

THE VILLAGE BIRDING LIFE

“Christmas Bird Count 2014 ”

by HSV Audubon

As with every Christmas season, teams of HSV Audubon members took to the field with the goal of counting birds in and around the Village. Four teams covered the north, south, east and west regions. Another team covered the Village proper while a sixth team watched feeders in their yards.

Because one of the frequent questions many HSV Audubon members have been getting lately from their friends, is “where are all the birds”, we were curious about how our bird count would compare to last years. Our initial hypothesis for the apparent lack of birds was that the birds that normally came to feeders had so much natural food this year that they didn’t need us. It looks like that hypothesis is wrong! Although the inherent inaccuracy of counting birds in such a short period of time means that our results can not be taken as conclusive, our total count of most of the “feeder” birds showed a decline of nearly 45%. Only American Goldfinches showed a significant increase. However, there was a tremendous increase in two species of non-feeder birds. Last year we counted only 4 American Robins; this year over 2800. Blackbird species increased from 273 to 1978.

While we don’t yet have an answer to the question “where are the birds”, this is exactly the reason that there is a Christmas Bird Count (CBC). The CBC is the largest “citizen science” project in the world. Audubon Society chapters throughout the western hemisphere will submit bird count information. This includes nearly a dozen bird counts from Audubon chapters across the state of Arkansas. The data from these CBCs is compiled and used to scientifically assess how bird populations are faring. Maybe when all is counted and analyzed, we’ll find out what’s up with “our” birds. Hopefully, they’re just visiting relatives in Pulaski County.

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 the 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.