

The 74th consecutive Elizabethton CBC was held on 17 Dec 2016.

Twenty-four observers in 6 parties, plus one feeder-watcher, participated. Conditions were generally favorable: mild (35-66 degrees), mostly cloudy, but rather windy, especially in the higher elevations.

A total of 80 species were tallied, tying the all-time high for this count set in 2012. By comparison, the average over the last 30 years was 72 species.

Highlights:

12 species of ducks (+ 4 more in count week) - in particular, wigeon, shoveler, Green-wg. Teal, both scaup, & Red-br. Merganser are scarce on this count, but all were found this year.
Double-cr. Cormorant - 4, found for just 7th time on this CBC, 6 times since 2004.
Red-headed Woodpecker - 2, just 3rd time in last 24 years & 10th ever on this CBC.
Red-br. Nuthatch - 7, above average number this year.
Pine Warbler - 3, only 3rd time on this CBC in last 50 years & most ever.
Savannah Sparrow - 1, first on this CBC in 16 years (not much accessible habitat).
Purple Finch - 9, most on this CBC since 1987.
Red Crossbill - 7, only 4th occurrence on this CBC in last 30 years.

Notable misses:

Brown Creeper
White-crowned Sparrow
Pine Siskin

Comments on selected species showing rather obvious trends on this CBC:

Wild Turkey - 114 - second most in last 24 years, none before that.
Great Blue Heron - 26 - tied for 2nd most ever; species continues to increase locally.
Bald Eagle - 4 - found 17 of last 18 years, only 3 times before that.
Killdeer - 3 - continuing decline on this CBC likely due to habitat loss / degradation.
Eur. Collared-Dove - 11 - found 5 of last 8 years.
Belted Kingfisher - 21 - tied for 2nd most ever.
Red-bellied Woodpecker - 47 - most ever; steady increase in foothills & lower mtns;
by comparison, CBCs here in 1970s had single-digit counts of this species.
Com. Raven - 13 - annual since 1974, none before.
E. Bluebird - 177 - 3rd highest ever (2010 & 2011), steady increase in recent decades.
Chipping Sparrow - 29 - 13th straight year found & 16th of last 19 years; sporadic earlier;
steady winter increase in recent years.
Field Sparrow - 7 - fewest since 1996.
Song Sparrow - 71 - fewest since 1974.
White-thr. Sparrow - 58 - fewest since 1969.
These low sparrow numbers may be due to drought this year (fewer seeds).

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