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2016 Christmas Bird Count – The Year of the Juncos – Evergreen Audubon

7-8 minutes



Photo courtesy of Bill Schmoker

The 2016 Christmas Bird Count, on Dec. 18, was a new milestone as we had our highest number of field observers ever – 80; we had 23 feeder watchers (over twice as many as the previous year); and we had our best effort in the field with 147 field party-hours recorded.

However, while this great outpouring of effort did result in a fairly good number of individual birds at 6301, it did not translate into good species diversity, and for the second time in the last twelve years we had less than 50 species, recording just 49. In contrast, last year we set a record high with 57 species, and we had 7643 individual birds.

Two factors may have contributed to the difference between last year and this. First, we had a dry fall this year, with less snow cover than usual, so the birds may not have been as concentrated in the areas where we've seen them in the past. Even before the count, many people remarked to me that they were seeing fewer birds than in previous falls, both in their yards and at their feeders. And then, of course, the day of the count was very cold—starting out at 9°F—and it was quite windy all day.

Overall, we had below average numbers for most of the species recorded, though we did have good numbers for our three common woodpeckers: 46 Downy Woodpeckers, 70 Hairy Woodpeckers, and 34 Northern (Red-shafted) Flickers.

However, the real story of the day was our grand total of **2171 Dark-eyed Juncos** – 34% of the total birds seen during the count were of this one species. With regard to the subspecies, we set new highs for Gray-headed – 587, Oregon – 258, White-winged – 91, Cassiar – 7, and for those that we could not identify to subspecies, we had 781. That's a lot of Juncos!

As many of you know, we have been leading the world for the last few years in numbers of Mountain Chickadees, last year getting 712. However, our number was down to 459 for this count, so we will just have to wait and see how the results from other count circles compare. We have also periodically led the world in numbers of Pygmy Nuthatches, though last year we fell about 60 short of retaining that honor. Our count this year was pretty good at 765, so we have a shot at being tops again.

The table below provides our numbers from 2016, the

average for the previous 47 years, and the high count for each species and the year it was recorded.

Thanks to all section leaders, participants, and Barbara Jean Gard for coordinating the feeder-watchers. A huge thanks, once again, to the Walds for hosting the Tally Rally, to JoAnn Hackos for making the meat chili, to Lisa Wald for providing the veggie chili, to Peg Linn for organizing the dinner, to all of you for contributing to the potluck, and to Brad Andres for compiling our data.

Chuck Aid, Bird Monitoring Director

Summary of birds observed on the 2016 Evergreen-Idaho Springs Christmas Bird Count, the average number seen from 1969 to 2015, and the high count and year recorded. Bolded entries are high counts or equaled high counts recorded in 2016; “cw” indicates seen during count week but not on count day.

Common Name	Number per Year		High Count	
	1969-2015	2016	number	year
Cackling Goose	<1		2	08
Canada Goose	8	17	70	90
Wood Duck	<1		2	93/07
Gadwall	<1		1	10
American Wigeon	<1		2	96
Mallard	61	36	248	12
Northern Pintail	<1		1	96/98
Green-winged Teal	<1		1	81

Common Name	Number per Year		High Count	
	1969-2015	2016	number	year
Chukar	<1		1	80
Dusky Grouse	<1		12	94
Wild Turkey	40	63	110	04
Rock Pigeon	75	79	212	81
Eurasian Collared-Dove	6	21	83	15
Mourning Dove	<1	3	2	10
Wilson's Snipe	1	2	4	78/91/00
Great Blue Heron	<1		1	88/90
Black-crowned Night Heron	<1		1	09
Bald Eagle	1		5	10
Northern Harrier	<1		2	04
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	3	9	several
Cooper's Hawk	<1		2	09
Northern Goshawk	1	cw	3	72/87/11
Red-tailed Hawk	14	23	44	11
Ferruginous Hawk	<1		2	98
Rough-legged Hawk	1		11	85
Golden Eagle	3	2	8	89/15
Great Horned Owl	1	2	5	09/12/14
Northern Pygmy-Owl	1		4	95
Long-eared Owl	<1		1	74/82
Northern Saw-whet Owl	<1		1	70
Belted Kingfisher	2	2	6	04

Common Name	Number per Year		High Count	
	1969-2015	2016	number	year
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	<1		1	80
Downy Woodpecker	29	46	51	08
Hairy Woodpecker	46	70	81	11
Am. Three-toed Woodpecker	<1		3	79/89
Northern (Red-shafted) Flicker	16	34	45	15
American Kestrel	1	2	4	87/12
Merlin	<1		2	10
Prairie Falcon	<1		1	82
Loggerhead Shrike	<1		1	several
Northern Shrike	4	3	13	86
Gray Jay	13		53	77
Pinyon Jay	4		200	72
Steller's Jay	267	207	446	00
Blue Jay	<1		1	95/00
Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay	3	7	18	11
Clark's Nutcracker	27	45	108	78
Black-billed Magpie	194	296	370	12
American Crow	703	750	1,786	15
Common Raven	117	116	200	72
Horned Lark	<1	1	15	86
Black-capped Chickadee	77	48	184	15

Common Name	Number per Year		High Count	
	1969-2015	2016	number	year
Mountain Chickadee	491	459	786	75
Hybrid Chickadee	<1		1	13
Juniper Titmouse	<1		1	82
Bushtit	1		17	15
Red-breasted Nuthatch	47	27	127	93
White-breasted Nuthatch	72	64	142	15
Pygmy Nuthatch	424	743	1,046	12
Brown Creeper	13	9	36	15
Canyon Wren	1		5	81
Winter Wren	<1		2	75
American Dipper	18	7	37	87
Golden-crowned Kinglet	3		18	84
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<1		2	83/91
Mountain Bluebird	<1		2	92
Townsend's Solitaire	68	84	202	82
American Robin	136	48	1,500	72
Brown Thrasher	<1		1	several
Northern Mockingbird	<1		1	78
European Starling	127	143	301	00
Bohemian Waxwing	39		580	80
Cedar Waxwing	8		163	87
House Sparrow	99	26	377	00
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch	124	25	429	84

Common Name	Number per Year		High Count	
	1969-2015	2016	number	year
Black Rosy-Finch	7	2	70	04
Brown-capped Rosy-Finch	15	18	140	04
Pine Grosbeak	14	6	103	14
House Finch	175	206	443	11
Cassin's Finch	162	66	519	14
Red Crossbill	62	24	643	82
White-winged Crossbill	<1		16	70
Common Redpoll	4		30	70
Hoary Redpoll	<1		1	12
Pine Siskin	211	67	723	08
American Goldfinch	16	13	176	00
Evening Grosbeak	130	75	420	95
Yellow-rumped Warbler	<1		13	15
Spotted Towhee	<1		4	75
Cassin's Sparrow	<1		1	71
American Tree Sparrow	2	1	37	84
Chipping Sparrow	<1		1	12
Clay-colored Sparrow	<1		1	83
Fox Sparrow	<1		1	several
Song Sparrow	5	12	15	11
White-throated Sparrow	<1		1	84/06
Harris's Sparrow	<1		2	80
White-crowned Sparrow	<1		1	several

Common Name	Number per Year		High Count	
	1969-2015	2016	number	year
Golden-crowned Sparrow	<1		1	93
Dark-eyed (Gray-headed) Junco	163	587	587	16
Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco	86	258	258	16
Dark-eyed (Pink-sided) Junco	21	253	276	80
Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco	83	194	413	82
Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco	53	91	91	16
Dark-eyed (Cassiar) Junco	<1	7	7	16
Dark-eyed Junco (All subspecies)	557	2,171	2,171	16
Red-winged Blackbird	57	27	586	91
Brewer's Blackbird	<1		15	12
Common Grackle	<1		3	93
Great-tailed Grackle	<1		1	07
Brown-headed Cowbird	<1		1	09
Number of Species	47	49	57	15