

2015 Fall Bird Counts in South Carolina

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Five counts were held for the 2015 Fall Bird Count. The counts were held September 5 through October 9 in Greenville, Spartanburg, Cherokee, and Aiken counties and Congaree National Park. In spite of rainy weather on several of the counts, dedicated participants managed to generate some respectable numbers. Seventy-two observers in the field and 29 at feeders recorded a total of 146 species and 13935 individuals. The species total was better than the 142 reported last year but well short of the high of 168 in 2011. The number of warbler species reported, 27, was an improvement over last year's 24.

Greenville County: September 26/27, 100 species, 4130 individuals

Compiler: Paul Serridge

4 Audrey Lane
Greenville, SC 29615

Participants: Joan Baker, Shelby Birch, Jeff Click, Don Cox, Steve Cox, Donnie Coody, Denise DuPon, Ed Engasser, Ruth Engasser, Chip Gilbert, Sara Gilbert, Joyce Hall, Simon Harvey, Peter Hens, Genny Hill, JB Hines, Rob Hunnings, Jerry Johnson, Len Kopka, Jane Kramer, Tim Lee, Yves Limpalair, Cathy McClintock, Eric McFalls, Chris Peak, Jim Pirrone, Merikay Pirrone, Charlie Rucinski, Barbara Serridge, Paul Serridge, Judith Webb, Art Young, Susan Zickos.

The count was originally scheduled for Saturday, September 26 with Sunday as the rain date. The weather was not conducive to birding on either day with very low cloud, mist, periods of rain, moderate wind, and less than perfect visibility. The decision on whether to bird on Saturday or postpone until Sunday was taken by individual leaders. The weather was marginally better on Sunday.

Twelve parties covered different areas of Greenville County, 4 on Saturday, 8 on Sunday. In addition, several individuals reported birds at backyard feeders or from spots not covered by parties.

One hundred species were reported, with a total of 4130 individuals. Those figures are similar to the averages over the past 10

years: 103 and 4448 respectively. Thanks to the commitment of all, we had a reasonable count in spite of the weather.

A Vesper Sparrow at Wilson's Farm was a first for a Fall Count, bringing the total species reported since we started keeping records to 156. At the other end of the birding spectrum a House Sparrow reported from a feeder was the only one of that species reported during the count. Only 1 House Sparrow in Greenville County?

Some expected species were not reported, in part because of the weather. For example, the weather wiped out the hawk watch at Caesar's Head and so there were no Broad-winged Hawks. Similarly, the weather put paid to any nocturnal birding and so no Eastern Screech-Owl was reported. But how does one explain a complete absence of Common Grackles in Greenville County over the 2 days of the count? Birding is certainly serendipitous.

Many thanks to all who participated, especially the leaders who submitted detailed reports in a very short time.

Spartanburg County: September 5, 91 species, 5009 individuals

Compiler: Lyle Campbell

126 Greengate Lane
Spartanburg, SC 29307-2215

Participants: Carole Anderson, Tom Broom, Tim Brown, Dan Bryant, David Campbell, Lyle Campbell, Sarah Campbell, Timothy Campbell, Alan Chalmers, Amy Coker, Cheryl Cooksey, Ed Elam, Kathleen Elam, Frank Guida, J. B. Hines, Frank Hull, Phyllis Hull, Jack Jennings, Nancy Mandlove, Joe Mitchell, Roberta Mitchell, Bill Myers, Mary Ann Myers, Eva Pratt, Sam Pratt, Doug Rayner, Stan Sargent, Elizabeth Storm, Jon Storm, Melissa Storm, Merike Tamm, Kristin Taylor, Kay Wealden, Richard Wealden, Dan Wootton, Nancy Wootton

Spartanburg had a fair Fall Count, considering that several key birders were not able to participate this year. We had 91 total species, including 11 warbler species. Sparrows and blackbirds were scarce. One chimney attracted 1200 migrating Chimney Swifts at dusk. Best birds were a Little Blue Heron, Barn Owl, and a Swainson's Warbler.

Cherokee County: September 13, 67 species, 1585 individuals

Compiler: Lyle Campbell

126 Greengate Lane
Spartanburg, SC 29307

Participants: David Campbell, Timothy Campbell, Claude Cobb, J. B. Hines, Karla Lavender, Tre Gee Parker

Six Cherokee Count birders found 67 species, including 5 species of warblers. Best warbler was a Blackburnian. The best bird in the area did not make the count. Claude Cobb observed a Swallow-tailed Kite during the week before count day, the first record we are aware of for Cherokee County.

Aiken County: October 9, 114 species, 2783 individuals

Compiler: Anne Waters
1621 Apple Valley Dr.
Augusta, GA 30906

Participants: Larry Eldridge, Eric Haskell, Paul Koehler, Willie Malpass, Julie Mobley, Eric Monaco, Mary Pallon, Lois Stacey, Peter Stangel, Mark Vukovich, Alice Walker, Doug Walker, Anne Waters, Calvin Zippler

Congaree National Park: September 27, 65 species, 506 individuals

Compiler: John Grego
Participants: Ron Ahle, Blaney Coskrey, John Grego, Fiona Hawley, Miriam Oudejans, David Schuetrum, Warren Steckle

A Fall 2015 Migration Count was held September 27 at Congaree National Park on an alternately overcast and rainy day. Nocturnal birding was slow but did result in a couple of owl and thrush species. Friends of Congaree Swamp sponsored an organized walk on the Low Boardwalk and Sims Trail in the morning, and a portion of this group later visited the east end of the park in the afternoon. Another small party covered other portions of the park during the morning. Migrants were active throughout the morning along the Low Boardwalk and Sims Trail, and many of them were foraging low, so party members had good looks at warblers, thrushes and cuckoos in spite of the generally poor viewing conditions. It was a particular treat to see Wood Thrush foraging on the ground at more than one location.

Conditions were worse in the afternoon, and a visit to the eastern portion of the park did not boost our species count as much as in the past.

Table 1. Fall 2015 bird counts in South Carolina

	Greenv	Spart	Cherok	Aiken	Congar	Total
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck				2		2
Canada Goose	259	347	30	33		669
Wood Duck	50	7		31		88
Mallard	65	78	2	2		147

	Greenv	Spart	Cherok	Aiken	Congar	Total
Blue-winged Teal				2		2
Green-winged Teal				1		1
Northern Bobwhite				1		1
Wild Turkey	50	4	3	2		59
Pied-billed Grebe	1			1		2
Double-crested Cormorant			4			4
Anhinga				10		10
Great Blue Heron	8	20	5	5	1	39
Great Egret	2	1	1	13		17
Little Blue Heron		1		2		3
Cattle Egret				7		7
Green Heron	2	4				6
White Ibis					1	1
Black Vulture	49	33	8	58	13	161
Turkey Vulture	28	23	23	21	4	99
Osprey	2	1	3	1		7
Bald Eagle			1			1
Northern Harrier	1	2		1		4
Sharp-shinned Hawk		2	1	1		4
Cooper's Hawk	1	2				3
Red-shouldered Hawk	9	10	2	15	6	42
Red-tailed Hawk	8	11	3	2	1	25
American Coot	1					1
Killdeer	29	6	49	24	4	112
Spotted Sandpiper		1			1	2
Solitary Sandpiper			4			4
Greater Yellowlegs				4		4
Lesser Yellowlegs				8		8
Least Sandpiper				33		33
Dunlin				1		1
Least Sandpiper				31		31
Western Sandpiper				1		1
Rock Pigeon	9	34	51	12		106
Eurasian Collared-Dove	6	12		7		25
Mourning Dove	196	383	175	63	3	820
Yellow-billed Cuckoo			3	10	10	23
Barn Owl		2				2
Eastern Screech-Owl				10	1	11
Great Horned Owl	3	3		3		9
Barred Owl	1	3		11	9	24
Common Nighthawk		24				24
Chimney Swift	269	2146	19	1	18	2453
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	239	77	4		2	322
Belted Kingfisher	11	9	1	7	3	31
Red-headed Woodpecker	10	14	8	26	2	60
Red-bellied Woodpecker	51	31	7	80	15	184
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker		3		9		12
Downy Woodpecker	34	18	4	39	7	102
Hairy Woodpecker	6	3	1	2	1	13
Red-cockaded Woodpecker				2		2
Northern Flicker	5	1	3	57	3	69
Pileated Woodpecker	15	11	2	27	12	67
American Kestrel	4	1	1	6	2	14
Peregrine Falcon	1					1
Eastern Wood-Pee wee	37	8	10	10	4	69
Acadian Flycatcher				1	5	6
Eastern Phoebe	49	17	2	46		114

	Greenv	Spart	Cherok	Aiken	Congar	Total
Great Crested Flycatcher		5	2	1		8
Eastern Kingbird		2	1			3
Loggerhead Shrike	1					1
White-eyed Vireo	3	10	9	23	24	69
Blue-headed Vireo	4			1	1	6
Red-eyed Vireo	8	1	3	11	1	24
Blue Jay	202	109	67	101	5	484
American Crow	510	176	69	149	13	917
Fish Crow	21	6	2	24	19	72
Common Raven	4					4
Purple Martin		6				6
Tree Swallow	1			7		8
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	1			264	68	333
Barn Swallow	1	1		12	1	15
Carolina Chickadee	128	64	28	86	17	323
Tufted Titmouse	103	65	24	101	23	316
White-breasted Nuthatch	21	19	3	16	3	62
Brown-headed Nuthatch	14	16	5	41	2	78
House Wren	1	2		5		8
Carolina Wren	110	77	33	104	23	347
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	2	8	2	3	2	17
Ruby-crowned Kinglet				8		8
Eastern Bluebird	170	179	51	46	1	447
Veery	1				1	2
Gray-checked Thrush					4	4
Swainson's Thrush	3			4	5	12
Hermit Thrush	1					1
Wood Thrush	4			2	12	18
American Robin	104	26	12	14		156
Gray Catbird	37	4		21	4	66
Brown Thrasher	34	10	2	50	3	99
Northern Mockingbird	57	59	10	53		179
European Starling	255	200	204	188		847
Cedar Waxwing		26				26
Ovenbird	6			1	1	8
Worm-eating Warbler	4				1	5
Northern Waterthrush		1		2		3
Blue-winged Warbler				2		2
Black-and-white Warbler	7			8	5	20
Prothonotary Warbler		1		1	1	3
Swainson's Warbler		1				1
Tennessee Warbler	8	1		4		13
Common Yellowthroat	10	2	1	12	10	35
Hooded Warbler	7		2	2	1	12
American Redstart	26	1		17	19	63
Cape May Warbler	2			1		3
Northern Parula	3			21	26	50
Magnolia Warbler	12	1		8	4	25
Bay-breasted Warbler				2		2
Blackburnian Warbler			1	2		3
Yellow Warbler	1	1				2
Chestnut-sided Warbler	12	1		1	1	15
Blackpoll Warbler				1		1
Black-throated Blue Warbler	5				2	7
Palm Warbler	7			48		55
Pine Warbler	8	6	6	67	8	95

	Greenv	Spart	Cherok	Aiken	Congar	Total
Yellow-rumped Warbler		1		3		4
Yellow-throated Warbler	3	2		2		7
Prairie Warbler	3		1	1		5
Black-throated Green Warbler	4			1		5
Yellow-breasted Chat	1				1	2
Eastern Towhee	20	8	4	43	3	78
Chipping Sparrow	21	13	28	18		80
Field Sparrow	18	4	8			30
Vesper sparrow	1					1
Savannah Sparrow				1		1
Grasshopper Sparrow		1				1
Song Sparrow	14	2	2	1		19
Dark-eyed Junco	2					2
Summer Tanager	2	1	3	6	2	14
Scarlet Tanager	14	1		3		18
Northern Cardinal	142	175	20	122	43	502
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	16		1	3		20
Blue Grosbeak	8	5		4		17
Indigo Bunting	98	3	5	30	6	142
Painted Bunting				1		1
Red-winged Blackbird	55		1	2		58
Eastern Meadowlark	12	6	2	1		21
Common Grackle		116	506	250	1	873
Brown-headed Cowbird	7	9	5	10		31
Orchard Oriole		3	1			4
Purple Finch		8				8
House Finch	41	80		1		122
American Goldfinch	129	118	17	1	8	273
House Sparrow	1	13	14	33		61
Species	100	91	67	114	63	146
Individuals	4130	5009	1585	2783	428	13935
Regular Count						
Hours foot	46.75	30.5	10	32.5	14	133.75
Hours car	15.85	27	4.5	16.25		63.6
Hours canoe/kayak	0.75					0.75
Miles foot	31	23.5	6	13.75	9.2	83.45
Miles car	259	420	120	114.5		913.5
Miles canoe/kayak	1					1
# Regular parties	12	17	3	9	2	43
# Regular observers	33	22	6	14	7	72
#Species		85	67	113		
#Individuals		2278	1575	2718		
Feeder Watch						
Hours Feeder Watch		60.5	7	3		70.5
#Feeder Watchers		23	3	3		29
#Feeder Stations		14	2	3		19
#Species		47	4	15		
#Individuals		679	10	35		724
Nocturnal						
Hours Nocturnal		2.5	0.5	2.75	2.25	8
Miles Nocturnal		6	0	6.5	6	18.5

	Greenv	Spart	Cherok	Aiken	Congar	Total
#parties nocturnal		5	1	2		8
#observers nocturnal		7	2	2		11
#Species		5	0	7		
#Individuals		2052	0	30		2082
Total						
Party Hours	68.1	120.5	22	51.5	16.25	278.35
Party Miles	291	449.5	126	134.75	15.2	1016.45
Time start	0645	0700	0700	0530	0445	
Time stop	1845	2200	2100	1630	1700	
Temperature: pre-dawn						
dawn		70	68	62		
AM	62	68	67	62		
noon		72	70	66		
PM	72	78	74	73		
sunset		72	85	76	81	
night		78	70	79		
		75	66	78		
wind: pre-dawn						
dawn	<12			0		
AM	<12			0		
noon	<12			0		
PM	<12			0		
sunset	<12			0		
night						
%clouds: pre-dawn						
dawn	100		100	100	100	
AM	100		100	100	100	
noon	100		100	60	100	
PM	100		100	75	100	
sunset	100		100	100	100	
night			100	100		
precipitation: pre-dawn						
dawn	rain	0	light	0		
AM	rain	0	light	0		
noon	rain	0	light	0		
PM	rain	0	light	0		
sunset	rain	0	light	0		
night		0	light			