

## *Highlights of OAS's Christmas Bird Count—December 2023*

*by Jeff Stacey*



Photo Credit: Heather Klish

The most surprising feature of the 2023 Oakland Audubon CBC wasn't the 73 species found (although that is one of our higher totals) —it was the 51 degrees Fahrenheit during the day!

The amazing warmth led to quite a few unusual sightings of birds that don't usually linger that late into December. The best example of these was the Virginia Rail found at Independence Oaks (a count first). We also had high counts of American Wigeon and Ring-necked Ducks, plus single records of Northern Pintail and Eastern Towhee. The typical winter birds were present too, including Pine Siskins, American Tree Sparrows, and Dark-eyed Juncos. All three local falcons (American Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, and Merlin) were found as well. Lastly, we recorded four owl species including Barred Owl and Northern Saw-whet Owl, both difficult to find for this count.

Special thanks go out to the 65 participants (field observers and feeder watchers). We appreciate your participation and hope to see you on the next one!