

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE CBC

We held our count on Saturday with pleasant, calm conditions and not too much snow on the ground. We did fairly average for species richness, but our numbers of birds was way down. E.g., we had singles or at least single digits of many species (Song Sparrow) and only managed to find 101 Canada Geese!! I think the handful of recent “atmospheric river” rain events flushed a lot of birds out of the Tahoe basin, and cold temperatures in the preceding days meant a lot of frozen-over bodies of water.

We also dipped on some usual suspects: no wrens, no sapsuckers, neither bluebird, no swans, Pied-billed Grebe, Sharp-shinned and Red-shouldered hawks, kingfisher, no owls, Horned Lark and pipit, no siskins/goldfinches, and no Zonotrichia. Please let me know if you’ve seen any of these in during count week (within the S. Lake Tahoe count circle).

However, we still managed to find 66 species on count day, and 5 Count Week species (so far - it ends tomorrow).

Highlights included a posing Rough-legged Hawk seen from Cove East, a male Eurasian Wigeon at Edgewood Golf Course, point blank looks at an immature Bald Eagle, impressive swarms of distant gulls that must have spent the night at the mouth of Taylor Creek, drunken robins singing on a mid-December afternoon. We also added Least Sandpiper to our checklist from a count week bird.

I’ve received many inquiries about the Northern Shrike, which was not seen on the day of the count, but was seen the day prior. Apparently that bird has been around for the last month or so. It has been seen all over the Upper Truckee Marsh/Cove East area, but mostly along the edge of the willows near the high water line.

Will Richardson
Truckee, CA