

14th NASSAWADOX CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT, December 15, 2019

By Harry Armistead

28 participants found 109 species on a clear day with temperatures from 42-55, winds SW15-20 falling to 5, 6:30 A.M. - 5:30 P.M., good weather, permitting the boat to get out the six miles to Hog Island, where 12 unique count species were found.

HIGHLIGHTS. Some of the counts below are record highs. Rarities include single Common Eider, Great Cormorant, Golden Eagle, Osprey, and Lesser Black-backed Gull, plus two Blue-headed Vireos. The eagle and one of the vireos were well-photographed.

Notable high counts: c. 10,000 Snow Geese, 2,000 Red-throated Loons, 461 Willets, 314 Marbled Godwits, c. 10,000 Dunlin, 10 Eastern Phoebe, 571 American Crows, 202 Eastern Bluebirds, and 737 American Robins. Considering that two-thirds of the count circle consists of bays, ocean, saltmarsh, islands, and beach, the landbird highs are especially remarkable. Most of the Willets and godwits found, as usual, at Willis Wharf.

Nassawadox Christmas Bird Count continues to fill in our knowledge of this, with the exception of Willis Wharf, rather unbirded area. Big thanks to Jim Murray for cheerfully permitting access to his Brickhouse Neck property and likewise to Bill Dyas for his farm. Thanks to Cutis and Lynn Badger for securing entry to Upshur Neck, a gated community. This count is always the Sunday of the first full weekend of the Christmas Bird Count period. In 2020 that is December 20.

Please consider helping in 2020. We need more help, especially since Nassawadox's date always conflicts with six other CBCs west of Chesapeake Bay.