

FORT BRAGG CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS - December 22, 2012

The final tally for the second official Fort Bragg Christmas Bird Count (CAFB) included 143 identified species, plus two taxa (*Scaup* sp. and *Dowitcher* sp.), for a total of 145 on Count Day. Count Week birds (Burrowing Owl, Bewick's Wren, Cedar Waxwing, Palm Warbler, and the elusive Bullock's Oriole) would have brought us up to the coveted 150-species mark this year. We counted a grand total of 18,509 individual birds, of which 16,430 were identified as to species.

Eight species appeared on the CAFB list for the first time: **Brant, Redhead, Dowitcher, Bonaparte's Gull, Heermann's Gull, Barn Owl, Yellow-Headed Blackbird, and Black-Headed Grosbeak.** The Count Week **Palm Warbler** and **Burrowing Owl** were also new additions.

Uncommon birds, present here in winter in small numbers and which could easily be missed on any given day, included:

Northern Shoveler (1)	Rhinoceros Auklet (1)	Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker (1)
<i>Scaup</i> sp. (1)	Cassin's Auklet (1)	Pileated Woodpecker (2)
Common Goldeneye (3)	Band-Tailed Pigeon (4)	Say's Phoebe (1)
Snowy Egret (3)	Barn Owl (1)	Northern Mockingbird (2)
Osprey (2)	Western Screech-owl (2)	American Pipit (4)
Peregrine Falcon (1)	Great Horned Owl (1)	Orange-Crowned Warbler (2)
Sora (2)	Barred Owl (1)	Nashville Warbler (2)
Rock Sandpiper (1)	Northern Saw-whet Owl (2)	Brown-headed Cowbird (1)
Ancient Murrelet (6)	Red-Breasted Sapsucker (2)	Lesser Goldfinch (2)

The most abundant bird was, unsurprisingly, American Robin; at 1,510 individuals, they accounted for almost one in every ten birds identified (not including the 1,869 unidentified Gulls). Western and California Gulls were essentially tied for second, with 1,168 and 1,140 individuals, respectively. Yellow-Rumped Warbler came in fourth at 797.

We had forty-nine field participants this year, plus sixteen feeder-watchers. Notable visitors included **Jerry White**, who came all the way over from Kelseyville hoping to get out to sea for some pelagic birds; alas, the boat captain studied the rolling seas and chose discretion. Jerry had fun anyway and at the Count Dinner exclaimed, "We have to get this count to 150!" I promised we would, one of these years.

Once again I want to thank the Area Leaders: **Ron LeValley, Toby Tobkin, Warren Wade, Bob Keiffer, Art Morley, Jim Havlena, Dave Jensen, and Richard Hubacek.** We are extremely fortunate to have such first-class birders who are also able to organize teams and conduct their counts with minimal effort from the compiler. Special thanks also to **Joleen Ossello** for coordinating the feeder-watchers, and for her brilliant performance on MCTV. I am deeply grateful to **Angela Liebenberg** and **Judy Steele** for making the Count Dinner happen without any effort on my part; it is such a relief to know there will be food and drink waiting at the end of the day.

Be sure to mark your calendar for Saturday December 21, 2013, when we will at last reach that magical 150-species mark. You certainly won't want to miss such an historic event!