



*inspiring people to protect
Bay Area birds since 1917*

MEDIA ADVISORY

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Bird Lovers Flock to Oakland Christmas Bird Count – Sunday, December 15

Over 250 local bird lovers will storm the beaches, parks, golf courses, and even the cemeteries of the East Bay this Sunday, December 15, as part of the Audubon Society's 120th annual Christmas Bird Count.

The Oakland count— organized by Golden Gate Audubon Society and covering a 15-mile-wide circle that also includes Berkeley, Alameda, Emeryville, Orinda, and Lafayette—is one of 2,615 bird counts held this month by Audubon chapters throughout the hemisphere.

For several recent years, the Oakland count has mobilized more volunteers in the field than any other count.

Audubon volunteers will start counting around dawn (actually 4 a.m. for a team counting owls!) and continue until mid- or late- afternoon. Then they will gather to report on the day's sightings at a festive compilation dinner in Berkeley.

More than just a fun winter tradition, the Christmas Bird Count provides valuable data on bird population trends over decades, and has been cited in over 300 peer-reviewed

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scientific articles. This year, it takes place under the dual shadows of bird population decline and climate change.

The journal *Science* published a [study this fall](#) using CBC data to describe a steady decline of nearly three billion North American birds since 1970, primarily as a result of human activities. And National Audubon issued a [report on birds and climate change](#) estimating that 2/3 of the continent's birds are at risk of extinction if global temperatures rise by 3 degrees Celsius.

In the Oakland count area, some common species that have seen long-term declines over the past four decades include Dark-eyed Juncos (down 35 percent), Fox Sparrows (down 42 percent), Brewer's Blackbirds (down 65 percent), and Tricolored Blackbirds, which have not been spotted at all in the past few years.

Of course—as even non-birders have noticed—some other species such as American Crows and Wild Turkeys have adapted well to urban living and are much more common.

“What will we find this year? We won't know until we're out in the field!” said Pam Young, Executive Director of Golden Gate Audubon Society. “What we *do* know is that this kind of community science is more important than ever. If we can identify which of our local bird species are in trouble, then we can take steps to help them. And a Bay Area where birds thrive is also one where humans will thrive.”

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Media are invited to cover one of our Oakland count teams in the field. To connect with a count team, contact Communications Director Ilana DeBare at idebare@goldengateaudubon.org or (510) 301-5573. If possible, please contact us before Sunday since it can be hard to reach teams once they are in the field.