



*inspiring people to protect
Bay Area birds since 1917*

MEDIA ADVISORY

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San Francisco to hold annual Christmas Bird Count on Friday, December 27

Over 125 eager birders will fan out across San Francisco's hills and valleys on Friday, December 27 in Golden Gate Audubon Society's annual Christmas Bird Count.

The city may be known internationally for its cable cars, fog, and tech economy, but it holds other honors in the birding world. For the past five years, San Francisco's Christmas count has found more Red-masked Parakeets than any other count in the country—153 of them in 2018.

For the past four years, the city has been number-one for Anna's Hummingbirds (with a whopping 1,271 of the diminutive birds in 2018) and for the past three years, it's led the nation in Townsend's Warblers (with 225 in 2018).

Now in its 120th year nationally, the Audubon Christmas Bird Count is the longest-running community-science initiative in the world. It mobilizes nearly 80,000 volunteer bird counters in more than 2,600 locations across the Americas.

In San Francisco, teams will spread out at dawn across a 15-mile-wide circle, from the cemeteries of Colma to the rocks of Land's End and the marshy shoreline near

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Bayview-Hunter's Point. Last year, they found a total of 187 species, tying a previous all-time high.

(Media are invited to cover the count: To connect with a team in the field, contact Ilana at idebare@goldengateaudubon.org or 510-301-5573 – preferably before Friday.)

The count is a fun wintertime tradition for bird lovers—an opportunity to spend the day outdoors with friends while adding to our knowledge of bird population trends. CBC data has been cited in more than 300 peer-reviewed ornithological studies.

This year, it takes place under the dual shadows of bird population decline and climate change.

The journal *Science* published a [study this fall](#) using CBC data to describe a steady decline of nearly three billion North American birds since 1970, primarily as a result of human activities. And National Audubon issued a [report on birds and climate change](#) estimating that 2/3 of the continent's birds are at risk of extinction if global temperatures rise by 3 degrees Celsius.

Red-masked Parakeets—the “wild parrots of Telegraph Hill”—are an introduced species that has managed to thrive in San Francisco's urban environment. But other native species are declining, including California Quail, the official bird of both the city and the state.

Quail have virtually vanished from within the city. Last year's count found just 17, down from a high of 139, and those were in parts of the count circle outside city limits (Crystal Springs and Colma). Another species of concern is the White-winged Scoter, a sea duck. In the past, as many as 260 were seen but last year there were only seven.

“What will we find this year? We won't know until we're out in the field!” said Pam Young, Executive Director of Golden Gate Audubon Society. “What we *do* know is that this kind of community science is more important than ever. If we can identify which

of our local bird species are in trouble, then we can take steps to help them. And a Bay Area where birds thrive is also one where humans will thrive.”

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Media are invited to cover the count. To arrange an interview or to meet up with a team in the field, contact Ilana at idebare@goldengateaudubon.org or (510) 301-5573. Please contact us IN ADVANCE if possible since it can be difficult to locate teams once they are out in the field.