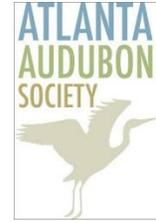


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2017 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT SEASON WRAPS UP IN ATLANTA

(Atlanta, Ga,) January 26, 2018 – The results are in from the 2017 Christmas Bird Count (CBC) across metro-Atlanta and, by all measures, it was a very successful CBC season. Counts were held in four “circles” around metro-Atlanta, including In-town Atlanta, Marietta, Peachtree City, and Roswell. When the count results were in, 159 volunteers counted more than 40,500 individual birds representing more than 100 different species.

The Christmas Bird Count is an annual tradition dating back to 1900, when ornithologist Frank M. Chapman, an early officer in the then-nascent Audubon Society, proposed a new holiday tradition—a “Christmas Bird Census” that would count birds during the holidays rather than hunting them as had previously been done.

Each year, from December 14 through January 5 each thousands of volunteers across the Americas brave snow, wind, or rain, and take part in the effort. The National Audubon Society and other organizations use data to assess the health of bird populations, and to help guide conservation action. At 118 years old, the annual Christmas Bird Count is the longest-running citizen science project in the nation!

“2017 was a great year for Christmas Bird Counts,” says Nikki Belmonte, Executive Director of Atlanta Audubon Society and leader of the Roswell CBC circle. “It was cold, but not nearly as rainy as in 2016—thankfully, because it would have been snow! Our volunteers just put on an extra layer and counted the birds.” Typically, the CBCs wrap up with a ‘counting party’ featuring hot chili, soup, and beverage. Volunteers report compare notes, report totals, and tell just a few ‘bird tales’ about the count day. The camaraderie is one of the best parts of this citizen science program.

Here are breakdowns from the four metro counts:

December 14, 2017– Roswell Christmas Bird Count

- Total number of species: 93
- Total number of birds: 8,500
- Number of volunteers: 37

- Notable Sightings: “The most frequent bird spotted was Canada Goose, with 1,126 individuals reported,” says Nikki Belmonte, Roswell CBC leader. “Some of the notable species were Sedge Wren, Common Loon, American Kestrel, Bald Eagle, and 12 species of ducks, including Northern Pintail.”

December 16, 2017 – Marietta Christmas Bird Count

- Total number of species sighted: 93
- Total individual birds counted: 8,173
- Number of volunteers: 43
- Notable Sightings: Loggerhead Shrike, Virginia Rail, Sora, and Greater Scaup

December 17, 2017 – Peachtree City Christmas Bird Count

- Total number of species sighted: 90
- Total individual birds counted: 7,698
- Number of volunteers: 17
- Notable sightings: “A Sora and Greater Yellowlegs were new to the count, and we were greeted by four Bald Eagles at daylight, and nine more were spotted at one time later that day along with 35 Great Blue Herons,” says Brock Hutchins, Peachtree City CBC leader.

December 30, 2017 – In-town Atlanta Christmas Bird Count

- Total number of species: 93 (new high count for this circle)
- Total number of birds: 17,000
- Number of volunteers: 70
- Notable birds: “We had a marked increase in waterfowl this year, including Gadwall, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, and Double-crested Cormorant,” says Joy Carter, In-town CBC leader. We also had some hard-to-find-in-the-city birds, including Wild Turkey, Wilson’s Snipe, American Kestrel, Eastern Meadowlark, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Common Yellowthroat, and Peregrine Falcon.”

Media Note: Photos to accompany this article and a MS Word version of this press release are available for download at <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/y3I9s32oktcs94e/AADL4n1VHbxzzwGhN455VJ-fa?dl=0>.

The mission of the Atlanta Audubon Society is to protect Georgia’s birds and their habitats through conservation, education and advocacy.

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