

During the 114th CBC 235 people put in 440 person-counts and participated in 25 Louisiana Christmas Bird Counts. Counters found 260 species, six higher than last year, which isn't surprising given the higher effort reported. The three most abundant birds were icterids: Brown-headed Cowbird (6,972,586 with almost 98% at Pine Prairie), Red-winged Blackbird (5,851,254 with 73% at Pine Prairie), and Common Grackle (370,714). These were followed by three waterbirds: Snow Goose (310,850), American Coot (81,858), and White-faced Ibis (78,200, including a remarkable 51,715 at White Lake).

The Sabine count in southwestern Louisiana finally reached a pre-Hurricane Rita count of 179, more than 20 species above the next highest count, which was Lacassine N.W.R.-Thornwell with 157 species. Only Sweet Lake-Cameron Prairie N.W.R. also topped 150 with 153 species this year. North Louisiana's top count again went to Bossier-Caddo-Bienville with 121 species, with Shreveport and Natchitoches not far behind with 114 and 112 species respectively.

A stakeout **Iceland Gull** on the St. Tammany-Northshore count represents only one of the few records of this species ever in Louisiana; other gull vagrants included a **Thayer's Gull** and **Glaucous Gull** on the Sabine N.W.R. count. **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, a now regular but uncommon species, and **Franklin's Gull**, a rare winter holdover, were both found on three counts totaling seven and five birds, respectively, including one each on the Shreveport count in north Louisiana. Other great finds were a stake-out **Brown Booby** on the St. Tammany-Northshore count, a stake-out **Ferruginous Hawk** on the Sabine Count, a rare winter **Magnificent Frigatebird** on the Grand Isle count, and two **Western Grebes** on the Shreveport count.

A total of 243 hummingbirds of six species were counted, with Rufous Hummingbird accounting for more than half. Ruby-throated Hummingbird was the next most common, followed by Black-chinned Hummingbird, Buff-bellied Hummingbird, Calliope Hummingbird, and Broad-tailed Hummingbird.

The recent trend of a **Say's Phoebe** winter influx continued, although with only about half as many birds (7) as last year, but adding to the previous 30 all-time records. Other unusual flycatchers found included **Western Kingbird** (6), **Least Flycatcher** (3), **Ash-throated Flycatcher** (1), **Couch's Kingbird** (1), and **Great Kiskadee** (1). Despite the unusually cold winter, the warbler list totaled a pretty typical 14 species, including **Yellow Warbler** (1), **Ovenbird** (1), **American Redstart** (1), **Black-throated Gray Warbler** (1), **Prairie Warbler** (2), **Northern Waterthrush** (2), and **Black-throated Green Warbler** (2). Although Louisiana tallied 80 Wilson's Warbler last winter, only 5 were found this year, all from the Grand Isle count.

The cold weather may have pushed more Fox Sparrows into Louisiana than usual, with 133 birds reported from 17 counts, whereas it is normally reported from 6-13 counts. This count, however, is still much lower compared to the 1960s and 1970s, indicating a long-term decline in Louisiana. This trend, however, may not necessarily represent a widespread decline, but rather a northward shift in the winter range. Based on Christmas Bird Count data collected between 1966 and 2005, Niven et al. (2009) showed that the center of the Fox Sparrow winter distribution shifted northward by 287 miles and away from coastal areas by 227 miles. This is the 8th most dramatic northward shift among 305 species analyzed by Niven et al. (2009, *American Birds*). To put these distances in perspective, the linear

distance from Lake Charles to Shreveport is only about 160 miles. Given that south Louisiana is at the southern edge of Fox Sparrow's wintering range, it may be that we are already witnessing the effects of climate change on the distribution of this short-distance migrant.

