



Seattle CBC Feeder Watch Guide

Thank you for your interest in taking part in the Seattle Christmas Bird Count (CBC) as a **Feeder Watcher**. The information you gather during the count will enable us to better understand wintering bird populations in Seattle. We want to ensure your involvement is suitable to both your needs and the requirements of the established CBC Feeder Watch data collection protocol. This document will provide you with the information you need to take part in the Seattle Christmas Bird Count as a Feeder Watcher.

The goal of the Christmas Bird Count is to census everything with feathers and a heartbeat within a pre-defined, 15 mile diameter circle, over a 24hr period. The Feeder Watch program aims to determine the highest number of individuals of each species seen on your bird feeders or within your yard.

To take part in the CBC Feeder Watch program, there are **three requirements**:

1. Your bird feeder/yard **must** be located within the Seattle CBC count area. Review this [map](#) and search for your planned Feeder Watch location to confirm that it's within the count area circle. If your feeder is not located within the count area circle, unfortunately we cannot use your data for the Seattle CBC, although it would still be useful if added to [eBird](#).
2. You can only count birds at your feeder on the day of the Seattle CBC. The 2019 Seattle CBC will take place on **Saturday, December 28**.
3. **You must register** your intention to become a Feeder Watcher with the count organizer using the registration website, and choose 'Feeder Watcher Participant'. Register for the count [HERE](#).

Feeder Watch Survey Protocol

How to Observe

You can conduct the Feeder Watch survey using a couple of different techniques – Continuous or Sporadic.

Continuous

You can conduct your survey in one continuous block of time eg. 60-90 minutes or more. This method will enable you to schedule your day around your survey. You **MUST** however be watching your feeders/yard the entire time. We request that you not leave and return to the count at intervals within the block of time as this does not constitute a continuous count. You can conduct your survey at any time on count day. You could survey first thing in the morning and then continue about your business for the rest of the day, or leave it to last thing in the afternoon. This way the count need not interrupt your day too much.

Sporadic

If you are unable to devote a continuous chunk of time to the survey, you can conduct your count in multiple smaller blocks of time eg. 15-20 minutes. The benefit of this is that you may be able to better fit this type of survey into your busy Holiday schedule. For example, you could make multiple discreet observation periods by dividing up the Seattle CBC day. You could spend 15-20 minutes watching the feeder(s) first thing in the morning; then conduct 15-20 min observations every 2-3 hours throughout the rest of the day. At the end of the day, you will have multiple completed datasheets from which you can glean the highest numbers of birds observed for each species.

What to Record

For your convenience, a datasheet can be found at the end of this document to keep track of your observations and record your feeder count totals. Please ensure to complete all parts of the 'About the Survey' section at the top of the datasheet.

Feeder Location

The bird feeder(s) that are being surveyed must be located within the Seattle CBC boundary. Therefore, we require you to record the **physical address of the feeder(s)** being surveyed on the datasheet. We will double check the location of the feeder(s) before adding the data into the full count database.

Observers

We need to know **how many observers** are taking part in your Feeder Watch count. This helps us give credit to those who helped gather the data and aids us in calculating the “effort” (in this case, number of eyes) used in collecting the data. We cannot accept your data unless we know how many people took part in your feeder count.

Time

It is vitally important to record the **start and end time** of your survey period(s). This will further enable us to calculate the “effort” (ie. how long those eyes spent watching) used to count the number of individuals and species. Similar to the number of observers, we cannot accept your data unless we know how much time you spent conducting your counts.

Species

For the data to be accurate, it is important to correctly **identify the different species of bird** that use your bird feeders and yard. Fortunately, there are a limited number of species that occur in Seattle’s urban yards in winter and so with a good bird identification [website](#), [book](#) or [mobile app.](#), learning the different species should be relatively easy.

Number

Feeder Watchers should record the **maximum number of each species** visible (or within earshot) at any **one time** during your count. You should not simply tally individuals each time you see them because you might be counting the same individual bird repeatedly visiting your feeders. To reduce this issue we ask you to simply record the highest number of individuals of each species you see/hear during your feeder watch. For example, a 20 minute feeder watch:

Minute 3 – you see 2 Black-capped Chickadees visit your feeder

Minute 14 – three Black-capped Chickadees are seen in a nearby shrub

Your count for Black-capped Chickadee would be three – the highest number you saw at one time during the 20 minute count, not 6, the cumulative number of individuals seen. Even if you don’t count any birds during your survey, we still want your data; zero is a useful data point.

Bird Location

You are not constrained to only recording the birds that come to your bird feeder, you can count any birds that come to your yard, including those that fly through or over your yard. The majority of Feeder Watchers will position themselves next to a window in their home or apartment where they can get a good view of their bird feeder or yard. From that vantage you may include any other birds that you can accurately identify from the window.

Gender

It’s possible to distinguish the sex of some bird species by color. We encourage you to do this if you are confident in your abilities. For example, you record 25 House Finches; however, it would be great if you were able to count 16 red (adult males) and 9 brown (not adult males). That way, if you count again later and have 12 red and 20 brown, you’ll record 36 House Finches because the greatest count of “reds” was 16 and the greatest count of “browns” was 20; $16 + 20 = 36$. This of course does not work for all birds, only those where males and females are different colors.

Finalizing the Datasheet

Once your survey(s) are complete, please ensure all the data on your datasheets are legible. The most important items are the ‘About the Survey’ section, the number of individuals of each species, and the effort taken to record those birds.

Submitting your Data

Please submit your data using the online datasheet: <http://bit.ly/2C53pbe>. If you have any questions, please reach out to CBC@seattleaudubon.org. Completed datasheets can also be turned in at the CBC Potluck, or hand delivered to the Nature Shop. To ensure inclusion with the rest of the CBC data, please submit your data to Seattle Audubon as soon as possible after the count (ideally within 3 days).



Christmas Bird Count



Seattle CBC 2019 – Feeder Watch Datasheet

About the Survey – *only conduct Feeder Watch count on December 28, 2019*

Observer Names	Feeder Location ↓	Start Time:	End Time:
1.	Street:		
2.	Zip:		
3.	Email:		
4.	Phone:		

Bird Count Data

Species	Maximum Number	Species	Maximum Number
Sharp-shinned Hawk		Pacific Wren	
Cooper's Hawk		Golden-crowned Kinglet	
Glaucous-winged Gull		Ruby-crowned Kinglet	
Large Gull sp.		American Robin	
Rock Pigeon		Varied Thrush	
Band-tailed Pigeon		Cedar Waxwing	
Anna's Hummingbird		European Starling	
Red-breasted Sapsucker		Yellow-rumped Warbler	
Downy Woodpecker		Townsend's Warbler	
Hairy Woodpecker		Spotted Towhee	
Northern Flicker		Fox Sparrow	
Pileated Woodpecker		Song Sparrow	
Steller's Jay		White-crowned Sparrow	
California (Western) Scrub-Jay		Golden-crowned Sparrow	
American Crow		Dark-eyed Junco	
Black-capped Chickadee		Red Crossbill	
Chestnut-backed Chickadee		House Finch	
Bushtit		Purple Finch	
Red-breasted Nuthatch		Pine Siskin	
Brown Creeper		American Goldfinch	
Bewick's Wren		House Sparrow	
Other:		Other:	

The above bird list details some of the more common feeder/back yard visitors and is intended to be an aid for recording your results, and is by no means an exhaustive list. A full list can be found on the CBC webpage of the [Seattle Audubon website](http://seattleaudubon.org), and includes local subspecies and variants.

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