

## 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Plainfield Winter Bird Count

Welcome to the Plainfield Winter Bird Count -- We are glad to have you join us! This year marks the 126th annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count, making it the longest running citizen science project on the planet. More than 50,000 observers across North America participate each year in this all-day census of winter bird population. The results are compiled into the longest running database in ornithology, representing over a century of continuous trends of bird populations. Our particular Plainfield circle, spanning Montpelier to Marshfield, is among the longest-running count circles in the country!

The Plainfield Winter Bird Count will take place this year on **Saturday, December 19, 2026**. To cover our count circle we welcome on-foot and vehicle-based field observers as well as feeder watchers who will count birds at their own feeders. Below and attached are all the instructions and datasheets you'll need.

### Feeder Watchers

Please use the attached feeder watcher datasheet for your counts. It includes instructions for observing, recording, and submitting your data. This is a great option for folks who would like to watch birds from the comfort of their own home. If you'd like to be a feeder watcher, please let us know in advance so that our road-based teams don't also count birds at your feeders as they drive by.

### Field Observers

You should have a sector (or sector portion) assignment at least a week before the count. If that's not the case, please contact Sean ([sean@northbranchnaturecenter.org](mailto:sean@northbranchnaturecenter.org)). We do our best to assign teams to their preferred areas, and to their preferred mode of transit (vehicle or foot).

Maps of the count circle and the sectors within it can be found on our website. Please familiarize yourself with the instructions on the next page. The general rules across all CBCs can be found here: <https://www.audubon.org/conservation/join-christmas-bird-count>.

Please use the attached tally sheet to keep a quick count throughout the day.

At the end of the day, transcribe your data onto the formal attached datasheet for submission.

### Data Submission

Data can be submitted by emailing the info to [sean@northbranchnaturecenter.org](mailto:sean@northbranchnaturecenter.org). You can send an image of the datasheet or simply provide all the information contained on the datasheet in the body of your email. You can also join the post-count potluck to report your data in person.

### Potluck!!

Join us after the count for our celebratory potluck dinner at NORTH BRANCH NATURE CENTER. Please plan to arrive after dark, any time you'd like after 4:45. We'll kick off our count tally at about 5:15. The potluck is our chance to compare notes, compile data, share observations, sometimes eat bird-shaped meatloaf, and, of course, vie for the title of "most crows seen." We'll also dig into our historic count records to find interesting trends and sightings from over the years. If you can't make it to the potluck, please email or drop off your data after you have finished your count.

## Rules for Field Observers

**Count every bird you see.** Counts should be as exact as possible. Accurate counts of even our most common birds like chickadees are important. If you cover the same ground twice, do not double-count birds that may have been observed earlier.

**Choose your own adventure.** Some teams prefer to be out at dawn, others midday, and many all day long. You have your territory assignments, but you are welcome to tackle your territory whenever/however you see fit. Please note that bird activity at feeders tends to be best in the mornings.

**Include your effort.** There is a place for this in the data sheet. Effort information is necessary to interpret results. Include the time that you spent birding as well as the distance you traveled (and whether by car or foot). Please round all hours to the nearest quarter-hour, and all distances to the nearest quarter-mile. It is the effort of the party—not the individual—that we need. For example, the effort of 3 individuals walking together 1 mile is not 3 miles, it is 1 mile for the party. And if a group splits, then you would add the separate effort of the second party.

**Obey traffic laws and private property.** Maybe obvious, but easily forgotten about. In particular, be careful on main roads and be aware of stopping on blind turns. Be very respectful about birding on private property, or pointing your binoculars into private property (i.e. the feeders in the front yard). If asked, please let people know that you are participating in the Winter Bird Count with the National Audubon Society.

**Don't forget about "count week" birds.** If we miss any species during the count day, we can still include them as 'count week' birds if they are seen within three days before/after the count. Keep your eyes open for unusual birds from the Wednesday prior to the count through the Tuesday following the count.

Thank you, and happy birding!

## Plainfield Winter Bird Count – Tally Sheet

Canada Goose \_\_\_\_\_

American Black Duck \_\_\_\_\_

Mallard \_\_\_\_\_

Hooded Merganser \_\_\_\_\_

Common Merganser \_\_\_\_\_

Ruffed Grouse \_\_\_\_\_

Wild Turkey \_\_\_\_\_

Bald Eagle \_\_\_\_\_

Sharp-shinned Hawk \_\_\_\_\_

Cooper's Hawk \_\_\_\_\_

Northern Goshawk \_\_\_\_\_

Red-tailed Hawk \_\_\_\_\_

Rock Pigeon \_\_\_\_\_

Mourning Dove \_\_\_\_\_

Barred Owl \_\_\_\_\_

Downy Woodpecker \_\_\_\_\_

Hairy Woodpecker \_\_\_\_\_

Pileated Woodpecker \_\_\_\_\_

Northern Shrike \_\_\_\_\_

Blue Jay \_\_\_\_\_

American Crow \_\_\_\_\_

Black-capped Chickadee \_\_\_\_\_

Common Raven \_\_\_\_\_

Tufted Titmouse \_\_\_\_\_

Red-breasted Nuthatch \_\_\_\_\_

White-breasted Nuthatch \_\_\_\_\_

Brown Creeper \_\_\_\_\_

Golden-crowned Kinglet \_\_\_\_\_

American Robin \_\_\_\_\_

European Starling \_\_\_\_\_

Bohemian Waxwing \_\_\_\_\_

Cedar Waxwing \_\_\_\_\_

American Tree Sparrow \_\_\_\_\_

Dark-eyed Junco \_\_\_\_\_

Snow Bunting \_\_\_\_\_

Northern Cardinal \_\_\_\_\_

Purple Finch \_\_\_\_\_

House Finch \_\_\_\_\_

Common Redpoll \_\_\_\_\_

Pine Siskin \_\_\_\_\_

American Goldfinch \_\_\_\_\_

Evening Grosbeak \_\_\_\_\_

House Sparrow \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Plainfield Winter Bird Count Data Form</b>	Year:	
	Sector/Territory:	

Snow Goose		COMMON RAVEN	
<b>CANADA GOOSE</b>		Horned Lark	
<b>American Black Duck</b>		<b>BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE</b>	
<b>MALLARD</b>		<b>TUFTED TITMOUSE</b>	
Green-winged Teal		<b>RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH</b>	
Canvasback		<b>WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH</b>	
Ring-necked Duck		<b>BROWN CREEPER</b>	
Lesser Scaup		<b>Carolina Wren</b>	
<b>HOODED MERGANSER</b>		Winter Wren	
<b>COMMON MERGANSER</b>		<b>GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET</b>	
<b>RUFFED GROUSE</b>		Hermit Thrush	
<b>WILD TURKEY</b>		<b>AMERICAN ROBIN</b>	
Great Blue Heron		<b>EUROPEAN STARLING</b>	
Turkey Vulture		<b>Bohemian Waxwing</b>	
<b>Bald Eagle</b>		<b>CEDAR WAXWING</b>	
Golden Eagle		<b>AMERICAN TREE SPARROW</b>	
<b>Sharp-shinned Hawk</b>		<b>Song Sparrow</b>	
<b>Cooper's Hawk</b>		Swamp Sparrow	
<b>Northern Goshawk</b>		<b>White-throated Sparrow</b>	
<b>RED-TAILED HAWK</b>		<b>DARK-EYED JUNCO</b>	
Rough-legged Hawk		Lapland Longspur	
American Kestrel		<b>Snow Bunting</b>	
Ring-billed Gull		<b>NORTHERN CARDINAL</b>	
Herring Gull		Red-winged Blackbird	
<b>ROCK PIGEON</b>		Rusty Blackbird	
<b>MOURNING DOVE</b>		Common Grackle	
<b>BARRED OWL</b>		<b>BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD</b>	
Long-eared Owl		<b>Pine Grosbeak</b>	
Belted Kingfisher		<b>PURPLE FINCH</b>	
Red-headed Woodpecker		<b>HOUSE FINCH</b>	
Red-bellied Woodpecker		Red Crossbill	
<b>DOWNY WOODPECKER</b>		White-winged Crossbill	
<b>HAIRY WOODPECKER</b>		<b>COMMON REDPOLL</b>	
Northern Flicker		Hoary Redpoll	
<b>PILEATED WOODPECKER</b>		<b>PINE SISKIN</b>	
<b>NORTHERN SHRIKE</b>		<b>AMERICAN GOLDFINCH</b>	
<b>BLUE JAY</b>		<b>EVENING GROSBEAK</b>	
<b>AMERICAN CROW</b>		<b>HOUSE SPARROW</b>	

**PURPLE FINCH**= Seen on count day/week for more than five of the last ten years

**Snow Bunting** = Seen on count day/week for three to five of the last ten years

Rusty Blackbird = Seen on count day/week in the last 15 years, but under three of the last ten years

**For Count Week species (seen 3 days before or after, but not on, count day), enter "cw" instead of count**

<b>Unlisted Species Write-Ins</b>

Conditions			
Temperature min/max		Precipitation start/end	
Cloud Cover min/max		Water (open vs. frozen)	

Team Effort			
Total Party hrs. - Foot		Total Party Miles - Foot	
Total Party hrs. - Car		Total Party Miles - Car	

**Owling**

Nocturnal Effort			
Hours		Miles	

Sector/Team	
Sector No.:	Sector Location:
Team Members	Address

Feeder Counters	
Name and Hours:	

## Plainfield Winter Bird Count Feeder Watcher Checklist

Max Seen	Species
	Wild Turkey
	Sharp-shinned Hawk
	Cooper's Hawk
	Red-tailed Hawk
	Rock Pigeon
	Mourning Dove
	Barred Owl
	Red-bellied Woodpecker
	Downy Woodpecker
	Hairy Woodpecker
	Pileated Woodpecker
	Northern Shrike
	Blue Jay
	American Crow
	Common Raven
	Black-capped Chickadee
	Tufted Titmouse
	Red-breasted Nuthatch
	White-breasted Nuthatch
	Brown Creeper
	European Starling
	American Tree Sparrow
	Song Sparrow
	White-throated Sparrow
	Dark-eyed Junco
	Northern Cardinal
	Purple Finch
	House Finch
	Common Redpoll
	Pine Siskin
	American Goldfinch
	Evening Grosbeak
	House Sparrow
	<i>other</i> _____

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Start Time (first time observing feeders):

\_\_\_\_\_

End Time (final time observing feeders):

\_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL OBSERVATION TIME (cumulative time actively spent observing feeders):

\_\_\_\_\_

Weather: \_\_\_\_\_

Temperature: \_\_\_\_\_ Precip: \_\_\_\_\_

**Feeder Watcher Instructions:** Count the maximum number of each species that are visible at one time on the count day (December 19). So, for example, if you see a group of 3 chickadees in the morning and then a group of 5 chickadees in the afternoon, your total is 5 chickadees (not 8). Also, be sure to record personal information above and effort information below.

**Options for reporting your feeder count:**

1. Come to the potluck compilation dinner
2. Email results to:  
[Sean@NorthBranchNatureCenter.org](mailto:Sean@NorthBranchNatureCenter.org)
3. Mail this data sheet to:  
NBNC, 713 Elm Street, Montpelier VT 05602