



Great Backyard Bird Count



How to Participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count¹

We need every bird enthusiast in North America to count for the birds!

All you need is basic knowledge of bird identification and access to the Internet at home, a friend's house, local library, school, or anywhere you can get access to the web.

Here's what you do:

- **Count the birds in your backyard**, local park, or other natural area on one or all four count days. You can count in as many different locations as you wish, just make sure to keep separate records and fill out a checklist for each area.
- **Watch the birds** for at least 15 minutes on each day that you participate. We recommend watching for a half-hour or more, so that you'll have a good sense of what birds are in your area.
- **How to count:** Your data will be used by scientists to analyze bird populations, so it is very important that everyone count their birds in exactly the same way. On the day(s) that you count, watch your bird feeders, or take a short walk (less than 1 mile) in your neighborhood or park.

For each kind (species) of bird that you see, keep track of the **highest number of individuals** that you observe at any one time. Use a "Tally Sheet" to help keep track of your counts. Your tally sheet should look something like the following:

Bird	Tallies	High Count
Cardinal	3, 5, 2, 1	5
Blue Jay	1, 2, 3	3
Carolina Chickadee	4, 1, 6, 2, 4	6
Cedar Waxwing	2, 3, 1, 2	3

Be careful not to count the same bird over and over! Don't add another Blue Jay to your tally every time you see a Blue Jay at the feeder. **You could be seeing the same individual again and again.** If you record only the highest number of individual birds that you see in view at one time, you're sure to never count the same bird more than once!

Also, do not worry that you can't identify all of the species that you may see. If you don't know the species that you see, **DON'T GUESS.** There are check off boxes on the report form where you can indicate your level of expertise and whether or not you are reporting all species seen.

- At the end of the day go to the "Submit your bird checklist" page of the GBBC web site (<http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>)
- Fill out the questions about your location, local habitat, and count duration. Then enter your high counts for each species sited on that day and location. You can submit one bird checklist for each day that you count or for each **new** area that you count in.

For example:

- If you count 4 days at one location, you'd submit 4 different checklists.
- If you count 4 days at 2 *different* locations each day, submit 8 checklists. And etc.
- Reports may be submitted up to two weeks after the dates of the annual bird count.
- **Problems Getting Access to the Internet?** Many libraries, schools, bird clubs, and other community-based groups will be helping, too. If organizations in your area are not already planning to help those without Internet access, you can help get something started!
- **Finally**, after you've submitted your data, explore our website. Check our results section to see other reports from your community, and watch as data comes in from other areas. Have a look through our other pages, and find out other ways you can help birds. Enjoy!

¹ Modified from Great Backyard Bird Count web page "Participating is Easy!"