



Project FeederWatch

Embrace the winter. Count feeder birds for science!

What is Project FeederWatch?

Project FeederWatch is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders at backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America. FeederWatchers periodically count the birds they see at their feeders from November through early April and send their counts to Project FeederWatch. FeederWatch data help scientists track broadscale movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance. Project FeederWatch is operated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Bird Studies Canada.

Who can participate?

Anyone with an interest in birds! FeederWatch is conducted by people of all skill levels and backgrounds, including children, families, individuals, classrooms, retired persons, youth groups, nature centers, and bird clubs.

What will I do?

Count birds that appear in your count site because of something that you have provided (plantings, food, or water). For each species, you will report only the highest number of individuals that you see *in view at one time*. By following this procedure, you are certain to avoid counting the same bird more than once. You will report your bird counts to scientists at the Lab of Ornithology either over our web site or on paper data forms. Learn more about how to count birds for FeederWatch in the instructions section of this website.

Does it cost money?

There is a \$15 annual participation fee (\$12 for Lab members, CAN\$35 for Canadian participants), which covers materials, staff support, web design, data analysis, and a year-end report (*Winter Bird Highlights*). Project FeederWatch is supported almost entirely by participation fees. Without the support of our participants, this project wouldn't be possible.

Where do I count the birds?

You designate an area that you can consistently observe throughout your count days. Participants are advised to choose obvious boundaries, such as the border of a yard or the area within a courtyard. Learn more about setting up a count site in the instructions section of this website.

When does the season start?

Our survey is conducted each winter starting on the second Saturday of November and runs for 21 weeks, through the first Friday of April. You may join at any time of year. The last day to sign up for any given season is Feb. 28 or 29. On Mar. 1 we begin taking sign-ups for the following season. Kits are shipped in the fall or, if you sign up during the season, about 2 weeks after you sign up.

How much time does it take?

It's up to you! Select your own bird-count days--two consecutive days once every two weeks (or every week if you enter data online and you choose to count that often). Count during all or part of those days. Learn more about selecting count days in the instructions section of this website.

Why should I participate?

FeederWatch results are regularly published in scientific journals and are shared with ornithologists and bird lovers nationwide. The counts you submit will make sure that your birds (or lack of birds) are represented in our papers and in the results found in the Explore Data section of this website.

As a FeederWatcher, you will learn more about winter birds and how their populations are faring. Read what our participants say. You will also contribute to the science and conservation of North American feeder birds.