

# Christmas Bird Count Field Counter Instructions

**REPORTING YOUR DATA** – see [matsubirders.org](http://matsubirders.org) for links and forms

**Preferred:** Use the Online Spreadsheet to submit ALL of your species and participant data. Directions are on the first tab of the spreadsheet.

**OR**

email your results and participant info to [matsubirders@gmail.com](mailto:matsubirders@gmail.com)

**OR**

Call to report your count if the spreadsheet doesn't work for you.

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## **COUNT FORMS**

All forms mentioned are available at <https://matsubirders.org/christmas-bird-count>

**Online spreadsheet** is preferred way to submit your count data. **See other options above**

**Tally Form:** use to record the species and number of birds you see or hear.

**Participant Form:** submit one form for Field Counting and a separate form for Feeder Counting

(Note: see Feeder Counter Instructions on website.)

**COUNT WEEK SPECIES:** During Count Week, report species seen within the Count Circle that were **not** seen on Count Day (species only, numbers not needed). EMAIL TO [matsubirders@gmail.com](mailto:matsubirders@gmail.com). Count week includes 3 days before Count Day, and 3 days after Count Day.

**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 feeders will be assigned an additional Team Designator. The Team Designator should be used when you submit your totals. Team Designators will be passed to you by email, telephone, or mail prior to Count Day.

**NOTE:** Use the **TEAM DESIGNATOR** to find your data page on the spreadsheet. Follow the directions on the first tab of the spreadsheet.

**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.**

**FIELD TEAM LEADERS:**

- **Do not count ravens after 12 noon!**
- **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.
- **If you have taken one of the Area Maps, please turn them in after the Count so we don't have to pay to have them printed again next year!**

**DOCUMENTING RARE BIRD SIGHTINGS:**

The species listed on the Tally Form are most of the species seen on previous Mat Valley CBC's.

Species tagged with an **asterisk(\*)** OR any species not listed **REQUIRE** a **CBC Rare Bird Documentation Form to substantiate your sighting(s).** Without a Rare Bird Documentation Form as backup, the CBC Regional Editor will not approve our reports of rare sightings. The best rule is, if it's a species that we rarely see or if it's not a Valley winter regular, you should complete the Rare Bird form. **Pay close attention to the last sentence** 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 avoid filling 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. Your

Rare Bird Documentation Form should be turned in along with your Participation Form, photos and Tally Sheet. (NOTE: These forms are all available online.)

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

**TIP: Use your smartphone to video the bird while you describe what you are seeing that identifies the bird, or get a photo.**

**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.**

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

- **See Feeder Counter directions**
- Keep your FIELD and FEEDER Count Totals on **separate** Tally Sheets.
- Keep your FIELD and FEEDER amount of **time** you watched on **separate** Participation forms.
- Use **Assigned Team Designator** on each FIELD and FEEDER count forms. !
- Note: Online Spreadsheet Reporting Should Follow Directions On The Spreadsheet.
- When using The Spreadsheet **Field And Feeder Data Are Recorded Separate By Team Designator**.

**DEFORMED BEAK OBSERVATIONS**: These are no longer required for the CBC. If you see a bird (or birds) with a deformed beak, please report your observation to United States Geological Service at the link

[https://alaska.usgs.gov/science/biology/landbirds/beak\\_deformity/observerreport.php](https://alaska.usgs.gov/science/biology/landbirds/beak_deformity/observerreport.php) . Be sure to click "submit" at the bottom of the page when you are finished. This information will help them determine where and how many birds are affected. For any additional questions or comments, please email [GS-AK\\_Beak\\_Deformity@usgs.gov](mailto:GS-AK_Beak_Deformity@usgs.gov) .

**P.S. If you have questions about the Count during our CBC Count Day, you can call one of the compilers above.**