

Can I enter my Christmas Bird Count into eBird?

The Christmas Count is the largest and longest-running ornithological citizen science project. Its data are a great complement to what we are collecting in eBird, and indeed the CBC has paved the way for eBird in many respects. It is not a problem to enter data in eBird and then submit it for the CBC too, since the two projects are collecting data in similar ways, but at different scales. eBird can be a great way to store your data and compare it from year to year. Please see also our [article on using eBird Mobile on your CBCs](#).

As you head out to do Christmas Counts this season, please remember the following:

- 1) Entering data for the CBC and for eBird presents no problem at all. Indeed, one day we envision the possibility of entering your eBird list and having it automatically contribute to the CBC.
- 2) Most CBC circles are divided into multiple sectors, with teams of people ("parties") covering each sector. Remember that eBird counts are single-party counts, so any data collected during the CBC season should be entered for single parties only, not parties that spend a lot of time split up. (See more [here](#) on the problem with multi-party counts being entered in eBird.)
- 3) The official CBC effort does not permanently store information at the "sector" level. eBird provides an opportunity to permanently record those data. For example, most coastal counts will have a substantially different mix of birds on the open beach versus areas 5 or 10 miles inland. eBird thrives on location specificity, so stores these data at a finer scale.
- 4) While eBird works best with location specific sightings, it can be time consuming to enter multiple lists from a single day. We certainly appreciate those who take the time to break a day of birding into discrete stops, especially from hotspots like parks and refuges. However, a day-long traveling count or area count is not inappropriate. The important thing is that you describe what you did (accurate mileage, duration etc.).
- 5) If you do use a day-long count to enter your count, please give some thought as to the location that you use. Please do not plot your point at a 'hotspot' if you spent significant time birding outside of the hotspot area. It is far better to plot a new point to represent the CBC sector, and to name it in a way that makes it clear what it represents -- such as "Lakeville CBC--Sector 5". Since hotspot summaries depend on data collected at the actual point, the bar charts and other summaries become much less meaningful when they include data from outside the location.
- 6) Traveling counts with accurate mileage and duration are preferred over area counts. Most CBC territories encompass much more area than you are able to cover, so the mileage is a better measure. Unlike the CBC, you should subtract your miles spent backtracking. eBird just wants the one way distance of the mileage you covered.

If you haven't already, contact your local compiler, or see the "Get Involved" page for the [Christmas Bird Count](#).

Many thanks in advance to all those who participate in both eBird and the CBC. Our collective knowledge of birds has grown exponentially thanks to the efforts of citizen scientists like yourselves. Everyone at Team eBird enthusiastically participates in our local CBCs, so please get out there, have fun, and enjoy the compilations!

While you are at the compilation, try to think about what patterns are emerging this year. Are a lot of late-lingering summer and fall species occurring? Are northern species occurring in good numbers? What finches

are being found in your area this year (Red and White-winged Crossbills, Common Redpolls. Evening and Pine Grosbeaks)? Are Bald Eagle numbers continuing to increase and kestrels continuing to decline? How are the half-hardy wintering birds like catbirds, Winter Wrens, and Yellow-rumped Warblers? Then, when you get home, try 'View and Explore' in eBird to see if you can learn more about these questions!

Using eBird Mobile on your CBC

Recording birds for Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) is now easier than ever, thanks to [eBird Mobile](#). If you have a smartphone, but don't yet have eBird Mobile, you might want to consider getting it for yourself for Christmas (Bird Counts) this year. If you've been waiting, now is a great time to check it out! Since eBird data is best when collected at fine scales, and since CBC data is best when tallied bird-by-bird through the day, using eBird Mobile to submit to eBird and tally for CBCs is ideal. Below we give some brief instructions for how to use eBird Mobile this CBC season; please see also our [article on how to use eBird on your CBCs](#).

In decades past, at the end of a day's birding was the "tally", which involved a whole lot of painstaking addition to decipher the chicken scratchings in our notebooks and add up the totals for a full day. Common birds seen in small numbers all day long were always the worst, with line after line of hash marks for chickadees and goldfinches and crows.

Now, with eBird Mobile, this solution is simple and the tally-up at the end of the day is a much more enjoyable chance to eat chili, reminisce about the day, and not fret over the process of adding up birds from your notebook.

iOS users:

- 1) **Collect your checklists in eBird Mobile all day long.** Be sure to carefully check your list after each stop. We find that it is best *not* to submit until the end of the day, since species that inadvertently get left off are hard to correct once submitted and are left off the tally feature below.
- 2) **At the end of the day, click Trip Summary and open your "Day Total".** If you did owling or birding that you don't want counted, you can define a customized period across which to tally the birds using the "Trip Summary" option.
- 3) **Double-check the eBird Mobile list and tallies.**

Android users:

A "Trip Summary" feature is not yet available, but using eBird to tally your observations is still quite easy once you submit your checklists to eBird. If you keep data from multiple locations that you need to add up, you can make a [Trip Report](#) in eBird. If you select the day of the CBC as your start date and then select only the locations you visited on the count, you'll get an accurate tally for the day.

When conducting a Christmas Bird Count, it is especially important to make sure your checklist locations are accurate. [This link](#) provides some tips and tricks for getting started with eBird Mobile.