



*inspiring people to protect
Bay Area birds since 1917*

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Golden Gate Audubon To Conduct Annual Christmas Bird Counts in San Francisco and Oakland

More than 300 avid Bay Area birders will fan out over the two respective cities to count all the birds they see in a single day

WHAT: Christmas Bird Count (CBC)

WHERE: Oakland and San Francisco

WHEN: Oakland – Sunday, December 16

San Francisco – Thursday, December 27

WHY: To provide insight into the past and present status and health of our bird populations and the general health of our environment, as well as being a social, sporting, and competitive event.

To cover the event for a story, please contact: Leslie Weir lweir@goldengateaudubon.org 510.843.2222 ext.1004 (office) or 510.684.9896 (cell)

Berkeley, CA. -- On December 16 and 27, from before dawn until dusk, 400 hardy volunteer birders will trek through parks, neighborhoods, wetlands, and woods to count birds. Some will venture onto the bay in boats. Others will traverse city streets, cross remote streams and creeks, and skirt reservoirs and bay mudflats, with their binoculars and scopes trained on trees, bushes, buildings, wires, poles, land, water, and sky. They will call out the names and numbers of birds they see at every site and carefully record them. Then the count participants will gather at the end of the day over dinner to tally their results and share stories of their day in the field.

“For Bay Area birders, these two Christmas counts are an integral part of the holiday season,” says past San Francisco co-organizer Dan Murphy. “A great day of birding, then a fine compilation dinner, friends sharing adventures in the field, and telling stories of rare birds over dessert – what could be finer?”

Each year, the Audubon Christmas Bird Count mobilizes over 70,000 volunteer bird counters in more than 2,300 locations across the Western Hemisphere, from above the Arctic Circle to Brooklyn and Los Angeles to Tierra del Fuego. The Audubon Christmas Bird Count utilizes the power of volunteers to track the health of bird populations at a scale that professional scientists could never accomplish alone. Every local count is part of this vast volunteer network and continues a tradition that stretches back more than 100 years. Each count attempts to identify and record every individual bird encountered within a defined 15-mile-diameter circle — about 177 square miles — during one calendar day. Our Oakland and San Francisco counts have ranked among the top 25 nationwide in terms of numbers of species found. In recent years, our Oakland count has had more participants in the field than any other count in the world.

Christmas Bird Counts combine many of the things Golden Gate Audubon stands for. It’s a fun day with a serious purpose; everyday volunteer bird-watchers become citizen scientists, contributing data, as they have for generations, that will help inform future decisions about Bay Area birdlife and their habitat.

Location details

Oakland count circle extends from Treasure Island northeast to the San Pablo Reservoir in Contra Costa County, and south to St. Mary’s College in Moraga and the Oakland International Airport. With its wide variety of habitats, the Oakland count typically records more than 170 bird species.

The San Francisco count circle includes the north tower of the Golden Gate Bridge and all of San Francisco, and reaches down the peninsula to San Bruno Mountain and the wetlands north of the San Francisco International Airport. Also blessed with a wide variety of habitats, the San Francisco count generally tops 160 species.

Christmas Bird Count history

Christmas Bird Counts began in the northeast United States on December 25, 1900, when 27 bird-watcher/conservationists in 25 localities, led by scientist Frank Chapman, changed the course of ornithological history. On that day, they created an alternative to the “side hunt,” a long-standing Christmas day activity in which teams competed to see who could shoot the most birds and small mammals. Instead of hunting, Chapman was determined to identify, count, and record all the birds they saw, thus founding a conservation effort that has grown exponentially over the last 118 years. Bird Counts have been conducted in San Francisco since 1915, and in Oakland since 1938.

The data collected at each count are sent to the National Audubon Society. CBC results from 1900 to the present are available to all at www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/hr/. Generated entirely by volunteers, these data are a crucial part of this country’s natural history monitoring database. For over a century, the Christmas Bird Count has provided valuable insight into the past and present status and health of our bird populations and the general health of our environment, as well as being a social, sporting, and competitive event.

About Golden Gate Audubon

Golden Gate Audubon has been dedicated to protecting Bay Area birds, other wildlife, and their natural habitat since 1917. We conserve and restore wildlife habitat, connect people of all ages and backgrounds with the natural world, and educate and engage Bay Area residents in the protection of our shared, local environment. Golden Gate Audubon is sustained by contributions from members and supporters throughout San Francisco and the East Bay.

Media coverage is welcome. However, please contact us IN ADVANCE so we can connect you with a count team in the field. It can be hard to reach the teams once they are out in the field on count day. If you contact us in advance, we can provide you with a meeting place and time. Contact GGAS Communications Manager Leslie Weir at lweir@goldengateaudubon.org or 510.843.2222 ext 1004 (office) or 510.684.9896 (cell)

For more information on the Oakland and SF counts,

<https://goldengateaudubon.org/birding-resources/christmas-bird-counts/>

For information on the CBC nationally,

<http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>