

Arrowhead Ponds Report

Friday, December 6th, 2019

Leader Dan Bohlmann

We found when we arrived at our usual location on the Melinda Avenue Bridge that someone forgot to notify the usual birds to show up. All the dozen Black-crowned Night Herons, Great Blue Herons, Great and Green Herons, Great and Snowy Egrets and ducks of any type were all missing and in every previous year they were always there. Some ponds in another neighborhood must have offered them a better deal - some better food, a private swimming area or lush greenery. Even the usual residential birds weren't there including the always there Black Phoebe. The only birds we saw there were the 100+ Rock Doves resurfacing the roof of one house , a lonely American Coot and a lost Gila Woodpecker.

We decided that we would try another pond nearby in Arrowhead that has some waterfalls and it awarded us with a large community of around 50 Double-crested Cormorants. Hidden among them was some of the birds we expected to see at the first place: Black-crowned Night Heron, Mallards, a Great Blue Heron, lots of Great-tailed Grackles, and a Spotted Sandpiper putting on a show for us.

We then moved on to the Bird Blind on 59th Ave hoping to see the usual 300 + Common Mergansers but they must have heard about the spectacular pond that the other birds went to because they also were not there along with the other 15 types of ducks. The only ducks we saw were a flock of 50+ Ruddy Ducks sleeping on the other side of the lake. There were also two Great Egrets on the far side of the lake. Some of our group saw a Costa's Hummingbird, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Verdin, and also heard a Belted Kingfisher in the trees around the bird blind.

From there we went over to Thunderbird Park to see what desert birds we

could find. At first we thought it was going to be sparse birding and then things came alive. Cactus Wrens, Curve-billed Thrashers, Anna's Hummingbird, and Mockingbirds were everywhere. We had a Gilded Flicker and a Ladderback Woodpecker show up. Then in two trees we suddenly had a surge of multiple birds, who knows how many of each, Black-throated Sparrows, Black-tailed and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, and White-crowned Sparrows. The final sighting was a covey of Gambel's Quail.

The next stop was an irrigation ditch that ran in front of a school that was filled with American Wigeon and we spent a little time trying to find the Eurasian Wigeon that was there previous years with them. The Americans get a little irritated when you ask if they have a brownish-red head.

The last spot was some large lakes on the other side of 67th Avenue on Arrowhead Drive. Usually these lakes have a large variety of Ducks, Egrets and Herons. But not this year. All we saw was lots of Coots ,Domestic Geese, and a few ducks that we had already seen. We did find our Black Phoebe, and a few Yellow-rump Warblers. So we ended up with 30 Species.

Attendees: Dorothy Hansen, Shelly Gordon, Adrian Reznik, John & Judi Heath, Karen Bulkeley, Peggy Cullen and Dan Bohlmann