



*inspiring people to protect  
Bay Area birds since 1917*

Media Advisory

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## **Largest Christmas Bird Count in the World Will Take Place in Oakland – Sunday, December 18**

Over 270 Bay Area birders will fan out to count shorebirds, waterbirds, raptors, and songbirds throughout a 15-mile circle centered in Oakland on Sunday, December 18 in the largest Christmas Bird Count in the world.

The Oakland count – which includes Berkeley, Emeryville, Orinda, Lafayette, Moraga, and Alameda – drew more participants into the field than any other count in 2015.

Now in its 76<sup>th</sup> year, the Oakland count is part of a worldwide Audubon tradition going back more than a century, the longest-running wildlife census in the world. Each winter, veteran and novice birders spend a full day from dawn to dusk counting both species and individual birds in a designated 15-mile circle. The data provided by these “citizen scientists” reveal trends in bird populations and help policymakers develop strategies to protect at-risk species.

“Birds and wildlife face so many risks today, including loss of habitat due to urban development and climate change,” said Cindy Margulis, Executive Director of Golden Gate Audubon Society. “The information provided by our dedicated Christmas Bird Count

**GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY**

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volunteers is more important than ever to ensure the survival of the amazing birds that inhabit our yards, parks, and open spaces.”

The Christmas Bird Count had its start in 1900, when conservationist Frank Chapman proposed a holiday-season bird count as a more humane alternative to the tradition of a Christmas bird hunt. Last year, National Audubon’s 116th Christmas Bird Count included a record-setting 2,505 count circles throughout the Western Hemisphere, including about 15 in the Bay Area. In total, 76,669 observers out in the field tallied up 58,878,071 birds representing 2,607 different species, about one-quarter of the world’s known avifauna.

In Oakland last year, 277 field observers and 37 backyard Feeder Watchers documented a total of 179 species and 96,287 individual birds. Among the questions on the minds of this year’s Oakland count organizers are: *Will there be a continued increase in American Crows, Common Ravens, and Wild Turkeys? Will anyone spot any Tricolored Blackbirds, a species that is in decline across California due to loss of nesting habitat in the Central Valley?* (The day’s results will be submitted by the various teams at a festive Compilation Dinner in Berkeley right after the count.)

**Media are invited to join a count team in the field.**

To arrange to join a count team, please contact Ilana DeBare **before Sunday** since it will be hard to reach people once they are out counting. Ilana is at [idebare@goldengateaudubon.org](mailto:idebare@goldengateaudubon.org) or (510) 310-5573.

For more information on the Christmas Bird Counts centered in Oakland and San Francisco, see <http://goldengateaudubon.org/cbc>.

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