



**Audubon Science Office**  
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Dear CBC Participant

We are taking this opportunity to thank you for playing an important part in developing the Christmas Bird Count. For most of us, CBC is about birds and people. It's about finding birds, not finding birds, the ups and downs of numbers, and the always-memorable sightings each time we go out. In addition, most of us look forward to spending time in the field with friends and colleagues, some of whom we don't see from one CBC season to the next. Many of us enjoy the camaraderie of the post-CBC potluck dinner. Some of the finest food and company we have shared has been at our respective potluck dinners.

The CBC had its roots, as you well know, 105 years ago as a political and social activity, and the focus has changed a great deal over the years to face many challenges and opportunities. For example, the increase in participation from 27 to well over 50,000 people in more than 2000 locations is outstanding as we aim to improve our coverage of the continent and beyond. This requires a much more sophisticated management system, and offers us all the chance to do more with the information you provide.

Following the success of its initial political beginnings, the CBC has evolved into much more than a social event. Today CBC has an increasingly important role in monitoring bird species that are themselves subject to extreme pressures from development and habitat loss, as well as more insidious changes such as climate change. As you will have read last season in *American Birds* Vol. 58, through a partnership with the Patuxent Research Center we are able to analyze in much better ways the information you collect, using methods similar to those used for the Breeding Bird Survey data. In those instances where we have analyzed BBS and CBC results using the same methods, we have seen similar long-term trends in bird populations.

The importance of the CBC data is especially high when we look at species such as Harris's Sparrow and Northern Shrike, species that breed far to the north and are not well covered by the Breeding Bird Survey. Our analyses of these data give us population trend information for such species for the first time. Having good information makes assigning conservation priorities possible. You'll see CBC analyses featured in Audubon's next State of the Birds report as we come to understand population changes in some species for the first time thanks to your efforts.

We know you appreciate just how important CBC information is as we work together to conserve birds and their habitats. It's one part of a picture that includes Audubon's Important Bird Areas program and our Audubon At Home initiative as well as a suite of other activities by partner organizations that help us all to develop action plans to ensure future survival of the birds of the Americas.

You may also have read the recommendations in the Report of a Review Panel in last season's *American Birds*, which has tasked Audubon with increasing the value of historic and future CBC data, and also promote the CBC as an education and outreach tool. Over the years we have sought to do these things through our website and to continuously improve your online experience, meeting your needs and those of the conservation community.

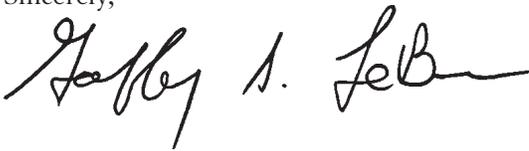
Resources (the time and expertise that money can provide) will determine the rate of progress on achieving the goals for CBC that the advisory group has set, which brings us neatly on to the issue of the \$5 CBC participation fee. Most participants happily pay the \$5 fee, and many donate additional funds. For a few, the fee is a major issue, a point of principal, and they refuse to pay it. All we can do here is to explain the fee and why it is so important to the running of the program, and what you can do.

The Science Division of Audubon runs the CBC as a self-sufficient program. The CBC does not benefit from any kind of guaranteed support, institutionally or otherwise. The 104<sup>th</sup> CBC had a budget of around \$520,000, and of this around \$200,000 came from fees. We raise the balance from donations, grants, and a range of fundraising activities. We are always searching for alternative sources of funding and welcome your specific ideas on those. Raising the balance is a task that CBC staff face every day.

Sometimes participants ask, “What do I get for my \$5.00?” The first and foremost result is the Christmas Bird Count program itself, from its international coordination and scope to its local importance and passion, and its contribution to bird conservation. Please also remember that as for the past four years, all participants who pay the \$5 fee and supply their mailing address to their compiler receive a copy of *American Birds* magazine, as well as the promise that Audubon, with its partners, will continue to enhance the value of the efforts of participants across the Americas.

As we look ahead to implementing the recommendations of the Review Panel to improve the CBC experience for you we welcome your help. We welcome your ideas for financial support and your own donations, both large and small. Please contact us if you can help.

Sincerely,



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## Important Questionnaire

Many thanks in advance for taking the time to let us know your thoughts on these questions!  
Please check just one option under each question

### 1. Feature content of CBC issue of *American Birds*

- I prefer science-based research articles
- I prefer a mix of research and popular articles
- I prefer popular articles about the lore and tradition of the CBC
- I prefer something else (details follow)

### 2. Timing of publication of CBC issue of *American Birds*:

- I prefer to get my CBC issue in mid-Summer
- I prefer to get my CBC issue in the Fall preceding the next season
- I prefer some other time (please specify)

### 3. Audubon Website

Approximately how many times each year do you visit any CBC webpage <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/> times

When considering the online CBC reporting through Historical Results <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/hr/index.html> please check one of the following:

- I would find a printable output similar to the old *American Birds* useful
- I would never use a printable output similar to the old *American Birds*

We invite you to learn about other Audubon Science programs when visiting the site.

**Please detach and mail your completed questionnaire to:**  
CBC, Audubon Science Office, 545 Almshouse Road, Ivyland PA 18974,  
or complete it online at [www.audubon.org/bird/cbc](http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc)