



Christmas Bird Count

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Guide to Christmas Bird Count party miles and hours

Field Observers

(excludes viewing at feeders and nocturnal birding or “owling”)

Birds tallied by observers in the field during daylight are counted separately from nocturnal/owling birders and those observing at feeders.

When reporting the minimum and maximum number of parties, remember these include only parties in the field during daylight hours.

Record the Total Number and Minimum/Maximum Number of Parties:

To determine the number of daylight parties, use the number of parties that you began the day with as your basic number. If parties further split up during the day, the maximum number in the field at any given time of the day should be reported, and the basic number becomes the minimum.

Example: Count Frozentoos, Alaska starts the day with 3 parties. Later, two of these split into two parties each. The compiler records this as Minimum Number of Parties (daylight) = 3 and Maximum Number of Parties (daylight) = 5.

Frozentoos, AK also had a group of counters out owling from 4:45 a.m. to 6 a.m., but this party is not included in the Minimum/Maximum Number of Parties.

Party Hours and Distance

(excludes viewing at feeders and nocturnal birding or “owling”)

- Party hours and distance (Total Party, By Foot, By Car, and By Other Transportation) are reported excluding feeder hours and nocturnal birding hours and distance. Please round all hours to the nearest quarter-hour, and all distances to the nearest quarter-mile or quarter-kilometer.
- The driving tenant here is that it is the effort of the party—**not the individual**—that we need. For example: the effort of 3 individuals walking together 1 mile is not 3 miles, it is 1 mile for the party. And if a group splits, then you would add the separate effort of the second party.
- A route re-traced on foot should only include the one-way distance. For example: If a field party walks out a path through a woodland to a distance of 1 1/2 miles and returns the same way, the distance is reported as 1 1/2 miles, not 3. The entire time spent on the path should be reported, not just that of the one-way distance.
- Record a value for all hours and distance fields except for those associated with **By Other Transportation**. If appropriate, enter a 0 for distance. For example, a stationary party (for example, a sea watch or roost count) may spend 1/2 hour in one spot--resulting in 1/2 hour and 0 miles for that party.

- Compilers will need a breakdown of hours and distance covered by car, foot, and other means of transportation (boat, bicycle, skis, etc.) from the party leaders. Please note the exact mode of transportation when you turn in your information via your compiler.
- Please make every effort possible to be accurate with these numbers.
- It would be unrealistic to report any more Total Party Hours than the Maximum Number of Parties (daylight) times 12, since 12 is the approximate maximum number of daylight hours in December and January.
- Take into account that for a party on foot, it is stretching reality to have traveled--and birded-- much more than 1 or 1.5 miles per hour.

Other Types of Effort information

Total Number of Feederwatchers: Example would be of 4 people watching birds at their feeders for several hours during the day. Again, this is not recorded in the daylight party number (it is recorded online as observers At Feeders, Total Number).

Hours At Feeders: The number of hours is obtained by totaling the hours spent at feeders by feeder-watchers taking part in your count at separate feeders. *Time spent observing feeders by parties afield should not be included here--they should be included in your field party totals.* Hours should be rounded to the nearest quarter hour. Example: If there are two people watching one feeder and one watches from 8:00 - 9:00 and the other watches from 8:30 - 10:00 the resulting total is two hours of time. If these people were watching two separate feeders, then you would add the times together, for a total of 2 ½ hours.

Nocturnal Birding ("owling"): For nocturnal birding (if done), report the number of hours spent by all parties in the field during non-daylight hours, rounded to the nearest quarter-hour and for the distance, total up the distance (by foot, car, or other transportation) traveled by those parties, and round to the nearest quarter-mile or quarter-kilometer.