



**Pyrrhuloxia (*Cardinalis sinuatus*),
Corvallis, Oregon. Photo/Barbara Combs**

Count window. An increase in observer skill and awareness may account for recent trends in the occurrence of the species.

A reported Pyrrhuloxia from Peoria in the Corvallis, OR, count circle was first observed in early November and continued to be seen at least into February. Its provenance has been hotly and often acrimoniously debated. Photographs of the bird indicated that it was a hatch-year bird and showed no signs of cage wear, toe-clippings, or other marks of past captivity. On the minus side, there does not appear to be any concrete pattern of vagrancy to the south for this species and plenty of human-assisted scenarios for a bird that is, by some accounts, easily purchased in Mexico. This report is also now in the hands of the records committee.

Record numbers of Brown Pelicans remained late into the season. The high numbers were attributed to a milder than average autumn and higher than average runs of bait fish. Thousands stayed along the coast through the end of December, most of them concentrated at Oregon coastal counts, with highest count coming from Coos Bay, OR, where 2712 were reported. Inland reports of Brown Pelican, unusual in any season, came from Wahkiakum, WA (30 miles inland), and Cowlitz-Columbia, WA, (50 miles inland), both along the Columbia River. By the first of January most had moved south, but not before filling local rehab centers with sick and injured birds. Most of the injuries involved high-wind related broken bones and frostbitten feet.

Numbers of overwintering warblers were just about average. Expected num-

bers of Orange-crowned Warblers and Common Yellowthroats were reported. Palm Warblers were reported in lower than average numbers. Wilson's Warblers were seen at Coos Bay, OR, and Portland, OR. The most unusual reports this season were Black-throated Gray Warblers reported from Columbia Estuary, OR, and Florence, OR.

Observers noted significant irruptions of Bohemian Waxwings and Pine Grosbeaks this season. Fifteen counts in Washington and six in Oregon reported Bohemian Waxwings, the birds were reported in Skagit and Everett in Washington but were only observed east of the Cascades in Oregon. Most Pine Grosbeak reports came from eastern Washington, with only two from extreme northeastern Oregon. Other winter finch numbers were at or below average for the region.

Counts that were able to field enough observers in spite of the weather did well, while less fortunate counts performed below average or were canceled. Coos Bay, OR, once again had the high count for the region at 154, followed by Coquille Valley, OR, at 148, Grays Harbor, WA, with 142 and a tie between Everett, WA, and Sequim-Dungeness, WA, both with 140. East of the Cascades, Tri-Cities, WA, recorded 109 species and Klamath Falls, OR, found 108.

There are still several counts reporting "small form" and "large form" Canada Geese, rather than making the change to Cackling Geese and Canada Geese. I reassigned numbers in those cases where I felt I could confidently make a change. Compilers were once again very good about providing details for those species that required them, and the few exceptions have been marked as having no details. If anything, folks are sending in more details than required by including species that may be locally unusual but are not flagged regionally.

I'd like to thank Alan Contreras, David Bailey, David Irons, Steve Mlodinow, Dennis Paulson, and Dennis Vroman for helping in the evaluation of details of rare and unusual species

reported on counts. Their assistance in evaluating rare bird documentation is always appreciated.

CALIFORNIA

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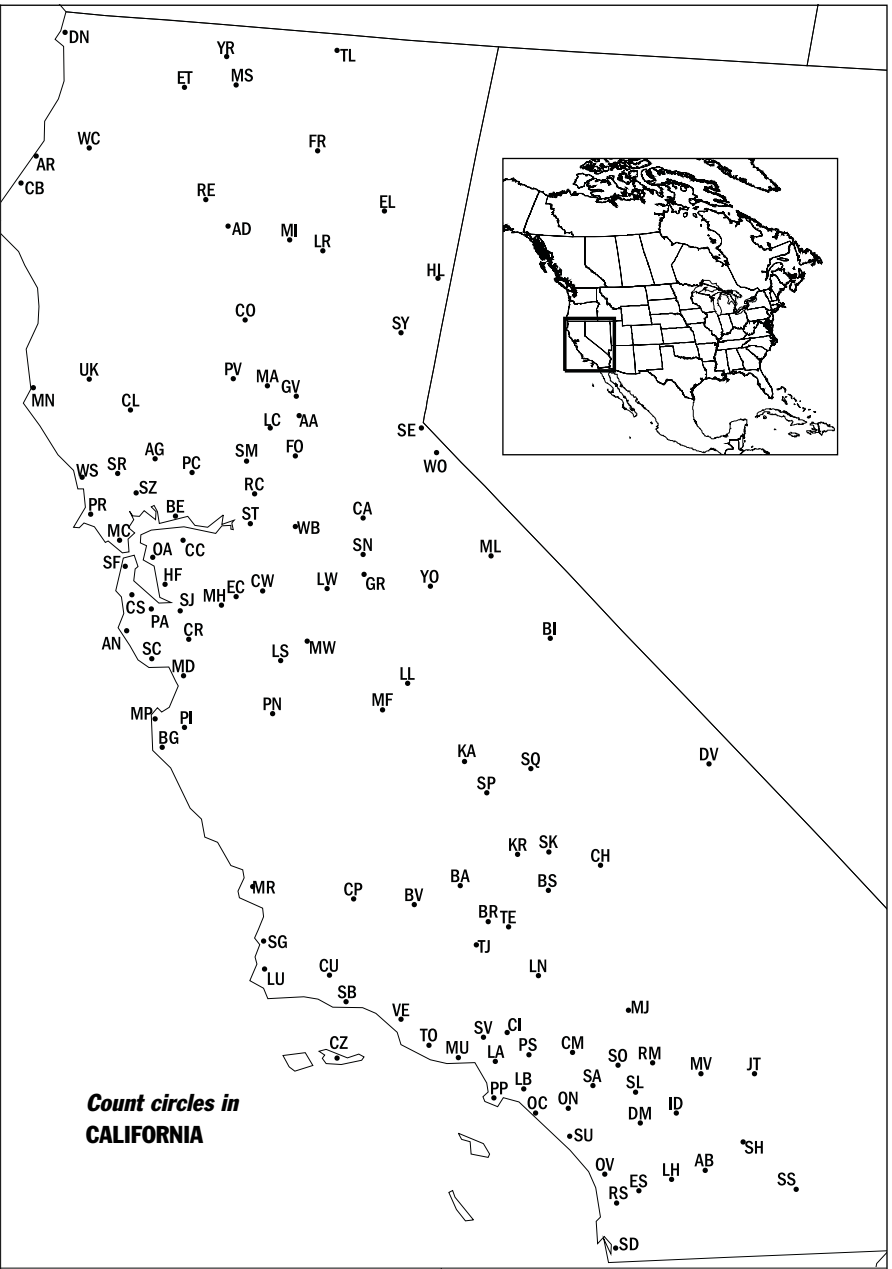
California conducted 120 counts during the 2008–09 Christmas Bird Count season, 3 more than last year. Eleven counts suffered rain all day, but, truer to our drought, dry skies prevailed for the majority (94) of counts. The lowest low temperature was -18 degrees Fahrenheit at Sierra Valley, which also recorded the lowest high of just 14 degrees. Santa Barbara showed the least temperature change throughout the day with only a one degree shift from low to high; Sequoia enjoyed the greatest shift, warming to 65 degrees after starting out at just 4 degrees. The warmest counts took place at San Juan Capistrano and Cachuma, where temperatures hit 80 degrees or above. Three counts posted species totals above the 200 mark: Orange County Coastal, San Diego, and Santa Barbara. Finally, Tejon Ranch is welcomed as the lone new count this year. When species are on the California Bird Records Committee review list we place "CBRC" in parenthesis to indicate that a final decision will come from that body.

The California count season began on a very sad note when Dr. Onik Arian, an emergency room physician and avid birder, was swept off a jetty and killed while counting birds for the Del Norte count. This loss has been deeply felt in the California birding community and beyond. The highlights to follow of California's 109th count are dedicated to his memory.

Almost a dozen southern area counts reported small numbers of Greater White-fronted Geese. Nineteen southern counts reported one or two Ross's

Geese, including one blue morph at China Lake. Two blue morph Ross's were reported on the Rio Cosumnes count as well. The Los Angeles count added Brant to their list for the first time. For the Eurasian Wigeon, 160 were reported (slightly more than has been reported each season over the last eight years) including five northerly counts posting numbers in the teens. More than one-third of California's counts reported this species this year. Clear Lake and Palo Alto documented Eurasian Green-winged Teal; three other counts reported this bird but details were not forthcoming. Thirteen Harlequin Ducks on six counts, the southernmost again in Monterey, is about average. Fourteen Long-tailed Ducks were reported on 12 counts, the southernmost being a photographed bird at Thousand Oaks; an inland record on the Bishop count is also noteworthy. Surf Scoters were found inland at Marysville and Salton Sea South. White-winged Scoters were reported on both the north and south Salton Sea counts. Two Black Scoters were recorded on the Los Angeles count. Several hybrid duck combinations were photographed this year, including Mallard x Northern Pintail, Gadwall x Northern Shoveler, Barrow's Goldeneye x Hooded Merganser, Bufflehead x Goldeneye sp., Barrows x Common Goldeneye, and American x Eurasian Wigeon. Unexpected loons were found inland at Stockton (Red-throated) and Eagle Lake (Pacific). Mount Hamilton memorialized its first recording of Horned Grebe with a nice sketch of the bird. Red-necked Grebes from Ventura (photographed) and Santa Barbara (several observers) were the only reports from southern area counts. The editors are not sure what to make of a report of three Red-necked Grebes at Tehachapi. The documentation describes at least one bird adequately, but the fact that not more was made of three being found inland on one body of water is unsettling.

Just three counts reported Northern Fulmar: Arcata (4), Monterey (1), and



Big Sur (1). Unusual shearwaters were reported from Orange County Coastal and San Juan Capistrano (Pink-footed), Arcata, Monterey and Thousand Oaks (Sooty), and lastly, at Año Nuevo, Arcata, and Monterey (Short-tailed). Finally, a Brown Booby strayed into the Rancho Santa Fe circle, likely from its post on the nearby Los Coronados Islands.

Least Bittern was reported on eight counts: multiples at Los Angeles (8), Oceanside (7), and Salton Sea South (2), and singles at Rio Cosumnes, Santa Barbara, San Juan Capistrano, Rancho Santa Fe, and Salton Sea North. Little Blue Heron was added to the Rancho Santa Fe count for the first time, and

three were reported where they are regularly seen on the San Diego count. Five Reddish Egrets were found, two at Orange County Coastal and singles at Oceanside, Thousand Oaks, and Long Beach. Yellow-crowned Night-Herons, two adults and a juvenile, continued on the San Diego count as did the Wood Stork at Escondido. Seventeen California Condors were recorded this year, more than double what has been recorded in any of the past six years.

A single Swainson's Hawk, unaccompanied by details, was the only Swainson's reported this year. Three Zone-tailed Hawks were recorded, one in Oceanside-Vista and two in places we

have become accustomed to hearing about them, Escondido and Ventura. Five Harlan's Hawks were reported, two of which are supported with photographic evidence. No details were submitted for the others. Rough-legged Hawks made it as far south as Tejon Ranch, where photographed. Three were reported from Carrizo Plains; unfortunately, no accompanying details were provided. A Crested Caracara (CBRC) was reported from Del Norte, and the editors presume this report pertains to a bird that has been present in this general region; however, as of this writing no details have been forwarded to the editors or the CBRC.

Just five Black Rails on two counts (Auburn and Benecia) were reported—fewer than any season during the past 20 years. Sandhill Cranes were found in unusual places at Fall River Mills (2), Rancho Santa Fe, and Thousand Oaks. Six counts recorded 12 Pacific Golden-Plovers: Long Beach (4), San Diego (3), Santa Maria-Guadalupe (2), Sacramento, Rancho Santa Fe, and Point Reyes. Arcata (2), Centerville Beach to King Salmon, and Salton Sea North were unusual places to record Mountain Plover. An American Oystercatcher was photographed on the San Diego count. Eight Rock Sandpipers were found on three counts: Arcata (5), Del Norte (2), and Santa Cruz (1). An astonishing 134 Stilt Sandpipers were counted on the Salton Sea South count. A Ruff, which was photographed, was a nice find for the Point Reyes count. Moss Landing produced a well-documented Wilson's Phalarope.

Two Laughing Gulls were reported from the Salton Sea North count, and a Franklin's Gull that has been present for some time was recorded in Del Norte. Salton Sea South also recorded two Heermann's Gulls. Centerville Beach to King Salmon provided good details (and a sketch) of a Heermann's Gull. Four Lesser Black-backed Gulls (CBRC) on four counts are supported with excellent details and/or photographic evidence: Buena Vista, Clear Lake, San Jacinto

Lake, and Salton Sea South. A Yellow-footed Gull was photographed on the Salton Sea South count. Glaucous-winged Gulls were recorded in higher than usual numbers on many southern California and inland counts. Thirteen Glaucous Gulls were reported on 10 counts, all coastal except Folsom. In addition to the higher numbers found at Arcata (28) and Centerville Beach to King Salmon (10), Black-legged Kittiwakes were found in smaller numbers at Point Reyes (4), Monterey (2), and Western Sonoma (1). A Thick-billed Murre (CBRC) was reported from Point Reyes and is only the third year this species has ever been recorded on a California count.

Only two Spotted Doves were reported this year, one at Mojave River Valley and another during count week at Orange County North. With 479 counted this year, Anza-Borrego continues to be a stronghold for White-winged Dove; nearby Salton Sea counts, North (5) and South (2), added a few as well. Farther from known areas, Santa Barbara added two photographed birds to the total. Inca Doves were reported only from Salton Sea counts, with both the North (9) and the South (23) accounting for the entire state's total. Just three Vaux's Swifts were seen this year, one each at Marin, Oceanside-Vista, and Sacramento.

A Williamson's Sapsucker was photographed in Ventura where not expected. Eleven Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reported on eight counts, all single birds except for Los Angeles, which reported three well-documented birds.

Four Hammond's Flycatchers were found, one each at Long Beach, Orange County North, Point Reyes, and San Diego. Gray Flycatchers were found at Anza-Borrego (3), Pasadena-San Gabriel (2), San Bernardino Valley (2), Orange County Coastal (2), Santa Barbara, Santa Ana, and Claremont. An experienced observer found a Dusky Flycatcher at Big Sur. Western (presumed Pacific Slope) Flycatchers were found at Long Beach, Pasadena, Monterey Peninsula, and Rancho Santa

Fe. Five Eastern Phoebes were substantiated on as many counts: Orange County Coastal, Point Reyes, San Jose, Salton Sea South, and Long Beach added a count week bird. Eighteen Vermilion Flycatchers were recorded this winter, including a few farther from where they are becoming expected at Ventura (2), Orange County North, San Bernardino, Buena Vista, and China Lake. Ash-throated Flycatchers were recorded at Orange County Coastal and Long Beach. Tropical Kingbirds were found on four counts: Crystal Springs, Orange County Coastal, Santa Barbara, and Salton Sea South. A Thick-billed Kingbird was photographed on the Palos Verde Peninsula count.

Thirteen Northern Shrikes were found on eight northern counts, about average. Orange County Coastal was able to find the long-present Yellow-throated Vireo on count day. Fifteen Plumbeous Vireos on 12 counts, and eight Cassin's Vireos on seven counts, is close to the average tally for these species. Barn Swallows continue to be more numerous than they were a decade ago, with 328 tallied on 25 counts. Additionally, 64 Northern Rough-winged Swallows were seen on 13 counts.

A Gray Catbird on the Monterey Peninsula count, a photographed Brown Thrasher on the Año Nuevo count, and a count-first Bendire's Thrasher on the Salton Sea South count were all exciting discoveries. Other more expected mimids found on counts include four Crissal Thrashers on the Salton Sea North count and Le Conte's Thrashers at Carrizo Plains (2), Anza-Borrego, and Lancaster. Five Sprague's Pipits were reported from the Salton Sea South count, where they are regular in winter.

A gratifying variety of warblers was found throughout the state this count season. A Tennessee Warbler on the Santa Barbara count, 24 Nashville Warblers on 14 counts, and a well-described Lucy's Warbler on the San Diego count round out the unexpected *Vermivora* that were found. A Chestnut-sided Warbler was photographed in San



**Grace's Warbler (*Dendroica graciae*),
Santa Barbara, California.
Photo/Alexander R. Abela**

Diego and a second bird was reported from elsewhere, but no details were shared. Long Beach recorded (and photographed) a Magnolia Warbler. A count week Cape May Warbler was reported from Santa Cruz, and likely pertains to a bird that was present for some time during the winter, though no details on this were included. Likewise, no details were provided for a Black-throated Green Warbler known to be present for some time at Redlands-Mill Creek. Grace's Warblers (CBRC) were found at Rancho Santa Fe and Santa Barbara. Pine Warblers (CBRC) were photographed and well documented at Orange County Coastal, Pasadena, and San Diego. Twenty-four Palm Warblers were found on 13 counts, all coastal except a bird on the Salton Sea North count. Black-and-white Warblers were found at Oceanside-Vista (3), Santa Barbara, Mendocino, Palos Verde Peninsula, and Santa Clarita. Four American Redstarts statewide included two adult males at San Diego and single birds at Santa Barbara and San Juan Capistrano. Four Worm-eating Warblers (CBRC) is more than has ever been recorded on California CBCs. Single birds were found at Rancho Santa Fe, San Diego, San Francisco, and Ventura. Northern Waterthrushes were found on the Arcata, Palo Alto, and Santa Barbara counts. Two MacGillivray's Warblers were present for some time and well documented on the Orange County Coastal count. A Painted Redstart was reported from Claremont; this is presumed to be a bird that many have seen, but no details corroborate this notion.

San Diego remarkably recorded all four North American tanager species.

Stake-out Hepatic and Scarlet Tanagers helped to make this a reality. The Scarlet Tanager was new to the San Diego count and only the third ever recorded in winter in California—the other two records also pertain to San Diego area birds. Sixteen Summer Tanagers is about average and includes four in San Diego, two in Santa Barbara, two in San Juan Capistrano, two in Oceanside-Vista, and singles at Palos Verde Peninsula, Orange County Coastal, Santa Cruz, and a new count bird at Bakersfield. Twenty-three counts recorded Western Tanagers, most notably 17 in San Diego, which is a 25-year high. Orange County North (14) and Los Angeles (12) also reported higher than usual numbers of this species. A state total of 74 is above average for Western Tanager, and it was recorded on quite a few northerly counts, including Rio Cosumnes, San Francisco, Palo Alto, Monterey, Santa Cruz, Sonoma Valley, Santa Rosa, Putah Creek, and Caswell Westley.

Green-tailed Towhees were recorded at San Diego, Morongo Valley, and San Bernardino. Clay-colored Sparrows were well described for the Escondido and San Jose counts. A Black-chinned Sparrow, exceedingly rare in winter, was well described by an experienced observer on the Orange County North count. Three Grasshopper Sparrows were recorded this winter, two at Salton Sea South and one at Thousand Oaks. A Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow wouldn't show on count day for San Diego but was photographed during the count week period. A McCown's Longspur was well described for the Honey Lake count. Lapland Longspurs were found in small numbers on seven counts, including six at Arcata, four at Honey Lake, two at Centerville Beach to King Salmon and Anderson River, and one heard-only bird at Salton Sea South. Salton Sea South counted the largest share of Chestnut-collared Longspurs with 45, but the species was also recorded at Lincoln (10), Rio Cosumnes (2), Anderson River Park, and Cachuma. Eleven Rose-breasted Grosbeaks is

almost twice the average number recorded annually; birds were recorded at San Diego (2), Morro Bay (2), Monterey Peninsula, Orange County North, Los Angeles, Pasadena-San Gabriel, Santa Cruz, Tejon Ranch, and Salton Sea North. Only two Black-headed Grosbeaks were recorded—a photographed bird in Oakland and a feeder bird at Ukiah. Additionally, two others were recorded during count week—one at Crystal Springs and another at Santa Barbara.

Rusty Blackbirds (CBRC) provided a nice surprise on the Oceanside-Vista and Salton Sea South counts, as did a Common Grackle (CBRC) on the Anza-Borrego count where a Bronzed Cowbird was also found. Five Orchard Orioles, four of which were on the San Diego count, is about average over the past five seasons. The fifth bird, photographed on the Del Norte count, could not have been much farther north. Hooded Orioles were recorded in San Diego (4), Santa Barbara, Centerville Beach to King Salmon, Palo Alto, and a count week bird in Bakersfield. Three Baltimore Orioles, two in Los Angeles and a photographed bird in Monterey Peninsula, were about average. Scott's Orioles were recorded on two counts: Morongo Valley (13) and Anza-Borrego (3). Finally, a single Pine Grosbeak was found at Woodfords.

Several birds were removed from the database this year, including Iceland Gull, Black-chinned Hummingbird, four Cliff Swallows, and three MacGillivray's Warblers. All were reported without any supporting documentation or explanation.

We are grateful for all of the excellent documentation, sketches, and photographs that were sent our way this year. California's counts are some of the best to be found because we have so many dedicated and diligent birders willing to give of their knowledge and time. We also have a long list of compilers who take extra effort and care in compiling details and summaries and passing those on in a timely manner. You make our job easier, and you make us look forward to next year.

HAWAII/PACIFIC ISLANDS

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The 109th Christmas Bird Count for Hawaii and the Northwest Islands region included 10 count circles this year: Midway Atoll, Laysan Atoll, French Frigate Shoals, Waimea and Kapaa on Kauai Island, Waipio and Honolulu on Oahu Island, Kualapuu on Molokai Island, and North Kona and Volcano on Hawaii Island. Overall participation in the main Hawaiian Islands was low once again.

This year's counts of Laysan and Black-footed albatross were the highest recorded from Midway Atoll—722,000 and 43,600 birds, respectively—but this was due to sampling differences rather than a greater number of birds nesting. Another Short-tailed Albatross turned up on Midway this year, as did one on Laysan Island. Bonin Petrel counts on Midway continue to soar, presumably in response to the eradication of rats in the 1990s, with a high of 11,170 petrels reported this year. The Laysan count reported a new high of 5000 Bonin Petrels. The 31 Tristram's Storm-Petrel on the French Frigate Shoals count was the most ever. This year's seabird rarity was a Brewster's Brown Booby on Laysan, thousands of miles from its usual haunts along the Pacific coast of Central America.

The three native Hawaiian waterfowl were all newsworthy this year. The growing Nene population on Kauai was reflected in a high count of 213 on the Kapaa Circle, where there was also a staggering 552 Hawaiian Duck recorded. The introduced Laysan Duck population on Midway tallied to 226 birds, an encouraging sign that a significant proportion of the population survived a botulism event. There were few highlights among the reports of migratory waterfowl: four Blue-winged Teal on the Honolulu circle, and a high count of 62 Northern Pintail and a Canvasback on the Molokai circle.

Numerous shorebird rarities showed up among the regular overwintering migrants. On the Molokai circle a straggler Whimbrel of the North American race was spotted among five Bristle-thighed Curlews. A Curlew Sandpiper turned up at the Waiawa Unit of the Pearl Harbor N.W.R. on the Waipio count circle. Two Ruffs appeared on Laysan Island, as did two Red-necked Phalaropes. A Red Phalarope was reported during count week on the Midway Circle. A Black-legged Kittiwake was documented as a new species for the Midway circle during count week.

Among the land birds, the most notable sightings included a massive count of 96 Red-crowned Amazons for the Waipio Circle and another 42 on the Honolulu Circle. Rose-ringed Parakeets

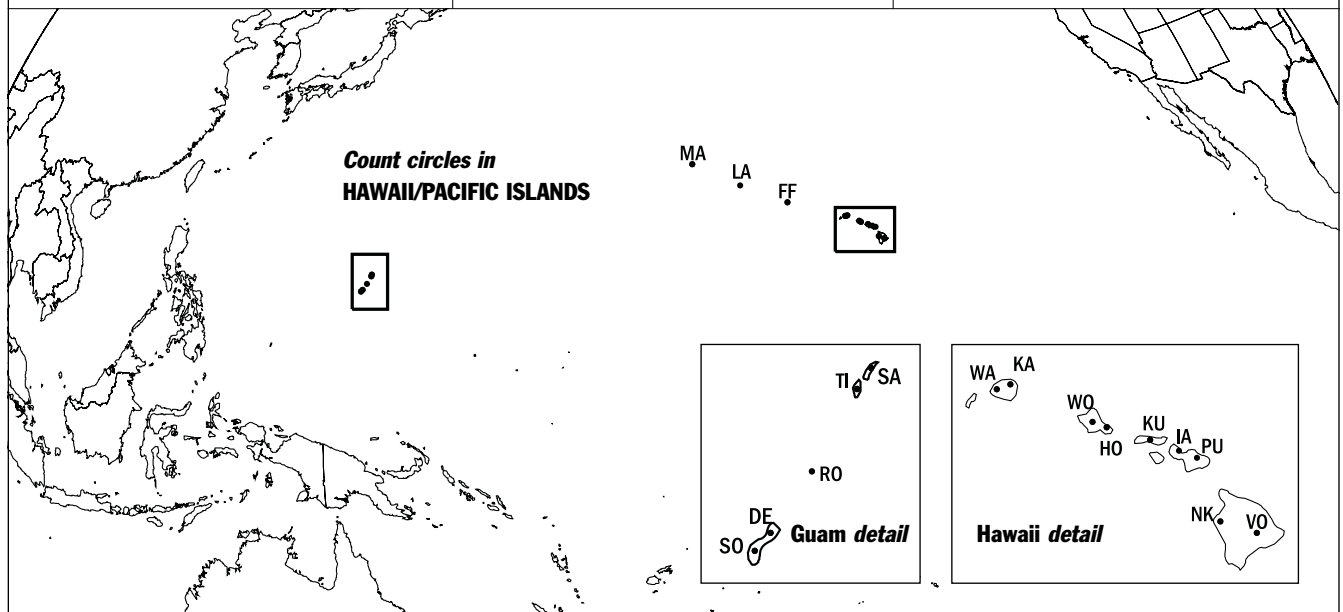


Brewster's Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster brewsteri*), Laysan Island, Hawaii.
Photo/USFWS via Thane Pratt

appeared on both circles in more modest numbers, with three and six birds, respectively. Two Mariana Swiftlets were reported from the Honolulu Circle, near where they breed in a single cave.

Participants on Hawaiian CBCs rarely have an opportunity to include rare native forest birds in their tallies. Four endangered Oahu Elepaio were tallied on the Waipio circle. On the Waimea circle, counters detected three Akikiki and two Akekee, two species petitioned to be listed as endangered species. On the Volcano circle, six Akiapolaau and one Hawaii Creeper, both listed endangered species, were seen.

For the Pacific region, five count circles in the Mariana Islands reported—Saipan, Tinian, Rota, Dededo Guam, and Southern Guam. Coverage was good again this year. Pacific Reef-Egrets throughout the Mariana Islands were counted either at or above record numbers. Could the record five Black-naped Terns on Saipan and nine on the



Southern Guam Circle indicate that this species is poised to establish itself in the archipelago? The Black-backed Wagtail on Saipan was new not just for the count circle but for the region as well. Other unusual vagrants included a Common Redshank on the Southern Guam circle, a Black-tailed Godwit on the Dededo Guam circle, and a Long-billed Dowitcher on Saipan. Several resident land birds showed high numbers: four Micronesian Megapodes on Saipan, 13 Mariana Crows and 33 Rota White-eyes on Rota, and high counts of Micronesian Honeyeater and Micronesian Startling throughout the Northern Marianas. The Orange-cheeked Waxbill population on Saipan continues to explode, and 111 were counted there.

MEXICO/BELIZE

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The 109th Christmas Bird Count season was great because we “rescued” two of the richer circles (based on the number of bird species and the number

of participants) from the Mexico and Belize region—Belmopan and Belize City. The information from these counts has been missing for at least the past five years, but this year a couple of enthusiastic birders from Belize facilitated getting the information entered into the CBC database, and we hope we can continue working with them in future seasons.

Two more circles from Belize were again included, Gallon Jug and Punta Gorda. In Mexico, two new circles were added: Barranca Rancho La Liebre in Sinaloa, and Madera in Chihuahua. Additionally, 20 other circles were conducted in Mexico, totaling 22 circles out of the 30 currently active.

During the 109th CBC we had 381 birders participating in the region. The counts with the highest number of participants were Laguna de Chapala (37 observers), Gallon Jug (35), and Belmopan (30). As expected, the four circles from Belize were the ones that had the highest diversity of bird species: Belize City (251 species), Punta Gorda (239), Belmopan (233), and Gallon Jug (201). In Mexico the circles with the most bird species recorded were Coast of Central Veracruz at 175, followed by Ensenada Baja California at 168, San

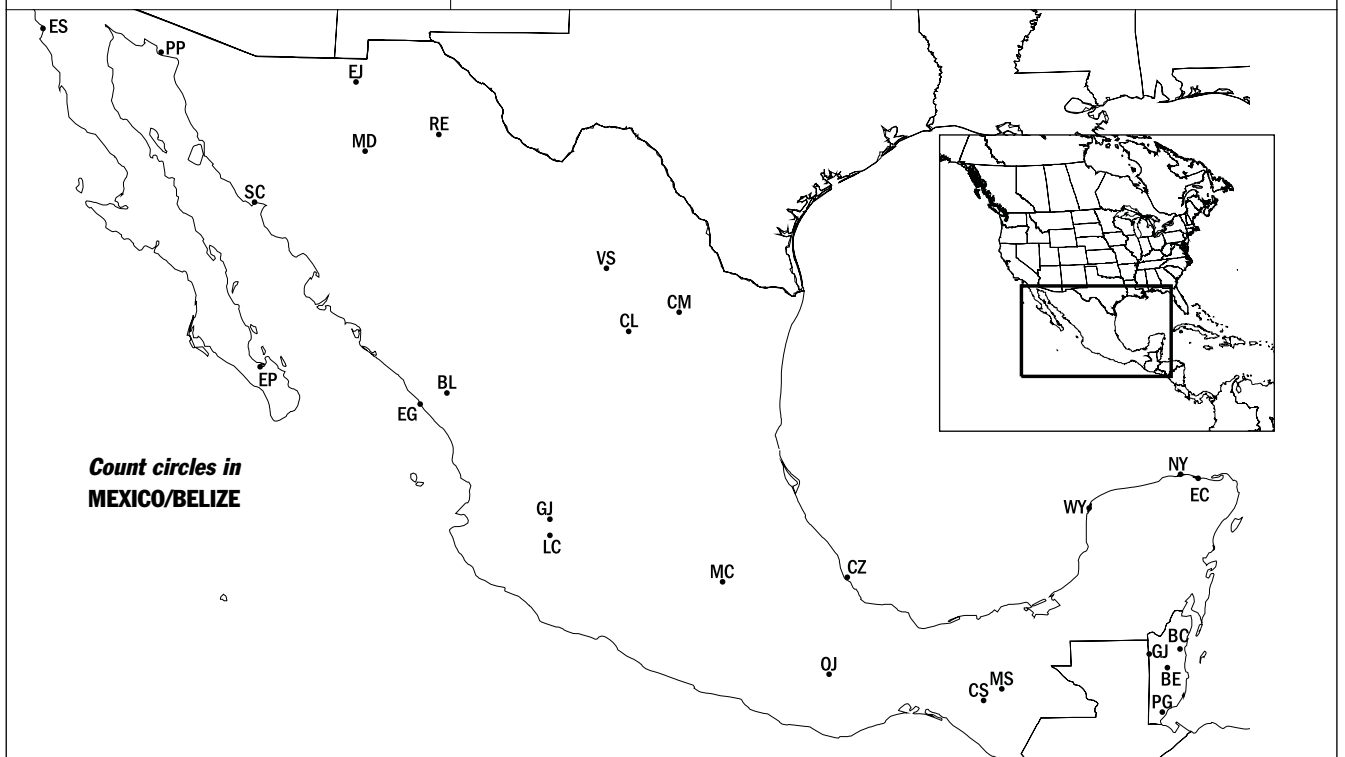


Golden-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus satrapa*), Cumbres de Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico. Photo/Rene Valdes

Carlos Sonora at 147, and El Cuyo Yucatan at 146. In all, 127,104 birds were tallied during the 109th CBC in the Mexico/Belize region. The circles that registered the highest numbers of individual birds were Ensenada (18,399), San Carlos (12,801), Guadajajara Jalisco (12,727), and Puerto Peñasco Sonora (12,408).

Remarkable records and comments from the Mexico/Belize region follow.

Belize: Punta Gorda (Lee Jones)—Rain early in the morning affected the number of forest species recorded. Along with weather, low participation this year resulted in our second-lowest species total. Nevertheless, we recorded five species new to the count—American Wigeon, Least Grebe, Lovely



Cotinga, American White Pelican, and Band-backed Wren. Belize City had two new species (Blue Grosbeak and Giant Cowbird), while Belmopan had seven new birds (Black-cowled Oriole, Blue Grosbeak, Swainson's Thrush, Stripe-throated Hermit, Long-billed Hermit, Common Pauraque, and Muscovy Duck).

Mexico: El Cuyo, Yucatan (Melgar Tabasco)—In previous years we have observed higher numbers of birds. Last year we didn't have enough rain in the region, and this year the lagoons didn't have enough water. However, we still had nine new species for the circle—Ring-necked Duck, Least Bittern, Purple Gallinule, Snowy Plover, Wilson's Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Wilson's Snipe, Caspian Tern, and Mangrove Cuckoo.

Puerto Peñasco, Sonora (Steve Ganley)—Our species count was 118, a little low, but we did have 12 count week birds, which would have given us 130. We were low because we did not have enough people to cover all of the areas on count day. Counters added four species to our checklist: Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Eastern Phoebe, Ruddy Ground-Dove, and Bronzed Cowbird. We also had our third Rusty Blackbird for the count, very rare for Mexico. The expansion of the town and the loss of vegetation within the count circle has caused us to lose most of our small passerines. Sparrows and desert birds are getting hard to find.

Ensenada, Baja California, had four unusual records: Lesser Yellowlegs, Gray Flycatcher, Tennessee Warbler, and Orchard Oriole. Oaxaca de Juarez had three new records: Magnolia Warbler, Monk Parakeet, and Sora. Northeastern Coast of the Yucatan Peninsula had four new records: Red-breasted Merganser, Singing Quail, Gray-headed Kite, and Long-billed Dowitcher.

San Carlos, Sonora (Terry Brownell)—Land birds were sparse. Most of the big pelagic species were present in large numbers. Pacific Loons have recovered from low points while Eared Grebes remain low. New records were Prairie Falcon and Pine Siskin.

We extend many thanks to all, both compilers and birders, for their enthusiasm and commitment to the CBC initiative. All your hard work is well worthwhile.

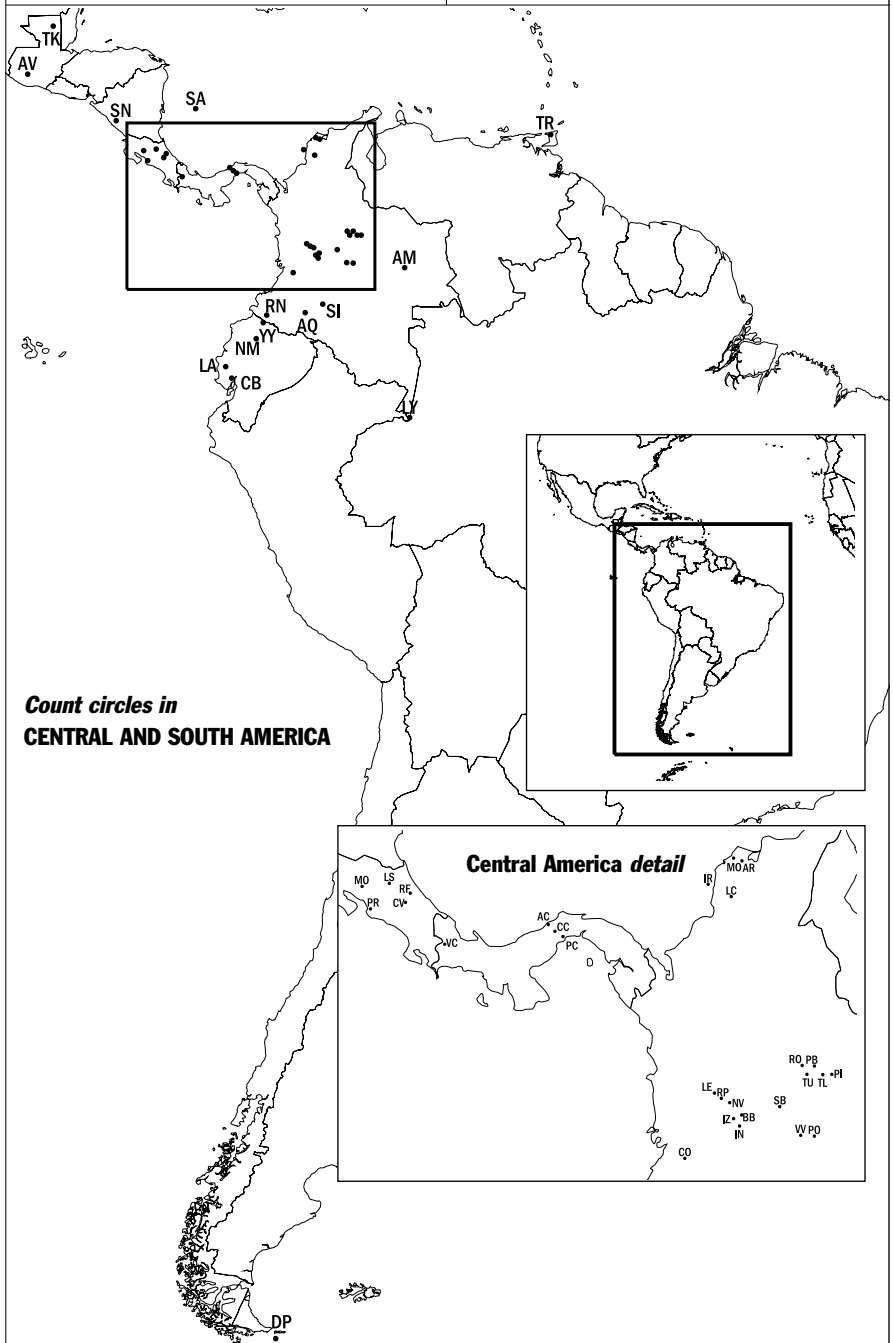
CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA

Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Chile, and Trinidad

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A total of 43 counts from Latin America continues an increase in

counts, but many in Brazil and Amazonia are absent again. The increase is largely due to the effort in Colombia, where 25 counts were submitted. In Ecuador, Mindo was just short of its previous all-time high with 420 instead of 425. Compiler Lani Miller worried about some declines in otherwise common birds: Bronze-winged Parrot dropped from 121 to 24; Red-eyed Vireo from 121 to 24; the noisy and conspicuous Pale-legged Hornero went from 79 last year to 26 this year; and the ubiquitous Tropical Kingbird went from 159 to 109. Many hummingbird numbers





Adelie Penguins (*Pygoscelis adeliae*), Cape Crozier, Antarctica. Photo/Noah Strycker

have dropped, even though the feeders that helped them multiply exponentially are still there. On the Cerro Blanco-Puerto Hondo Estuary count in Ecuador several Tumbesian specialties were no-shows, although they usually are seen regularly in Cerro Blanco. Seabirders in the South Atlantic Ocean, Drake Passage, recorded 21 species overall, with an outstanding total of 3633 Black-browed Albatross.

Central America hosted 12 counts again: two in Guatemala, one in Nicaragua, five in Costa Rica, and the usual four in Panama. High species total for Central America went to the excellent Rain Forest Aerial Tram count in Costa Rica, with 398. La Selva-Lower Braulio Carillo was second with 375 (last year's high species count for Central America). Atitlan Volcano, Guatemala, compiled by Knut Eisermann, included the participation of several local guides, children, and teenagers building their birding skills. Excellent work! The Endangered Horned Guan and Azure-rumped Tanager were counted again, this being the second year of the count. Two Yellow-green Vireos were noteworthy (winters in South America), as were 24 Cave Swallows that have been recorded several times along the Guatemalan Pacific slope mountains more recently. At Tikal, Guatemala, Swallow-tailed Kite, Philadelphia Vireo, Black Catbird, and Swainson's Warbler were nice finds. The Atlantic Panama Canal count suffered an unusually low species count (254) due to poor participant turnout. As a consequence, the Pacific Canal count was tops with 268. Even the Central Canal count that is usually far

behind the Atlantic was a close to overtaking the more species-rich Atlantic circle. Streak-chested Antpitta and Yellow-throated Warbler were good additions to this year's Pacific count.

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The region had 15 Christmas Bird Counts this season, including 14 Antillean counts and the venerable Bermuda CBC. This year I saw a tremendous effort put forward; high count honors went to Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico, with 133 species, followed by Arecibo, PR, and New Providence, Bahamas, tied at 111 species. Fajardo, PR, had the highest participation in the Antilles with 48 observers, followed by Arecibo with 41. The Bahamas had four counts reporting this year, Puerto Rico had three counts, and the U.S. and British Virgin Islands combined had five circles (U.S. 3 and British 2). The eight CBCs from Cabo Rojo, PR, to Anegada, BVI, represent a terrific transect for assessing migrant versus resident species winter population trends. The four CBCs in the Bahamas, although clustered in the northern islands, could also provide some interesting trend data. Bermuda's effort is always outstanding; 19 observers put in 73.5 hours, the highest party hour effort of all counts,

and they reported a very high tally of 96 species including a Ross's Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, and a Brown Booby.

Some of the rarities reported seem to have also clustered as well. Single Antillean Nighthawks and Chuck-will's-widows were reported from three sites on Puerto Rico. Both species were noted at Arecibo; Chuck-will's widow at Cabo Rojo, and Antillean Nighthawk from Fajardo, for an unusual circumstance of these two caprimulgids overlapping geographically and temporally. Least Terns lingered on the Puerto Rico Bank, one at Cabo Rojo and the other at Tortola. A Gull-billed Tern was seen during the Salinas-Bani, Dominican Republic, count. It seemed like a gull's winter in the northern part of the region this year, with seven species recorded at Bermuda and five in the Bahamas. Lincoln's Sparrows were found as widely dispersed as Abaco, Bahamas, in the north, and Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico, in the south.

I recommend using the interactive data search engine provided by National Audubon to assess general trends of species over time for single or multiple counts. For example, I looked at three species—two migrant warblers and a resident cuculid (Smooth-billed Ani)—that I was fairly confident would be counted on most CBCs throughout the Caribbean/Bermuda region. Northern Parula is fairly common in the West Indies during the winter. Cape May Warbler is also found in winter in the region, but its abundance is not as robust as the parula (Pashley, D.N., &



Partial albino Northern Parula (*Parula americana*), New Providence Island, Bahamas. Photo/Neil McKinney

R.P. Martin. 1988. The contribution of Christmas Bird Counts to knowledge of the winter distribution of migratory warblers in the neotropics. *American Birds* 42: 1164-1176). The parula was reported on 7.95 counts during the 20-year period, Cape May was reported on 6.36 counts, and the ani on 9.5 counts during the period. The migrant warblers (Figures 1 and 2) seem to be trending lower in recent years, while the Smooth-billed Ani seems to be holding on (Figure 3). These trends may be indicators of climate change in some subtle and yet poorly understood way. The quality of home territories for warblers in North America, for example, has been under stress from air pollution and insect infestations, to name two potential causes. As for the resident ani, which tends to adjust favorably to disturbed habitats and insect blooms, habitat stress, and infestations, the species would appear to be maintaining their populations in the region.

The rewards of CBCs may be as varied as the number of people who volunteer their time each year to do them. And every once in awhile there is a report of a bird that seems to make it all worthwhile. One of the more spectacular finds, in my opinion, was the Golden Swallow reported from the Puerto Escondido, DR, count. This swallow is perhaps one of the most endangered species in the Greater Antilles. This two-island endemic, Jamaica and Hispaniola, is so infrequently reported it warrants mention here. It would be most important to do a CBC-type count in the same area during the bird's presumed breeding season to verify its status.

Figure 1. General winter population trend for Northern Parula in the West Indies using CBC data from 1989 to 2008.

Figure 2. General winter population trend for Cape May Warbler in the West Indies using CBC data from 1989 to 2008.

Figure 3. General winter population trend for Smooth-billed Ani in the West Indies using CBC data from 1989 to 2008.

