

## Beech Creek CBC – 23 December 2017

Beech Creek is a little further north than the other counts Golden Triangle Audubon is involved in, but with wooded areas including Martin Dies State Park, Steinhagen Lake, and several Corps of Engineers parks, it has varied habitat. The 84 species seen on the count on December 23 was on the high side of average, conducted in good but somewhat chilly weather, with light winds. Although the area received essentially the same 50 inches of rain that Hurricane Harvey visited on the Golden Triangle, the area did not appear to have been affected quite as much. Although there was flooding from overflowing rivers and gullies, and large amounts of water had to be released from the lakes, the effects on the habitat away from lakes and watercourses do not seem to have been as great as those further south.

There is extensive waterfowl hunting in the northern part of the count circle every day, and the numbers and species of ducks seen on the count is very variable from year to year. The ducks are always very skittish, and in many years, they choose areas not in the count circle so as to avoid hunters. An example of this can be seen in our failure to find any Canvasbacks last year, but the usual 300 or so again this year.

Unusual species this year included Blue-winged Teal in two locations on the lake, an Eared Grebe on the west side of Steinhagen Lake, and a dark Ibis (Glossy/White-faced) in Martin Dies. White-winged Doves finally made it to the area, and one was photographed. A Rusty Blackbird in the Cherokee Unit of Martin Dies, and an American Woodcock in the Walnut Ridge Unit rounded out an interesting list of species rare to the area.

For the most part, the birds of the area were present in normal numbers, and the above average number of species stemmed from finding many species that are not seen every year. Of note, however, was a total of 16 Eastern Towhees, nearly tripling the previous high count.

GOOSE, [species] (31); DUCK, Wood (18); GADWALL (1); TEAL, Blue-winged (3); TEAL, Green-winged (1); CANVASBACK (295); REDHEAD (2); DUCK, Ring-necked (27); SCAUP, Lesser (51); MERGANSER, Hooded (6); GREBE, Pied-billed (69); GREBE, Eared (1); CORMORANT, Double-crested (217); CORMORANT, [species] (12); ANHINGA (7); PELICAN, American White (10); HERON, Great Blue (15); EGRET, Great (28); EGRET, Snowy (14); HERON, Little Blue (2); HERON, Tricolored (1); IBIS, Plegadis species (1); VULTURE, Black (39); VULTURE, Turkey (88); HARRIER, Northern (1); HAWK, Sharp-shinned (2); HAWK, Cooper's (1); EAGLE, Bald (5); HAWK, Red-shouldered (7); HAWK, Red-tailed (5); GALLINULE, Common (2); COOT, American (555); KILLDEER (14); SANDPIPER, Spotted (7); WOODCOCK, American (1); GULL, Ring-billed (1); TERN, Forster's (30); COLLARED-DOVE, Eurasian (6); DOVE, White-winged (1); DOVE, Mourning (5); KINGFISHER, Belted (5); WOODPECKER, Red-bellied (41); SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bellied (20); WOODPECKER, Downy (16); WOODPECKER, Hairy (2); FLICKER, Northern (7); WOODPECKER, Pileated (8); KESTREL, American (5); PHOEBE, Eastern (19); VIREO, White-eyed (6); VIREO, Blue-headed (6); JAY, Blue (36); CROW, American (72); CHICKADEE, Carolina (42); TITMOUSE, Tufted (27); NUTHATCH, Brown-headed (5); CREEPER, Brown (2); WREN, House (12); WREN, Winter (4); WREN, Carolina (23); GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray (18); KINGLET, Golden-crowned (12); KINGLET, Ruby-crowned (88); BLUEBIRD, Eastern (31); THRUSH, Hermit (12); ROBIN, American (299); CATBIRD, Gray (8); THRASHER, Brown (3); MOCKINGBIRD, Northern (8); STARLING, European (1); WARBLER, Orange-crowned (12); YELLOWTHROAT, Common (2); WARBLER, Pine (62); WARBLER, Yellow-rumped (154); WARBLER, Yellow-r.(Myrtle) (175); SPARROW, Chipping (61); SPARROW, Field (1); SPARROW, Fox (1); JUNCO, Dark-eyed (8); JUNCO, Dark-eyed (Slate-col.) (3); SPARROW, White-throated (134); SPARROW, Song (6); SPARROW, Lincoln's (1); SPARROW, Swamp (8); TOWHEE, Eastern (16); CARDINAL, Northern (96); BLACKBIRD, Red-winged (35); BLACKBIRD, Rusty (1); GOLDFINCH, American (245).

SPECIES, total (88); Number of Individuals (3441)

Number of observers (13); Parties (5); Party-hours on foot (12.3); Party-miles on foot (4.6); Party-hours by car (27.3); Party-miles by car (103.7); Party-hours total (39.6); Party-miles total (108.3)

Participants: Michael Cooper, Ashley Fuselier, Sherrie Gibson, John Haynes, Sheila Hebert, Thomas Hellweg; Phillip Hight, Dana Nelson, Charles and Wanda Smith, Harlan Stewart, Jana and John Whittle.