

## A COMPARISON OF AUBURN/OPELIKA AND CALLAWAY GARDENS CBC'S, 2006

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The Auburn/Opelika Christmas Bird Counts (CBC's) and the Callaway Gardens CBC's have been conducted by the author for a number of years (Dusi 1991). Both counts occur in localities that have mostly flat, or slightly undulating terrain, numerous pasture areas, many ponds or lakes and some forested land. Callaway Gardens is over 100 feet higher than Auburn and is approximately 20 miles north and 30 miles east of Auburn. The two count sites are separated by the Chattahoochee River.

The 2006 CBC's were done 10 days apart and are representative of the counts through the years. The Auburn/Opelika Count (A/OC) was made on 20 December 2006. Sixteen participants in 12 parties drove a total of 354.9 miles (571 km) and made observations for 61.5 party hours. Walking was negligible. The Callaway Gardens Count (CGC) was made on 30 December 2006. Twenty-nine observers drove a total of 309.5 miles (498 km) making observations for 29.75 party hours and walked 14.24 party miles (41 km) making observations for 24 party hours.

In the following list the A/OC number is given first, followed by the CGC number: Canada Goose 125-115, Wood Duck 149-67, Green-winged Teal 19-0, Mallard 24-23, Ring-necked Duck 447-7, Lesser Scaup 23-0, Common Goldeneye 2-0, Bufflehead 44-63, Hooded Merganser 254-5, Ruddy Duck 48-0, Wild Turkey 42-11, Northern Bobwhite 0-6, Pied-billed Grebe 30-12, Horned Grebe 1-0, Double-crested Cormorant 1-4, Great Blue Heron 39-13, Great Egret 3-1, Black Vulture 33-69, Turkey Vulture 88-136, Northern Harrier 3-2, Bald Eagle 1-1, Sharp-shinned Hawk 3-2, Cooper's Hawk 6-0, Red-shouldered Hawk 9-10, Red-tailed Hawk 23-19, American Kestrel 4-3, Virginia Rail 2-0, Killdeer 102-24, Least Sandpiper 2-0, Wilson's Snipe 22-1, American Woodcock 1-1, Ring-billed Gull 10-0, Rock Pigeon 206-43, Mourning Dove 381-276, Eurasian Collared-Dove 2-31, Great Horned Owl 1-1, Barred Owl 2-1, Eastern Screech-Owl 5-4, Belted Kingfisher 20-14, Red-headed Woodpecker 2-0, Red-bellied Woodpecker 67-90, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 11-44, Downy Woodpecker 25-51, Hairy Woodpecker 3-4, Northern Flicker 25-78, Pileated Woodpecker 14-36, Eastern Phoebe 48-27, Loggerhead Shrike 4-1, White-eyed Vireo 1-0, Solitary Vireo 5-5, Blue Jay

145-221, American Crow 485-365, Fish Crow 6-0, Carolina Chickadee 83-143, Tufted Titmouse 122-106, White-breasted Nuthatch 2-30, Brown-headed Nuthatch 44-83, Brown Creeper 2-3, Carolina Wren 77-81, House Wren 2-0, Winter Wren 4-1, Golden-crowned Kinglet 48-25, Ruby-crowned Kinglet 89-112, Eastern Bluebird 158-167, Hermit Thrush 6-10, American Robin 91-642, Northern Mockingbird 49-67, Brown Thrasher 16-29, European Starling 890-912, American Pipit 15-0, Cedar Waxwing 166-604, Orange-crowned Warbler 3-2, Yellow-rumped Warbler 143-409, Yellow-throated Warbler 1-0, Pine Warbler 18-106, Palm Warbler 1-7, Common Yellowthroat 6-2, Eastern Towhee 93-146, Chipping Sparrow 339-355, Field Sparrow 47-40, Vesper Sparrow 1-0, Savannah Sparrow 41-11, Grasshopper Sparrow 8-0, Fox Sparrow 0-8, Song Sparrow 159-223, Swamp Sparrow 93-16, White-throated Sparrow 137-203, Dark-eyed Junco 43-275, Northern Cardinal 137-398, Red-winged Blackbird 1031-1127, Eastern Meadowlark 52-171, Rusty Blackbird 141-0, Common Grackle 66-12, Brown-headed Cowbird 220-12, House Finch 134-53, American Goldfinch 158-228, House Sparrow 46-8. Total species 96-79.

A difference of 17 species was present in these two counts. Starting with waterbirds, A/OC had Horned Grebe, Green-winged Teal, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, and Ruddy Duck, that were not found in the CGC count. This may reflect less management of the waterfowl on the larger A/OC ponds because none of the A/OC ponds had golf course problems. Only the large fisheries ponds at A/OC were managed. The Bobwhite presence at CGC reflects their hunting program and restocking. No big difference in raptors was seen. The presence of Virginia Rail and Least Sandpiper in the A/OC count is the result of better habitat. Other unanswered appearances in the A/OC count, such as Red-headed Woodpecker, Fish Crow, Vesper Sparrow, House Wren, could have happened by chance or participants more familiar with their habitats. With greater human population increase in the A/OC area, future counts may be quite different.

### LITERATURE CITED

DUSI, J. L. 1991. A summary of Christmas Bird Counts at Auburn, Alabama. 1954-1991. *Alabama Birdlife* 38: 14-21.

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