

A Barn Owl over Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley launched Oakland's 78th annual CBC at 3:30 am yesterday, and birding continued apace until 2:00 pm, when heavy rain convinced most birders who were still in the field to call it a day.

The count's preliminary total of 170 species was 9 below our 10-year average, and many area leaders reported that numbers of birds seemed well below normal. At last evening's compilation dinner a Ferruginous Hawk (our first since 1994) over north San Pablo Ridge was chosen as the count's best bird. Other nice finds included a Long-tailed Duck off the Berkeley Pier, a Western Tanager on Bay Farm Island, a Black-throated Gray Warbler near Haviland Hall on the UC campus, a Hermit Warbler near Lake Merritt, and Bald Eagles reported from several areas.

An apparently over-wintering adult male Summer Tanager found on October 30 in Claremont Canyon Regional Preserve went missing for a month but was re-found on December 7. Thereafter it was reported nearly daily through December 15 but, sadly, eluded detection on count day.

Birds seen at least 8 of the last 10 years, but missed yesterday, include White-winged Scoter, Loggerhead Shrike, Pine Siskin and Snow Goose. If any of these species (or any rare species) is seen within the count circle through Wednesday (end of count week), please let us know.

More than 250 people registered for this year's count but we won't know until late 2019 whether Oakland extended its now four-year long streak of having more field observers than any other Christmas Bird Count. Either way, my co-compiler, Bob Lewis, and I invite you to join Oakland's 79th CBC, on December 15, 2019.