



Audubon

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September 30, 2008

Greetings to All,

I am writing to extend heartfelt thanks for your dedicated work on the Christmas Bird Count. Whether this past season was your first experience as a CBC observer, or you've been compiling multiple counts for decades, your efforts are vital to our understanding of how birds are doing and to developing the conservation efforts needed to protect them.

When Frank Chapman started the "Christmas Bird Census" in December of 1900 as an alternative to the traditional Christmas side hunt, it was a visionary act. But even the greatest foresight could not have predicted how important the CBC would become as a resource and tool for conservation. The combined efforts of tens of thousands of birders over the past 109 years have built a database of information on bird population trends unmatched by any other wildlife census.

This resource is essential to Audubon's State of the Birds reports, which identify birds – both common and less so – that are suffering population declines. In 2007, Audubon scientists and our partners completed two large-scale analyses drawing from the CBC database. The "2007 WatchList" and the "Common Birds in Decline" analyses made headlines and galvanized support for conservation action. Christmas Bird Count data were also instrumental in development of a newly released report from Audubon's partners, BirdLife International, that echoed our North American findings and revealed alarming declines in common birds worldwide.

Audubon is now in the process of analyzing the data to examine how birds have been affected by global warming and how their habitats will shift in the future. Once again, information you helped to provide will expand public awareness and help to shape policies essential to the well being of birds and the habitats they share with every other living creature.

Of course, the CBC also occupies a very special place in all our lives. Each year, it brings the birding community together to share in a holiday tradition that has nothing do with shopping lists or malls. But it does have a lot to do with gifts. I've experienced them myself. I've had the great pleasure of joining the count in New York's Central Park, and know that when people who care about nature gather outside for the simple act of observing and counting birds, something magical and inspiring happens. They share camaraderie, joy and moments of quiet reflection – and they celebrate and help to protect nature's gifts.

Each year, as you take a break from the holiday hustle and bustle to join your fellow birders – whether in a city park, deep in the forest, on the beach, or on a snow-covered prairie, every one of you makes a significant contribution to bird conservation. You are a big part of what gives Audubon the credibility and clout to make a difference. On behalf of Audubon, the birds and the future generations who will benefit from your efforts, I thank you.

Sincerely,

John Flicker
President & CEO, Audubon