



Seattle CBC At-Home/Feeder Watch Counting Guide

Thank you for your interest in taking part in the Seattle Christmas Bird Count (CBC) as an **At-Home Counter/Feeder Watcher**. The information you gather during the count will enable us to better understand wintering bird populations in Seattle. We want to ensure your involvement is suitable to both your needs and the requirements of the established CBC at-home data collection protocol. This document will provide you with the information you need to take part in the Seattle Christmas Bird Count as an At-Home Counter.

The goal of the Christmas Bird Count is to census everything with feathers and a heartbeat within a pre-defined, 15 mile diameter circle, over a 24hr period. The at-home counting program aims to determine the highest number of individuals of each species seen on your bird feeders or within your yard.

To take part in the CBC At-home Counting program, there are **three requirements**:

1. Your bird feeder/yard **must** be located within the Seattle CBC count area. Review [this map](#) and search for your planned count location to confirm that it's within the count area circle. If your location is not located within the count area circle, unfortunately we cannot use your data for the Seattle CBC, although it would still be useful if added to [eBird](#).
2. You can only count birds at home on the day of the Seattle CBC. The 2022 Seattle CBC will take place on **Sunday, December 18**.
3. **You must register** your intention to become a an At-Home Counter with the count organizer using the registration website, and choose 'At-Home Feeder Watch' ticket. Register for the count [HERE](#).

At-Home Counter/Feeder Watch Survey Protocol

How to Observe

You can conduct the at-home survey using a couple of different techniques – **Continuous or Sporadic**.

Continuous

You can conduct your survey in one continuous block of time eg. 60-90 minutes or more. This method will enable you to schedule your day around your survey. You **MUST** however be watching your feeders/yard the entire time. We request that you not leave and return to the count at intervals within the block of time as this does not constitute a continuous count. You can conduct your survey at any time on count day. You could survey first thing in the morning and then continue about your business for the rest of the day, or leave it to last thing in the afternoon. This way the count need not interrupt your day too much.

Sporadic

If you are unable to devote a continuous chunk of time to the survey, you can conduct your count in multiple smaller blocks of time eg. 15-20 minutes. The benefit of this is that you may be able to better fit this type of survey into your busy Holiday schedule. For example, you could make multiple discrete observation periods by dividing up the Seattle CBC day. You could spend 15-20 minutes watching the feeder(s) first thing in the morning; then conduct 15-20 min observations every 2-3 hours throughout the rest of the day. At the end of the day, you will have multiple completed datasheets from which you can glean the highest numbers of birds observed for each species.

What to Record

For your convenience, a datasheet can be found at the end of this document to keep track of your observations and record your count totals. Please ensure to complete all parts of the 'About the Survey' section at the top of the datasheet.

Count Location

The yards/areas that are being surveyed must be located within the [Seattle CBC boundary](#). Therefore, we require you to record the **physical address of the yard** being surveyed on the datasheet. We will double check the locations before adding the data into the full count database.

Observers

We need to know **how many observers** are taking part in your count. This helps us give credit to those who helped gather the data and aids us in calculating the “effort” (in this case, number of eyes) used in collecting the data. We cannot accept your data unless we know how many people took part in your feeder count.

Time

It is vitally important to record the **start and end time** of your survey period(s). This will further enable us to calculate the “effort” (ie. how long those eyes spent watching) used to count the number of individuals and species. Similar to the number of observers, we cannot accept your data unless we know how much time you spent conducting your counts.

Species

For the data to be accurate, it is important to correctly **identify the different species of bird** that use your bird feeders and yard. Fortunately, there are a limited number of species that occur in Seattle’s urban yards in winter and so with a good bird identification website, book or mobile app., learning the different species should be relatively easy.

Number

At-Home Counters should record the **maximum number of each species** visible (or within earshot) at any **one time** during your count. You should not simply tally individuals each time you see them because you might be counting the same individual bird repeatedly visiting your feeders. To reduce this issue we ask you to simply record the highest number of individuals of each species you see/hear during your feeder watch. For example, a 20 minute watch:

Minute 3 – you see two Black-capped Chickadees visit a bird bath

Minute 14 – three Black-capped Chickadees are seen in a nearby shrub

Your count for Black-capped Chickadee would be three – the highest number you saw at one time during the 20 minute count, not five, the cumulative number of individuals seen. Even if you don’t count any birds during your survey, we still want your data; *zero is a useful data point*.

Bird Location

You are not constrained to only recording the birds that come to a bird feeder, you can count any birds that come to your yard, including those that fly through or over your yard. The majority of At-Home Counters will position themselves next to a window in their home or apartment where they can get a good view of their bird feeder or yard. From that vantage you may include any other birds that you can accurately identify from the window.

Gender

It’s possible to distinguish the sex of some bird species by color. We encourage you to do this if you are confident in your abilities. For example, you record 25 House Finches; however, it would be great if you were able to count 16 red (adult males) and 9 brown (not adult males). That way, if you count again later and have 12 red and 20 brown, you’ll record 36 House Finches because the greatest count of “reds” was 16 and the greatest count of “browns” was 20; $16 + 20 = 36$. This of course does not work for all birds, only those where males and females are different colors.

Finalizing the Datasheet

Once your survey(s) are complete, please ensure all the data on your datasheets are legible. The most important items are the ‘About the Survey’ section, the number of individuals of each species, and the effort taken to record those birds.

Submitting your Data

Please submit your data using the [online datasheet](#). (Preferred method.) If you have any questions, please reach out to hanaeb@seattleaudubon.org. Completed datasheets can also be turned into the Nature Shop. To ensure inclusion with the rest of the CBC data, please submit your data to Seattle Audubon as soon as possible after the count (ideally within 3 days).

Christmas Bird Count



Seattle CBC – At-Home Counter/Feeder Watch Datasheet

About the Survey – only conduct your count on the official CBC day: **Dec 18, 2022**

Observer Names	Feeder Location □	Start Time:	End Time:
1.	Street:		
2.	Zip:		
3.	Email:		
4.	Phone:		

Bird Count Data

Species	Maximum Number	Species	Maximum Number
Sharp-shinned Hawk		Pacific Wren	
Cooper's Hawk		Golden-crowned Kinglet	
Bald Eagle		Ruby-crowned Kinglet	
Glaucous-winged Gull		American Robin	
Large Gull sp.		Varied Thrush	
Rock Pigeon		Cedar Waxwing	
Band-tailed Pigeon		European Starling	
Anna's Hummingbird		Yellow-rumped Warbler	
Red-breasted Sapsucker		Townsend's Warbler	
Downy Woodpecker		Spotted Towhee	
Hairy Woodpecker		Fox Sparrow	
Northern Flicker		Song Sparrow	
Pileated Woodpecker		White-crowned Sparrow	
Steller's Jay		Golden-crowned Sparrow	
California (Western) Scrub-Jay		Dark-eyed Junco	
American Crow		Red Crossbill	
Black-capped Chickadee		House Finch	
Chestnut-backed Chickadee		Purple Finch	
Bushtit		Pine Siskin	
Red-breasted Nuthatch		American Goldfinch	
Brown Creeper		House Sparrow	
Bewick's Wren		Other:	

The above bird list details some of the more common feeder/backyard visitors and is intended to be an aid for recording your results, and is by no means an exhaustive list of birds that might show up at your feeder/s. The full list can be found on the CBC page of the [Seattle Audubon website](http://seattleaudubon.org), and includes local subspecies and variants.

Please submit your data using the [online datasheet](#). If you have any questions, please reach out to hanaeb@seattleaudubon.org. If unable to use the online form, completed datasheets can also be hand delivered to the Nature Shop. To ensure inclusion with the rest of the CBC data, please submit your data to Seattle Audubon as soon as possible after the count (ideally within 3 days).