

# 37th annual Christmas bird count covers Grant County and Antone

## Gadwall and ruddy duck seen in John Day

By Thomas Winters  
To the Blue Mountain Eagle

On Dec. 16, a dedicated group of 10 birders performed the 37th John Day Christmas Bird Count.

The weather was moderate this year with temperatures ranging around freezing, much better than last year's low of minus 2 degrees. And the sun made valiant efforts to warm us in the afternoon.

The sightings this year were pretty routine. A pair of gadwall and a ruddy duck were found on the Iron Triangle (formerly Grant Western) pond.

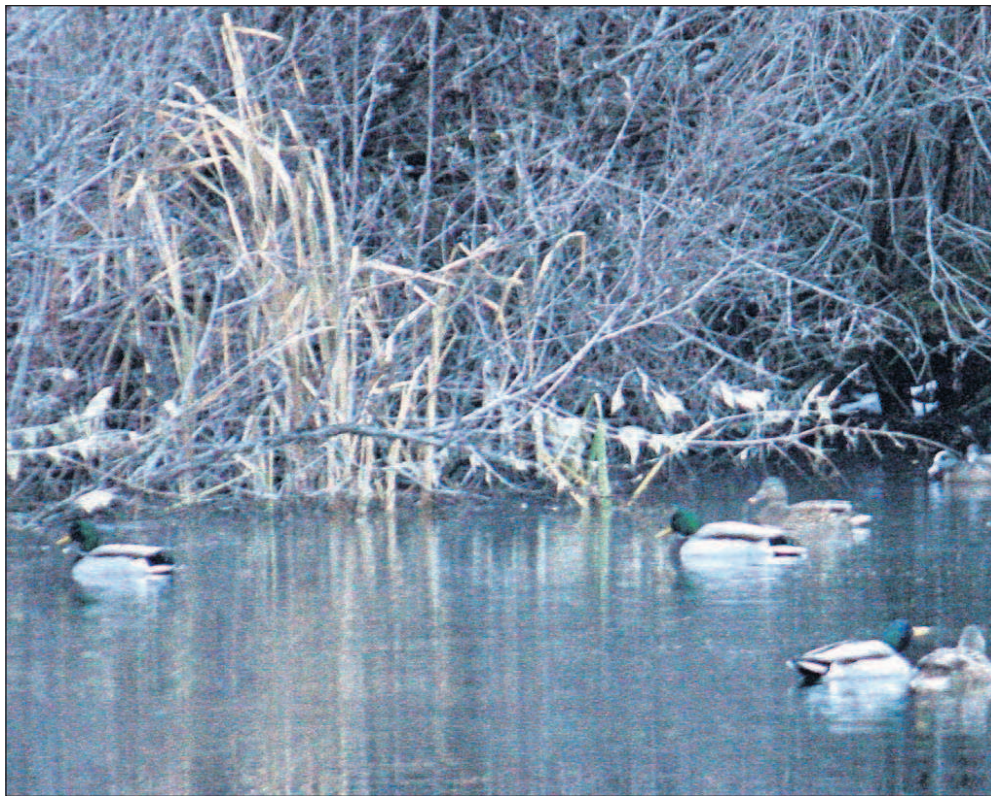
It had been nine years since gadwall were recorded, and this is only the second time a ruddy duck has appeared.

One species that has been seen on every previous count and was absent this year within the count area was rough-legged hawk. Eurasian collared-doves hit an all-time high, and are still expanding and increasing. Low snow levels allowed access to higher elevations where a black-backed woodpecker was found - this being only the fourth record for this count.

Special thanks go to the Holmstrom, Mullin and Crown (Carter) ranches for allowing access to their properties, and to Iron Triangle for allowing access to the Grant Western mill site.

Participants were Mike Bohannon, Karen Jacobs, Stacia Kimbell, Barbara and Peter Meyer, Clarence and Marilyn O'Leary, Jim Soupir, Allen Taylor and Tom Winters, with Anne Frost and Cecil Gagnon keeping track of their yard birds.

Birds seen: Canada goose



Contributed photo/Tom Winters

Four mallards and two American wigeons congregate in a pond at the old Grant Western lumber mill, as members of the Grant County Bird Club were out on their annual Christmas Bird Count.

(22), wood duck (6), gadwall (2), American wigeon (4), mallard (237), ring-necked duck (5), hooded merganser (7), ruddy duck (1), California quail (464), wild turkey (232), great blue heron (9), northern harrier (1), golden eagle (2), sharp-shinned hawk (3), Cooper's hawk (5), northern goshawk (1), bald eagle (23), red-tailed hawk (46), Eurasian collared-dove (441), mourning dove (43), great horned owl (6), belted kingfisher (5), downy woodpecker (4), hairy woodpecker (8), white-headed woodpecker (1), black-backed woodpecker (1), northern flicker (30), American kestrel (8), merlin (2), prairie falcon (1), northern shrike (2), Steller's jay (7), California scrub-jay (25), black-billed magpie (90), common raven (100), black-capped chickadee (11), mountain chickadee (15), red-breasted nuthatch (23), marsh wren (1), American dipper (2), golden-crowned kinglet (5), ruby-crowned

kinglet (1), Townsend's solitaire (83), American robin (1,250), varied thrush (1), European starling (969), cedar waxwing (119), fox

sparrow (1), dark-eyed junco (Oregon) (404), slate-colored junco (1), white-crowned sparrow (8), song sparrow (15), spotted towhee

(1), Brewer's blackbird (8), house finch (52), pine siskin (32), lesser goldfinch (4), American goldfinch (20), evening grosbeak (1) and house sparrow (78). Species not seen on the count day but during the count week include mountain quail.

On Monday, Dec. 18, the Antone Christmas Bird Count was held with eight participants meeting at the John Day Fossil Beds Visitor Center. Participants included the compiler from Corvallis, Joel Geier, who was accompanied by his daughter Martha, Pat Grediagin, Mardi Jensen, Jeff Picton, Dave and Laurie Robinson, Tom Winters and Roger Long of Monument School along with three of his students.

The weather was comparatively pleasant with some sunshine and temperatures that soared into the 40s. Low snow levels allowed access to some of the higher elevation areas. Special thanks to the national monument staffers who went out of their way to make sure we had a warm place to gather before the count and afterward for the countdown.

Species seen on this count included: Canada goose (96), mallard (24), northern pintail (3), common goldeneye (4), hooded merganser (10), common merganser (1), chukar (7), ruffed grouse (1), great blue heron (2), bald eagle (12), sharp-shinned hawk (1), Cooper's hawk (5), northern goshawk (2), golden eagle (3), American kestrel (5), prairie falcon (2), belted kingfisher (2), hairy woodpecker (1), northern flicker (5), northern shrike (2), black-billed magpie (62), common raven (46), black-capped chickadee (11), mountain chickadee (15), bushtit (25), red-breasted nuthatch (3), canyon wren (9), Pacific wren (1), American dipper (4), ruby-crowned kinglet (4), Townsend's solitaire (64), American robin (3,068), European starling (262), spotted towhee (1), song sparrow (22), white-crowned sparrow (7), Harris's sparrow (1), dark-eyed junco (Oregon) (192), house finch (2), red crossbill (6) and evening grosbeak (1).



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### Grant County Regional Airport Master Plan Wrap-Up Meeting

You are invited to attend this final meeting of the Grant County Regional Airport Master Plan project.

This meeting is an opportunity to review the selected alternatives for future airport development.

**When:** Monday January 22, 2018  
Noon-1 p.m.

**Where:** Grant County Regional Airport  
Terminal Building  
72000 Airport Road  
John Day, OR 97845

The Grant County Regional Airport serves as an important transportation link and economic resource to the County, and its residents. This Airport Master Plan will provide the "Flight Plan" for the future development at the airport for the next 20 years.

Your participation in the process is welcome and appreciated.

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