

Help Count Local Birds for Science during Audubon's 119th Annual Christmas Bird Count

Join thousands of participants in the world's longest-running wildlife census, which contributes invaluable data to bird population research.

Chemung Valley Audubon Society, a local chapter of the National Audubon Society, invites local birdwatchers to participate in the longest-running community science survey, the annual [Audubon Christmas Bird Count](#) (CBC). On Saturday, December 15th members will participate in a bird count centered in Corning, NY. On Tuesday, January 1st we will meet again for the Elmira Christmas Bird Count.

Birders of all skill levels are invited to take part in this fun tradition.

This year, the Audubon Christmas Bird Count will mobilize over 72,000 volunteer bird counters in more than 2,500 locations across the Western Hemisphere. 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 New York 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 more than 100 years.

"The Christmas Bird Count is a rewarding way to get involved with Audubon in your community," said Ana Paula Tavares, executive director of Audubon New York. "With over 50 counts in New York State alone, we hope to see record numbers of volunteers participate in support of their local birds."

To date over 300 peer-reviewed articles have resulted from analysis done with Christmas Bird Count data. Bird-related community science efforts are also critical to understanding how birds are responding to a changing climate. This documentation is what enabled Audubon scientists to discover that 314 species of North American birds are threatened by global warming as reported in Audubon's groundbreaking [Birds and Climate Change Study](#). The tradition of counting birds combined with modern technology and mapping is enabling researchers to make discoveries that were not possible in earlier decades.

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. Each individual count is performed in a count circle with a diameter of 15 miles. 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.

To sign up for a count, please contact the Chemung Valley Audubon by email at cvaudubon@gmail.org or visit <https://www.audubon.org/conservation/join-christmas-bird-count>.

The Audubon Christmas Bird Count began in 1900 when Dr. Frank Chapman, founder of *Bird-Lore* – which evolved into *Audubon* magazine – suggested an alternative to the holiday "side hunt," in which teams competed to see who could shoot the most birds. 118 years of counting birds is a long time, but the program somehow brings out the best in people, and they stay involved for the long run. And so the tradition continues.