

Palo Alto CBC, Dec. 21, 2020: Instructions for Party Leaders

RESTRICTIONS RELATED TO COVID-19:

- Read and follow **uodated** guidelines at <https://scvas.org/christmas-bird-count>, including **no carpooling** and **no sharing of equipment** between households. **Make sure each party member reads those guidelines**; confirm to your region coordinator.
- Birding teams (one or more per party) must consist of no more than two households, which must observe social distancing between households (10-foot-minimum target) and mask requirements at all times. (If possible, limit to single household.)
- Hence a party may need to divide into more **teams** than in the past, each assigned a particular sub-area. Work with your region coordinator on this. No team should consist entirely of birders below intermediate level.

BEFORE COUNT DAY

1) The count is meant to be a fun event, but is also part of Audubon's Citizen Science program. To get a representative count for your area, put in as much time (summed over teams) as you and your party members can manage.

2) Download forms from <https://scvas.org/christmas-bird-count-party-leaders>. You have two choices:

- Pdf, if you want to print (single-sided, please) and fill in forms by hand, to be either USPS-mailed or scanned (full-sized and clean) and emailed. If you scan printed forms, hold on to the originals in case of problems.
- Doc (Word) and Excel forms, to be filled out electronically and emailed. **Important:** on the Excel bird list, you **must not** insert, remove, or re-order any rows (other than adding unlisted species at the bottom). Feel free to add new columns at the right, if you like (*e.g.*, to track teams or sub-areas).

3) When you download your **forms**, please immediately FILL OUT THE TOP LINE OF EVERY PAGE. There are 8 regions; your "party" number is assigned by your region coordinator. Familiarize yourself with the forms ahead of the count.

COUNT DAY:

4) On count day, have each party member enter contact information on the **participant list**. Check entries for LEGIBILITY. Let your party members know about the virtual countdown.

5) On the **Party Statistics form**, include

- Time and mileage information for each team (sub-party). (If you take a non-birding pause, the "Hours" might be less than the difference between start and stop times.) Record any owling (nighttime birding) separately.
- Temperature (range) and weather.
- Summary of all areas covered: identify overall areas, plus **limited** details.

6) On the **Checklist**, all observations of birds with a "**W**" in the left column, as well as unlisted species, require a **writeup** (Rare-bird documentation form -- **include description**, and elimination of similar more-common species, on reverse side).

7) **At the time of any Eagle sighting**, note down all information requested on the **Eagle Log**. This will help us resolve possible multiple reports of the same bird(s).

AFTER COUNTING:

8) The day ends with a **countdown**, at which we try to tally everything seen during the day. This year's will be **virtual** (video) – stay tuned for details. If you attend, you get to announce your own rarities and other neat finds! All participants are welcome, but we particularly want to hear from party leaders. If you cannot attend, please let your region coordinator know in advance about any **W** or **boldface** species your party has found, as well as other species of interest (your choice, examples might be Wood Duck, Golden Eagle, Pileated Woodpecker).

9) By the end of count day, tell your region coordinator by what method you will return your forms – see item 2 above for choices -- and estimate how soon.

10) **Return your completed forms** to Al Eisner (eisner@slac.stanford.edu or 3538 Farm Hill Blvd. #4, Redwood City, CA 94061), with copies to your region coordinator if he or she requests them. We want only one set of forms per party, so if your party consists of more than one team, the party leader should combine the data from all teams (*e.g.*, sum up the species counts, list all party participants). **Exception: rare bird forms and photos** should be sent to Mike Rogers (m.m.rogers@comcast.net); if you send those by email, please cc to Al.