

## ***Hello Feeder Watcher!***

Thanks for volunteering to be a feeder watcher for the **Portland Christmas Bird Count** (CBC). Your efforts will help us get a more accurate census of the birds in our count circle on December 31, 2011.

The purpose of this sheet is to give you a few tips and hints on watching your feeders: methods of watching, counting strategies, and data return.

Two essential points of clarification:

1. Your feeder must be within the Portland CBC circle. See the count circle displayed on Google Maps at <http://tinyurl.com/26pmpmf>
2. You are to count birds **ONLY on December 31!**

The purpose of the Christmas Bird Count is to record birds within a pre-defined 15 mile diameter count circle in a 24 hour period. If you are unsure whether or not you reside in the count circle, give me a call and we'll figure it out.

### Methods of Watching

There are two schools of thought here:

a) a solid time—many people will watch their feeders for a 30-to-60 minute period during the day and record what comes in at that time. The advantage of this is full attention to the feeder and the surrounding yard and airspace (yes, count that crow or gull that flies down the street). But often, in life, a solid block is impossible, so you could try . . .

b) a few brief checks during the day—sure you'll miss some birds, but you would the other way as well. This way, you can focus on the feeder at spurts during the day--perhaps four to six five-to-ten minute intervals.

Either way, by keeping track of what you see in your yard, you'll find birds we miss while out in the field. This may not seem significant, but it really helps to give us a more accurate census of the birds within our count circle. And of course, there's always the chance that you'll see a species that no one else does on count day!

### Counting Strategies

You want to record both species and number during the count day. In either case, the number of birds that you see during the day will vary. But you also can't just sit there at your intervals and add up all the birds that come in. Thus some strategy is needed.

I suggest you keep track of the maximum number of a species found at the feeders at one particular time. This involves not only species and number, but in some cases, gender and individual differences.

What I'm saying here is to differentiate individuals and sexes as much as possible to get the most accurate count. When looking at House Finches, don't just count 25 House Finches; rather, count 16 Red (i.e., adult males) and 9 Brown (not adult males). That way, if you count again later and have 12 Red and 20 Brown, you'll be able to say you had 36 House Finches because the greatest count of Reds you had was 16 and the greatest count of Browns you had was 20: 16 + 20 =36.

This doesn't work for all birds: Scrub Jays pretty much all look alike, but if one Scrub Jay was flying away to the right while another was coming in from the left, you know you had 2.

This census method, differentiating individuals as well as numbers and species, will give you the most accurate method of counting without catching the birds. The table provided for counting separates those birds that have different male and female plumages.

### Data Return

If you've received this information by mail, use the enclosed envelope and return the list to me as soon as possible after December 31. In case you've lost the envelope or you've downloaded this from the Audubon website, my address is:

Wink Gross  
4665 NW Seblar Terrace  
Portland, OR 97210  
503 226 3842

You can also send results to me via email:

[winkg@hevanet.com](mailto:winkg@hevanet.com)

I don't need anything fancy; you can just type your results in the body of your email. **Be sure to include your address and time spent watching.** I must submit data by mid-January, so procrastinating may result in your efforts not being included in the national census.

Thanks again for helping out!!!

P.S. Detailed count results will be available on line at <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/index.html>

2011/12 Portland Christmas Bird Count: Feeder Watcher Data Sheet

Below are listed some of the common feeder birds that are often found in Portland. This is by no means a comprehensive list nor does it include things like gulls, ducks, and other birds that might fly by your yard. Feel free to supplement this by using the additional spaces or other sheets. Also, if you see a gull, but don't know what kind it was, you could just write "1 gull"--this data is still useful and will be added into the results. Thanks!

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Total time spent counting \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone/email \_\_\_\_\_

Rock Pigeon		European Starling	
Band-tailed Pigeon		Yellow-rumped Warbler	
Mourning Dove		Townsend's Warbler	
Anna's Hummingbird		Spotted Towhee	
Downy Woodpecker--male		Fox Sparrow	
Downy Woodpecker--female		Song Sparrow	
Northern Flicker		White-crowned Sparrow	
Steller's Jay		Golden-crowned Sparrow	
Western Scrub Jay		Dark-eyed Junco--male	
American Crow		Dark-eyed Junco--female	
Black-capped Chickadee		"Slate-colored Junco"	
Chestnut-backed Chickadee		House Finch--male	
Bushtit		House Finch--female	
Red-breasted Nuthatch		Pine Siskin	
Brown Creeper		Lesser Goldfinch	
Bewick's Wren		American Goldfinch	
Golden-crowned Kinglet		House Sparrow--male	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		House Sparrow--female	
American Robin			
Varied Thrush			
Cedar Waxwing			

Please return this form by mail as soon as possible after the count, or email the results to me at [winkg@hevanet.com](mailto:winkg@hevanet.com). Thanks for helping the Portland Christmas Bird Count!