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**Help Count Birds for Science during Audubon's  
120<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Bird Count**

*Join thousands of participants who will be part of the world's longest-running wildlife census, which contributes invaluable data to bird population research.*

**Matanuska Valley AK** – The National Audubon Society invites birdwatchers to participate in the longest-running community science survey, the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC). On December 15, 2019, birders and nature enthusiasts in the Matanuska Valley will take part in this tradition, many rising before dawn to participate.

“The Christmas Bird Count is a great tradition and opportunity for everyone to be a part of 120 years of ongoing community science,” said Geoff LeBaron, Audubon’s Christmas Bird Count director, who first started leading the community science effort in 1987. “Adding your observations to twelve decades of data helps scientists and conservationists discover trends that make our work more impactful. Participating in the Christmas Bird Count is a fun and meaningful way to spend a winter for anyone and everyone.”

This year, the Audubon Christmas Bird Count will mobilize nearly 80,000 volunteer bird counters in more than 2,600 locations across the United States, Canada, the Caribbean and Latin America. The Audubon Christmas Bird Count utilizes the power of volunteers to track the health of bird populations at a scale that scientists could never accomplish alone. Data compiled in the Matanuska Valley will record every individual bird and bird species seen in a specified area, contributing to a vast community science network that continues a tradition stretching back 120 years.

When combined with other surveys such as the Breeding Bird Survey, Audubon’s Christmas Bird Count provides a picture of how the continent’s bird populations have changed in time and space over the past hundred years. The long-term perspective is vital for conservationists. It informs strategies to protect birds and their habitat, and helps identify environmental issues with implications for people as well. For example, earlier this year, Science published a study using decades of Audubon Christmas Bird Count data to describe a grim picture: a steady decline of nearly three billion North American birds since 1970, primarily as a result of human activities. Christmas Bird Count data have been used in more than 300 peer-reviewed articles.

A brand new feature for this year’s 120th Christmas Bird Count will be “CBC Live,” a crowd-sourced, hemisphere-wide storytelling function using Esri mapping

software. This “story-map” will ask users to upload a photo taken during their Christmas Bird Count as well as a short anecdote to paint a global picture of the Christmas Bird Count in real time.

The first Christmas Bird Count (CBC) in the Matanuska Valley occurred in 1979, so this year's Count will be the Matanuska Valley's 41st CBC. The Matanuska Valley's Christmas Bird Count Count Circle is a 15 mile diameter circle centered at the former Four Corners location, where the old Trunk Road crossed the Palmer-Wasilla Highway.

Birders of all ages are welcome to contribute to this fun, nationwide community science project, which provides ornithologists with a crucial snapshot of our native bird populations during the winter months. At least ten volunteers, including a compiler to coordinate the process, count in each circle. The volunteers break up into small parties and follow assigned routes, which change little from year to year, counting every bird they see. In most count circles, some people also watch feeders instead of following routes.

The Mat-Su Birders wild bird club sponsors our local CBC, and more information about our Counts can be found on the Mat-Su Birders' website at <http://matsubirders.org>. If you would like to participate in the Feeder Count portion of our CBC, your home and feeders must be no more than 7.5 miles (as the raven flies) from the old Four Corners location.

To sign up for this year's Matanuska Valley Count, please contact Bob Winckler at 907-376-8594 or by email at [winckler@mtaonline.net](mailto:winckler@mtaonline.net).

The Audubon Christmas Bird Count is a community science project organized by the National Audubon Society. There is no fee to participate. Counts are open to birders of all skill levels and [Audubon's free Bird Guide app](#) makes it even easier to learn more. For more information and to find a count near you visit [www.christmasbirdcount.org](http://www.christmasbirdcount.org).

*The National Audubon Society protects birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow, throughout the Americas using science, advocacy, education and on-the-ground conservation. Audubon's state programs, nature centers, chapters and partners have an unparalleled wingspan that reaches millions of people each year to inform, inspire and unite diverse communities in conservation action. Since 1905, Audubon's vision has been a world in which people and wildlife thrive. Audubon is a nonprofit conservation organization. Learn more at [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org) and [@audubonsociety](#).*