

THE VILLAGE BIRDING LIFE

“Christmas Bird Count Results”

by HSV Audubon

This past Monday, nearly 50 HSV Audubon members took advantage of the gorgeous weather to participate in the annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Armed with binoculars, spotting scopes and bird guides, the birders roamed the Village and surrounding areas in search of birds. There were six teams, one for each directional quadrant, one for feeders and one for the central Village.

The “feeder team” observed from the comfort of their homes. The traveling teams, organized so that there was a mix of experienced and newer birders, started birding just after sunrise and ended, in some cases, not until it was too dark to see. Of course there was enough flexibility to accommodate those who thought 3 or 4 o’clock was a reasonable time to stop. While keeping in mind that the reason for the CBC was quite serious, the goal of all was to have fun. Of course, this meant that the traveling teams made time for a leisurely and sociable lunch. In any event, at the end of the day all bird sightings were carefully recorded on standardized checklists. Again, in the spirit of fun, the final tabulations were calculated and shared at a catered dinner the following evening.

The annual CBC is the world’s longest running citizen-science wild-life survey. It was initiated in 1900 by the National Audubon Society and has occurred uninterrupted every Christmas season since. This highly anticipated event gives HSV Audubon members the opportunity to join in spirit with nearly 65,000 other birders world-wide in order to survey bird populations. Every bird observed is identified and recorded. This information is sent to National Audubon where it is used to assist a variety of ongoing scientific bird studies. Tracking population trends and where various bird species spend their lives are just a couple of examples of how this information is used.

As usual, the most counted specie at feeders in the Village this year was the Dark-eyed Junco. Gold Finches were a close second. Eighty-three total species were identified locally, slightly up from the 81 last year. Highlights this year included a flock of over 600 Common Grackles. The surprise observation this year was an American Black Duck which was seen swimming on a small pond west of the Village. Black ducks look like a dark female Mallard with an olive colored bill. Although rare in Arkansas, a confirmed observation was made on Lake Balboa last spring.

As always HSVBIRDS.ORG has a lot of information about everything you’d like to know about birds and some of Nature’s other wonders. You will see on the website that HSV Audubon has available a Village birding checklist. It lists over 200 species of birds that might be seen in the Village, when they might be seen and how common they are. It’s a great way to keep track of the birds at your feeder.

HSV Audubon meets the 2nd Friday of each month, except in the summer, at 10:00 at the

Coronado Center. Guests are always welcome to join us in our love and pursuit of birds and all things Nature.

Photos by Vic Prislipsky