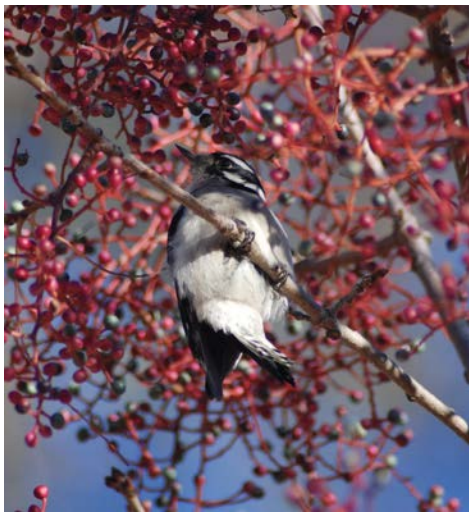




2023 San Jose Christmas Bird Count

Welcome new participant!

Thank you for your interest in the San Jose Christmas Bird Count! This year's Bird Count will be held Sunday, December 17th, 2023.



What is a Bird Count?

Every year, we count birds within a circle drawn on a map. The circle is divided into sectors. Each sector has varying habitat that attract different types of birds. Some sectors are very likely to have rare birds while others are usually more ordinary. But cool birds are everywhere and you might see a rare or at least uncommon bird no matter where you are birding for us.

Each sector is divided into party areas. Your party will have a leader who will notify you where and when to meet. Be sure to ask about lunch, as many parties have a tradition of eating at a certain restaurant or picnicking in a park or location. You will want to know the plan.

Wear layers. Temperatures will likely be pretty low when you start but they'll rise and it will be good to take off those heavy clothes as the day goes on. Wear sturdy shoes and be aware of weather expected so you can be prepared.



A Covid-free event

Due to Covid-19, there are restrictions and guidelines this year provided by SCVAS and the National Audubon Society. Here is a summary:

1. Of course, first and foremost, If you are feeling sick or are showing symptoms within 48 hours of your start time, stay home.

Obviously, we will hate to lose birders who don't feel well but we are lucky to be having a count at all and we expect to miss our normal bird totals. It can't be helped. We'll get by.

2. Masks are required **only** if you can't social distance, whether you are outside or inside. We need to follow all local regulations and restrictions. Vaccinations are not required but of course, we do recommend them.



3. When carpooling with people from outside your normal group of contacts, please wear masks inside of vehicles. We have become used to the idea that we don't have to wear masks around others, but in close quarters, we could be spreading illness before we realize we're sick.

4. As has been the case for the last few years, there will be no countdown dinner. Please send photos and stories regarding your most interesting species and experiences to your compiler. Without the benefit of hearing stories and such at our countdown dinner, we'll be wanting to let everyone know about the great birds you saw and the interesting experiences you had. There will be a video countdown released within a few days that will contain all the photos (of people, birds, etc) and stories you've shared with us.



Tips for new birders

The first birder I counted with at my first Christmas Bird Count back in 1986 was just twelve years old. He was an amazing birder even then. He gave me tips I still use to this day.

Watch the sky. We ignore the sky most of the time and don't notice soaring hawks or birds flying overhead. For the count, be sure you don't miss flying birds.

Look at every tree and bush.

Hawks and other birds can often be found sitting in trees or even atop the apex. Look for any odd colors in the tree. Bald Eagles are often only seen because of a speck of white in the distance. Sparrows and other birds often hang out under bushes or on top or along the side. Keep your eyes peeled for movement.

Make mental notes. Remember when you see a bird, you may see it for a matter of seconds, perhaps even less. If you don't recognize the bird right away, deliberately look at colors that stand out to make the bird different. What color is its chest and back? Does it have an eye stripe or eye ring? You may not get another look so it is important to get a determination on what you may have seen.



Rare Birds. Some birds are considered uncommon or rare. Each party has a list of birds normally seen on the bird count. If your bird is marked as a rare bird, or is not on the list, a rare bird form will need to be filled out. We have a rare bird committee with some of our best birders who will scrutinize reports of rare birds to decide if this sighting is likely to be accurate. They will evaluate the report to see if the bird might be a similar and more common species or otherwise identified incorrectly.

Thanks again and Have Fun Out There!

