



More than 60,000 volunteers throughout North America will count birds between December 14, 2012 and January 5, 2013 for the 113th Annual Christmas Bird Count. This season's CBC is expected to be larger than ever, expanding its geographical coverage and accumulating even more information about winter bird distributions. The Christmas Bird Count is a project of the National Audubon Society in the United States and is coordinated in Canada by Bird Studies Canada. Learn more by visiting the [Audubon](#) and [Bird Studies Canada](#) CBC webpages. Last year's count shattered records. A total of 2248 counts and 63,223 people tallied over 60 million birds. Volunteers from every Canadian province and territory, all 50 of the United States, parts of Central and South America, Bermuda, the West Indies, and Pacific Islands, participate in the world's longest-running Citizen Science survey. A number of changes are coming to the program this year. "We're dropping fees, adding languages, going digital, and taking citizen science year-round," said Audubon President and CEO David Yarnold. "The Christmas Bird Count harnesses volunteer power to gather knowledge that shapes conservation policy at enormous scales. This is the largest, longest-running animal census on the planet, and we're all proud to be a part of the CBC. And with the elimination of fees, we're looking forward to even more people having a role in this adventure." "This is not just about counting birds," said Dick Cannings, Bird Studies Canada's Christmas Bird Count Coordinator. "CBC data are at the heart of hundreds of peer-reviewed scientific studies, and inform decisions by wildlife managers across the continent. Because birds are early indicators of environmental threats to habitats we share, this is a vital survey of North America and, increasingly, the Western Hemisphere." Christmas Bird Count results have revealed the dramatic impact climate change is already having on birds, and a disturbing decline in common birds, including the Rusty Blackbird. The many decades of data not only help identify birds in need of conservation action, but also reveal success stories. The Christmas Bird Count helped document the comeback of the Bald Eagle and significant increases in waterfowl populations, both the result of conservation efforts. The world's longest-running wildlife census began in 1900 when Dr. Frank Chapman suggested an alternative to the holiday "side hunt," in which teams competed to see who could shoot the most small game, including birds. Chapman proposed that people count birds instead.