

Christmas 2018 Bird Count for Heritage Oaks by Frances and Peter Rice

Every year across North America, the Audubon Society and other bird watching organizations conduct Christmas Bird Counts (CBC). This is the 119th annual CBC. The Sarasota chapter of the Audubon Society coordinates this effort in northern Sarasota County. A Christmas Bird Count was conducted here at Heritage Oaks Golf & Country Club on Saturday, January 5, 2019 by Peter & Frances Rice, Ted & Patti Blute, Bob Jones, Gene Ginsberg, Margaret Jarvie, Jamis & Marty Horn, Sally Zwadyk, and Susan Forte. We identified 38 bird species and 462 individual birds. We did not see any White-winged Doves for the first time in over ten years in this CBC at Heritage Oaks. This was very unusual. However, 31 of "our" White-winged Doves were seen perched in a tree, three miles NW of HOGCC, at the first bend of Raymond Road near the Celery Fields.

The following are the names and numbers of all of the bird species the team identified: Blackbellied Whistling-Duck (100); Blue-winged Teal (6); Hooded Merganser (2); Wood Stork (3); Magnificent Frigatebird (first time; flying SE high overhead) (1); Double-crested Cormorant (17); Anhinga (19); Great Blue Heron (16); Great Egret (25); Snowy Egret (8); Little Blue Heron (7); Tricolored Heron (9); Black-crowned Night-Heron (6); White Ibis (39); Glossy Ibis (51); Black Vulture (15); Turkey Vulture (7); Osprey (4); Bald Eagle (1); Red-shouldered Hawk (4); Common Gallinule (13); Limpkin (6); Sandhill Crane (8); Caspian Tern (1); Mourning Dove (15); Belted Kingfisher (3); Downy Woodpecker (2); Loggerhead Shrike (1); American Crow (12); Gray Catbird (1); Northern Mockingbird (14); Palm Warbler (14); Northern Cardinal (3); Common Grackle (1); and Boat-tailed Grackle (17).

For more information and a video about birds at Heritage Oaks Golf & Country Club, plus information on about living with alligators, visit the HOGCC Internet site. Click on these two pages: Member Home, then Nature & Audubon Certification.



CBC Bird Counters (Left to Right) – Standing: Bob Jones, Susan Forte, Marty Horn, Ted Blute, Frances & Peter Rice; Seated: Sally Zwadyk, Janis Horn, Patti Blute, Gene Ginsberg. Photo taken by Margaret Jarvie, also a CBC Bird Counter.