

# **2016 Christmas Bird Count** **Field Counter Instructions**

## **GENERAL**

**Count Day:** Sunday, December 18, 2016

**Count Week:** 15-17 & 19-21 December 2016

**Count Day Backup Bad Weather Day:** For 2016, there is no bad weather backup day since all remaining weekend days during the Count Period (Dec. 14 to Jan. 5) are holidays.

**Count Week Species:** Report species seen within the Count Circle during Count Week that were not seen on Count Day (species only, numbers not needed).

**Team Designator:** All Field Teams and all home Feeder Counters are assigned an alphabetical Team Designator that should be placed in the upper right hand corner of your Participant Form. Field Teams that also Feeder Count their own feeders will be assigned an additional Team Designator. The Team Designator will be used at the wrapup meeting when you report your totals. Team Designators will be passed to you by email, telephone, or mail.

**Count Forms:** You can use any kind of paper to keep your running tally of species and species numbers seen during the Count, **but please use the Participant Form (Form #3) and Tally Form (Form #6) for your final tally and report that you turn in.**

**Documenting Rare Sightings:** The species listed on the Tally Form are most of the species seen on previous Mat Valley CBC's. Many of those species are tagged with an asterisk(\*). Be sure and use a **CBC Rare Bird Documentation Form to substantiate your sighting of any species listed with an asterisk, or for any species not listed!** Without a Rare Bird Documentation Form as backup, the CBC Regional Editor will not take our reports of rare sightings seriously. The best rule is, if it's a species that we rarely see or if it's not a Valley winter regular, you should include details. **Pay close attention to the last sentence of Item #10** on the Rare Bird form, which asks you to tell how you know that the bird was the species that you reported, and not another species. Example: if you report a Golden Eagle, how did you determine that it wasn't a juvenile Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, etc.? **You should try to answer the questions on the form right after you see a rare species,** and not try to fill out the form later from memory. Audubon requires a CBC Rare Bird Documentation Form if a "HARLAN'S" Red-tailed Hawk is reported. Remember, the Regional Editor will want to see observation comments supporting our rare bird ID's. He's not interested in our birding qualifications. We will be asking for your rare bird forms at the wrapup meeting, so please have them ready to turn in with your bird count report.

**IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, PHOTOGRAPH RARE SPECIES!**

**MILEAGE/HOURS:** Be sure and keep track of your team's mileage and hours. If your group splits up and goes in two different directions, that requires separate accounting of hours and mileage for the time you are separated. When traveling your route, if you have to double back over ground already covered, subtract that distance from your total mileage. **When calculating the distance that you walk, do not report a maximum distance greater than could be covered at 1.5 mph**, e.g., if you walk for one hour, the maximum distance you could have covered is 1.5 miles, for two hours, 3 miles, etc. Audubon will disallow a higher figure. **If you plan to look for owls prior to daybreak, keep your owling time and distance separate from your other times and distances.**

**TEAM LEADERS:**

(1) **Do not count ravens after 12 noon!**

(2) **Poaching!** Don't add any birds to your Count Area's totals that you see outside of your assigned Count Area. However, do count and record any rare birds or high numbers of a species that you see in adjacent Count Areas so that, if the Team assigned to that area didn't see that species or has a lower count for that species, you can report the additional sightings for that area at the wrapup meeting.

(3) If you have taken one of the Area Maps, please turn them in at the wrapup meeting so we don't have to pay to have them printed again next year!

**FIELD COUNTERS WHO ALSO COUNT AT THEIR HOME FEEDERS**

**Only count birds at your home feeder on Count Day!** The highest number of birds of a species **SEEN AT ONE TIME** is your high count for that species for the day. **Do not add all of the totals for that species that you have seen over the day.** Remember to keep track of how much time you count birds at your feeder and try to count for at least one hour. Please keep a separate count of the number of deformed beak birds that you see and where you saw them.

**IF YOU ALSO FEEDER COUNT, KEEP YOUR FEEDER COUNT TOTALS AND THE AMOUNT OF TIME YOU WATCHED YOUR FEEDERS SEPARATE FROM YOUR FIELD COUNT TOTALS. TURN IN YOUR FEEDER COUNT DATA ON A SEPARATE PARTICIPANT FORM AND TALLY SHEET FROM YOUR FIELD COUNT DATA!**

## CBC WRAPUP MEETING AND POTLUCK

This year we're meeting at Jean and Harry Holt's home for our CBC wrapup/potluck meeting. The Holt's home is just off of the Palmer-Wasilla Highway (directions will be sent separately by email). Jean and Harry will provide barbecue brisket with rolls and a pot of beans, and coffee, tea, and hot chocolate. We ask that everyone bring either vegetable side dishes, hors d'oeuvres, salads, or desserts, etc., and beverages (if you would like something other than coffee, tea, or hot chocolate).

Snacks from 4:30 to 5:00 PM and dinner from 5:00 to 6:00 PM  
on Sunday, December 18, 2016.

We want to see all of you at the wrapup meeting and potluck!!

### TURNING IN YOUR COUNT DATA AND AREA MAPS

After the potluck dinner, we'll go through the species' list and ask everyone to provide their Count data. If you aren't able to make it to the wrapup/potluck meeting, please call your Count totals in to the potluck meeting at telephone number **745-5577** between 4:00 & 6:00 PM on December 18th. We strongly encourage you to call in your Count data so we have your information when we tally up the CBC Count at our December 18th CBC Wrapup/Potluck. We'll be collecting your Count Sheets and your Area Maps at the wrapup meeting!

If you call in your Count total between 4 & 6 PM, you will not need to mail in your Participant Form and Tally Sheet.

If you can't call in your Count data on the evening of December 18th, please mail your Participant Form/Tally Sheet and your Area Map as soon as possible to:

**MAT-SU BIRDERS  
P.O. Box 877378  
Wasilla AK 99687-7378**