

PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 3, 2018

Contact: Mary Jo Kelly– 575-586-1189 or 575-224-4220

BIRD WATCHERS NEEDED FOR
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS IN MORENO VALLEY on December 14
AND QUESTA on December 15

Moreno Valley Christmas Bird Count will be December 14, 2018. To participate, register before December 14 with the compiler, Mary Jo Kelly by calling 575-586-1189 or 575-224-4220

Angel Fire area participants will meet at the parking lot on North Angel Fire Road across from the Fire Station at 8 AM.

Eagle Nest area participants will meet in the parking lot by the gas station and Post Office near the intersection of Hwy 64 and 38 in Eagle Nest.

Feeder Watchers on December 14 are welcome to participate. Those with bird feeders can participate by counting the birds at their feeders. Feeder Watchers need to register with Compiler Mary Jo Kelly prior to December 14.

Questa area Count will be December 15, 2018. Those participating in this Count will be given details on where to meet when they register with Compiler Mary Jo Kelly.

What is the Christmas Bird Count? The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is a long-standing program of the National Audubon Society, with over 100 years of community science involvement. It is an early-winter bird census, where thousands of volunteers across the U.S., Canada, and many countries in the Western Hemisphere go out over a 24-hour period on one calendar day to count birds.

CBC's began on Christmas day in 1900 when 27 conservationists in 25 localities, lead by scientist Frank Chapman, changed the course of ornithological history. This small group was an alternative to the "side hunt", a Christmas Day activity in which teams competed to see who could shoot the most birds and small mammals. Instead, Chapman proposed to identify, count, and record all the birds they saw. Chapman's group probably never imagined the powerful, citizen-based important tool they instigated. For example, the year 2003 resulted in 1,996 counts reporting 63,523,744 birds.

In addition to be fun and challenging, CBC's reveal valuable scientific data that monitors the status of resident and migratory birds across the Western Hemisphere. The data is 100% volunteer generated, and have become a crucial part of natural history monitoring. To date over 200 peer-reviewed articles have resulted from analysis done with Christmas Bird Count data. Beyond the items listed here, CBC data has been used by U.S. federal agencies as an important basis for making decisions about birds.

Can I just do my own CBC and send you my data? No. Since each CBC is a real census, and since the 15-mile diameter circle contains a lot of area to be covered, single-observer counts (except in unusual circumstances) cannot be allowed. To participate in the CBC, you will need to join an existing CBC circle by contacting the compiler in advance of the count day.

How does participation work? There is a specific methodology to the CBC, and all participants must make arrangements to participate in advance with the circle compiler within an established circle, but anyone can participate.

Each count takes place in an established 15-mile wide diameter circle, and is organized by a count compiler. Count volunteers follow specified routes through a designated 15-mile (24-km) diameter circle, counting every bird they see or hear all day. It's not just a species tally—all birds are counted all day, giving an indication of the total number of birds in the circle that day.

If you are a beginning birder, you will be able to join a group that includes at least one experienced birdwatcher.

If your home is within the boundaries of a CBC circle, then you can stay at home and report the birds that visit your feeder on count day as long as you have made prior arrangement with the count compiler. See additional questions about CBC participation below.

Since it is free, how is this program funded? The Christmas Bird Count relies 100 percent on donations to manage the historic database, and to fund the technology to make historic data available to researchers. The data collected by CBC participants over the past century have become one of only two large pools of information informing ornithologists and conservation biologists how the birds of the Americas are faring over time.

Additional information about the CBC is available on Audubon's website at www.audubon.org/bird/cbc