts. Only one Willet appeared, after a good increase last year. A half-dozen peeps turned out to be Least Sandpipers after photo-review. Only a few "Dowitcher species" were called. Wilson's Snipe and American Woodcock reappeared this year.

Gulls and terns were present in normal numbers, with exception of missing Black Skimmer. Dove numbers were normal and one each of Barred, Great Horned and Barn owls was seen or heard. Woodpeckers and the Belted Kingfisher were also present in typical numbers.

Most of the passerines seen last year were back, though often in smaller numbers. Again, our foot and driving mileages may be a factor in the lower counts. One Dark-eyed Junco was found, a species not counted since 2012. We also found one Vermilion Flycatcher, rarely found on the TXOC count.

DUCK, Wood (2); GADWALL (16); MALLARD (61); DUCK, Mottled (14); TEAL, Blue-winged (28); SHOVELER, Northern (58); PINTAIL, Northern (668); TEAL, Green-winged (704); CANVASBACK (2); READHEAD (2); SCAUP, Lesser (1); MERGANSER, Hooded (5); LOON, Common (1); GREBE, Pied-billed (10); CORMORANT, Neotropic (178); CORMORANT, Double-crested (22); CORMORANT species (2); ANHINGA (4); PELICAN, American White (71); PELICAN, Brown (56); HERON, Great Blue (17); EGRET, Great (34); EGRET, Snowy (37); HERON, Little Blue (5); NIGHT-HERON, Black-crowned (1); NIGHT-HERON, Yellow-crowned (1); IBIS, White (36); IBIS, White-faced (160); SPOONBILL, Roseate (1); VULTURE, Black (6); VULTURE, Turkey (60); OSPREY (16); KITE, White-tailed (1); HARRIER, Northern (1); HAWK, Cooper's (3); EAGLE, Bald (1); HAWK, Red-shouldered (13); HAWK, Red-tailed (13); RAIL, Clapper (6); SORA (1); GALLINULE, Common (3); COOT, American (61); STILT, Black-necked (23); KILDEER (162); SANDPIPER, Spotted (2); YELLOWLEGS, Greater (12); YELLOWLEGS, Lesser (4); SANDPIPER, Least (6); DOWITCHER species (4); SNIPE, Wilson's (4); WOODCOCK, American (1); GULL, Laughing (39); GULL, Ring-billed (69); GULL, Herring (23); GULL species (2); TERN, Caspian (3); TERN, Forster's (10); TERN, Royal (3); PIGEON, Rock (64); COLLARED-DOVE, Eurasian (23); DOVE, Inca (10); DOVE, White-winged (110); DOVE, Mourning (113); OWL, Barn (1); OWL, Great Horned (1); OWL, Barred (1); KINGFISHER, Belted (17); WOODPECKER, Red-headed (1); WOODPECKER, Red-bellied (40); SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bellied (8); WOODPECKER, Downy (17); FLICKER, Northern (Yellow-shafted) (14); WOODPECKER, Pileated (7); CARACARA, Crested (2); KESTREL, American (10); MERLIN (1); FALCON, Peregrine (1); PHOEBE, Eastern (16); FLYCATCHER, Vermilion (1); SHRIKE, Loggerhead (17); VIREO, White-eyed (5); VIREO, Blue-headed (9); JAY, Blue (87); CROW, American (13); SWALLOW, Tree (178); CHICKADEE, Carolina (18); TITMOUSE, Tufted (12); NUTHATCH, Brown-headed (5); CREEPER, Brown (1); WREN, House (1); WREN, Winter (4); WREN, Sedge (5); WREN, Marsh (8); WREN, Carolina (35); GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray (11); KINGLET, Golden-crowned (3); KINGLET, Ruby-crowned (30); BLUEBIRD, Eastern (41); THRUSH, Hermit (7); ROBIN, American (381); CATBIRD, Gray (21); THRASHER, Brown (4); MOCKINGBIRD, Northern (82); STARLING, European (133); PIPIT, American (2); WAXWING, Cedar (63); WARBLER, Orange-crowned (19); YELLOWTHROAT, Common (8); WARBLER, Pine (115); WARBLER, Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) 214); SPARROW, Chipping (73); JUNCO, Dark-eyed

(1); SPARROW, White-throated (3); SPARROW, Vesper (2); SPARROW, Savannah (52); SPARROW, Song (2); SPARROW, Swamp (7); CARDINAL, Northern (76); BLACKBIRD, Red-winged (948); MEADOWLARK, Eastern (54); GRACKLE, Common (331); GRACKLE, Boat-tailed (58); GRACKLE, Great-tailed (485); FINCH, House (1); GOLDFINCH, American (57); SPARROW, House (23).

SPECIES, total (124); INDIVIDUALS, total (6988); Observers (12); Parties (4); Party-hours total (30.95); Party-miles total (78.8); Party-hours on foot (12.0); Party-miles on foot (8.25); Party-hours by car (19.2); Party-miles by car (70.55).

Observers: Howard Davis, Sherry Gibson, John Haynes, Sheila Hebert, Steve Mayes, Christine Sliva, Harlan Stewart, John and Jana Whittle, Sherrie Roden, Gary and Denise Kelley