PARKSVILLE QUALICUM CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

FIELD COUNT INSTRUCTIONS

Bird Counting

Record how many of each species seen or heard in your area, including fly-overs.

- Document your count with ebird or notes.
- Count Day is midnight to midnight, rain or shine. Many participants will count during daylight hours only, but night owling is important and encouraged.
- Count Week is 3 days before and 3 days after the Count Day inclusive, midnight to midnight. If you participate during this period, please report any species **not seen during count day.** Owling is encouraged. We will also be using ebird to identify species not seen on count day.
- Scouting your allocated area prior to count day is very helpful to fine tune your route, to research likely birds and to identify 'count week' birds - see above. Also, Ebird can be used to identify species seen recently in your area.
- Record/playback devices or pishing may be used with discretion to attract birds.
- If on your travels you see some interesting birds such as owls in another area, please let the other leader or the coordinators know.

Leaders

- May contact adjoining team leaders if you feel your boundaries need to be clarified. You will receive a list of email/telephone contacts.
- Please contact your team members as soon as you receive these instructions. Explain the area, route, meeting place(s), lunch arrangements, pit stops, availability of scopes, team roles, opportunities for scouting & owling.
  - Travel in your own car or in your small contact group
  - Do not attend if you are sick or have been around some who is sick

- Please gain specific consent from owners before you access private property either to scout or on count day.
- Dress warmly in layers especially if you must spend time on the waterfront. Bring spare clothing and towels. Always stay safe especially on or near the water. If it is windy or snowy you may have to avoid the woods.

Weather and Effort

- Please record time, duration and distance on foot and by car on count day. Keep a separate total for owling. Record weather and effort on the participant weather information form.
- Please enter the Temperature range, Wind Direction and Velocity, Daytime Start and Finish (excluding owling), and # Parties at the top of the form. On the next line, please enter the amount of Snow, if any, and circle the descriptors for A.M. and P.M. knowing the extremes is beneficial.
- Party hours and distance are used by Bird Studies Canada to assess changes over previous years. To calculate total party hours and total party distance, have the counters record the start and end time for every team change. For instance, if a group of 4 birds for an hour, then splits into two groups of two which then count for two hours, they should record the start and end times for each segment. The calculation of party hours would then be 1 (party) x 1 (hour) + 2 (parties) x 2 (hours), for a total of 5 party hours.
- Likewise, distance covered is calculated the same way. Each time the team changes, the approximate distance covered by the party should be noted. Please use km for consistency. For estimating distance, you could select an area in your zone to use as a benchmark or use these guidelines: slow, intensive birding: 1 km/hr; fairly good travel with regular stops to bird, 2 km/hr; steady walking with a few stops to bird, 3 km/hr. Vehicle time and distance is that covered inside your count area, but not that outside your area travelled to reach a counting spot.

- Party hour and party miles exclude feeder hours and owling hours. Report Total # hours (owling) and # miles (owling) separately on the effort form.
- If the route is an out and back trail or roadway, only the one distance is taken, but the entire time spent should be reported.

Rare Birds

- Any species seen/heard but not listed on the checklist you are provided **must be backed up with a CBC Rare Bird Documentation Form.** You may use this even for a listed species if you feel your sighting is unusual enough. Some sightings may require independent identification from a second observer.
- Photographs are always welcome especially sharp, close up images of the less common birds you have counted.

Questions - Contact

– Susan Knoerr 250-228-1541 or Jeanne Schippers 250-714-6683