

WESTERN SONOMA COUNTY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Sunday, January 1, 2017

Greetings CBC Area Leader:

Thank you for volunteering to be an area leader for Madrone Audubon's Western Sonoma County Christmas Bird Count (WSC CBC)! We are very happy to have your help and expertise! Following, are some housekeeping items and details to keep in mind for the WSC CBC. This information is important, so please take the time to review it.

Please go over all procedures with your team members including the post count dinner arrangements.

The following forms can be found on Madrone's CBC web page
(madroneaudubon.org/birds-christmas-bird-count.php)

- **Field Tally Form** – this is an unlocked Excel file. You may customize it to suit your needs, or you may use another list (AviSys, etc.). Regardless of the list you use in the field, be sure you **submit your Field Tally Form to me at the post-count dinner.**
- **Final Tally Form** – this is a PDF, you may not edit it. **All final tally results for each team must be recorded on this form.** Please do not use old forms, forms from other CBC's, etc. The last page of this form also includes the reporting section for **Observer Hours and Effort** in the field. Please do not forget to complete this because the comparability of our observations to other Christmas bird counts depends upon documenting our level of effort in terms of number of observers, amount of time in the field and amount of area covered.
- **Rare Bird Form** – If you observe an unusual or rare bird (a bird that is out of range or out of season), this form must be completed and submitted with your other materials at the post-count dinner.

Let us know if you have difficulty opening any of the files on the CBC webpage. **We** can attempt to send them to you in another format via email or mail you hardcopies.

Again, the **Observer Hours and Effort** report is included on the last page of the Final Tally Form. If you're unfamiliar with the process of calculating hours and miles for the CBC, please review the handy guide on Madrone's CBC webpage. **This information must be completed before you hand in your Final Tally form.**

Topo maps and a map of the count circle are available on the Madrone's CBC webpage.

Submit your final list of participants to me or Stacy Li on count day. Be sure to include first and last name, email address, phone number and mailing address. We need this information to keep our WSCCBC alive.

Please contact private property owners before count day and secure their permission to count on their property. If it is helpful, please reassure property owners that Madrone Audubon has insurance to cover participants during our activities. Please save the land owner contact information for future counts. Some land owners may request a list of the birds seen on their property. Please provide them with this. It fosters good relationships and ensures continued access to their property for future counts.

Use the following method for counting Turkey Vultures. Please assume that every able-bodied TV has roused itself and left its roost by mid-morning. Please only count TV's until 11:00 am. Any seen after that will probably already have been counted (and if you haven't seen one by 11, go ahead and count the first one that flies by, for the sake of your territory list). If the weather is absolutely horrible, disregard the above!

As usual, **unusual** birds (those out of range or season) should be described in **written detail** on a copy of the Rare Bird form. National Audubon has asked for the addition of photographic documentation when possible. If you or a member of your party has a camera that can be safely brought into the field and used on the count, the CBC editors would appreciate it. Do not risk your valuable instruments if the weather is inclement or the terrain is rough. Madrone Audubon is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items, so please use your good judgment if you choose to bring photographic equipment into the field.

Eagles and rare-ish hawks must be described by plumage, adult or immature status, time of sighting and direction of flight. Birds can pass from one area to another, so recording time and direction can help prevent multiple observations of a single individual. Sighting recorded without documentation will not be counted.

When you're able to make positive IDs, please do record subspecies (juncos, flickers, etc.); otherwise, record all **flickers** as "Northern" unless you checked **all** the field marks, juncos as Dark-eyed Junco, etc. Likewise, call all "butter-butts" **Yellow-rumped Warblers**, unless they can honestly be assigned to the Audubon or Myrtle races. Please use **Accipiter Sp.**, unless you have positive IDs on Sharp-shinned and Coopers hawks. It is possible that our **blackbird flocks** contain more Brown Headed Cowbirds and Tricolored Blackbirds than we realize – please check all flocks carefully.

Our count circle is in need of owl counters. We encourage you or any members of your team to count owls before dawn, even if it's someone else's territory.

A delicious catered post-count vegetarian dinner will be catered by Worth Our Weight at the Sebastopol Community Center, 390 Morris St., in Sebastopol. We are requesting a \$5 donation per person.

- You may arrive after 4:30 pm.
- Dinner begins at 5:30
- Tally and team reports begin at 6:30 pm
- **Please bring an appetizer (our counters are going to be hungry!) or dessert to share.**
- Coffee, tea and hot cocoa are provided – anything else is BYOB.
- Remember to bring your “campware” and help send less waste to the landfill.

Please submit the following forms to me at the Post-count Dinner:

- completed Field Tally form
- completed Final Tally form (**don't forget hours and miles**)
- final List of Participants (including name, phone number, email, mailing address)
- Rare Bird form (if applicable)

If you are not attending the dinner, please find someone who can deliver these materials to Stacy Li at the dinner. Please make sure your name and team number are on all forms.

Please let us know if you have any questions. **We appreciate all your hard work and continued support of this very important Citizen Science tradition!** We look forward to seeing you on Sunday, January 1st.

For the Birds,

Peter Laveque, WSC CBC Chair and Co-compiler
Stacy K. Li, WSC CBC Deputy Chair and Co-compiler
Madrone Audubon Society

Peter: 707-542-8946
Email: stacyli@sonic.net