Summary, Oceanside (CAOV) Christmas Bird Count—2019
Kirsten Winter (CBC Compiler)

The 74th Oceanside Christmas Bird Count was held on December 21, 2019. It was a clear and pleasant day, with light breezes. Temperatures ranged from approximately 35–40 degrees F in the morning to about 60–70 degrees in the afternoon. A dedicated group of 116 birders logged 230 hours of birding and 412 miles of travel on foot, by car, by boat, and by golf cart. The teams recorded approximately 30,000 individual birds, detecting birds at a rate of about 135 birds per hour. The total number of individual birds counted was up by about 1,000 or approximately 3% when compared with last year. Thank you to all of the team participants and to the volunteers at the Buena Vista Audubon Nature Center who hosted the post-count lunch and compilation!

A total of 182 species were detected, which is about average for this count. The count record of 200 species was set some years ago. The most numerous birds were American Crow at 2892, Yellow-rumped Warbler at 2284, American Coot at 1813, American Wigeon at 1394, House Finch at 1309, and Bushtit at 1040 individuals.

Many rarities were detected. Appearing for the very first time on the Oceanside count, a beautiful Northern Parula was spotted by Paul Chad at a continuing location near Agua Hedionda Lagoon.

Northern Parula - photo by Tito Gonzales, Dec 11 2019
A female Rose-breasted Grosbeak appeared for just the 4th time on this count and was detected by Ken Weaver at Guajome Park near the campground/gazebo.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak, photo by Ken Weaver

A Gray Flycatcher was found by Paul Lehman and photographed by Dave Batzler on the northeast side of Batiquitos near Hummingbird Road.

Gray Flycatcher - photo by Dave Batzler
A Zone-tailed Hawk was seen by Fred Roberts and team at Alta Vista Gardens.

Additional rarities included a Nashville Warbler seen by Paul Lehman near Karl Strauss Brewery; and four Yellow Warblers, two Palm Warblers, and a Bullock's Oriole observed by Paul Lehman in the coastal Carlsbad area. One Palm Warbler and one Plumbeous Vireo were detected by Stan Walens at La Costa. Two Ridgway's Rails were seen by Ryan Andrews and BJ Dooley and team at Agua Hedionda and five Ridgway's Rails were recorded at Buena Vista Lagoon by Tom Troy and team—encouraging news for the success of this endangered species after some rail "releases" in past years. A Brown Creeper was seen by Charlotte Morris and team in the Leo Carrillo area near Corte Cisco. Slightly more frequently recurring rarities included Summer Tanagers, seen by Ed Hall at Lake San Marcos and by Kathy Aldern and Maryanne Bache at Seascape Drive near Batiquitos Lagoon; Western Tanager, seen by Fred Roberts and team at Brengle Park; Black-and-White Warbler, seen by Gretchen Nell and team near El Arbol/Manzano riparian area; and Brant, noted by Ryan Andrews and team at western basin of Agua Hedionda Lagoon.

Many other species that are rarely found in the Oceanside circle were detected as single birds or as very few individuals, including one Cactus Wren (Robert Patton, Camp Pendleton); one Reddish Egret (Phil Unitt, Camp Pendleton and Dave Povey and pelagic team); one Wilson's Snipe (Stan Walens, La Costa); and Canyon Wren (one seen by Dave Batzler and team at Lake San Marcos and two seen by Jerry Manning and team at Gopher Canyon).

Canyon Wren - photo by Dave Batzler

Very few species were detected at record high numbers. Willet hit a record high of 267 birds. Cooper's Hawk set a record at 44 individuals observed. Seventeen Great-horned Owls were seen or heard.
Nuttall's Woodpecker set a record high with 199 individuals, as did Cassin's Kingbird with 300 individuals.

Several species were at or near record lows, including Loggerhead Shrike, Rhinoceros Auklet, Herring Gull, and Forster's Tern, at one individual each.

Returning from the last two years, one of our 34 survey teams featured young birders. Ryan Andrews led a young birder team at Agua Hedionda, where they located rarities including Brant and Ridgway's Rail. Thanks to this team, as they build the future birding cadre for our area.

Thanks very much to all of the teams who worked many hours to collect these data. Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) dating back to the very first CBC in 1900 help to track bird species trends for the United States and other countries. Thank you for your very important contributions to this effort.