



Audubon

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Dear Audubon Christmas Bird Count Participant:

As the newly appointed President of the National Audubon Society, it is my great honor to thank you for your tremendous contribution to our conservation mission. This issue of *American Birds* includes the latest CBC findings, but only hints at the true conservation value.

A former newspaper editor, I have long known that the secret to finding the facts of a story is to follow the money. Upon becoming an executive with an environmental organization, I quickly discovered that the secret to effective conservation is to follow the birds—exactly what you and Audubon make possible.

The dedicated efforts of CBC participants like you enabled Audubon to compile one of the world's most extensive databases of bird population trends. Thanks to you, we were able to document the alarming decline of some of America's most popular common birds and to contribute to the collaborative development of a periodic Watch List that monitors the status of rare and seriously imperiled species. This year and for several seasons to come, we anticipate that your efforts will help to clarify the impacts of the BP oil disaster, both on birds that winter in the Gulf and on the millions that use the area as a migratory Grand Central Station.

Christmas Bird Count data are the foundation of scores of peer reviewed studies, of state and local conservation plans, and of headline-making news. Data you collected inspired Congress to pass and fund vital legislation such as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act that benefits species across the Western hemisphere. Your dedication allowed Audubon to reveal disturbing climate-linked shifts in bird ranges. In California, CBC findings enabled Audubon to predict the future impact of climate change on both bird's ranges and habitat health, and to begin planning to help birds adapt. This vital research and response will soon be expanded nationwide.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is now using CBC data as one of 24 major indicators of climate impacts. And together with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other partners, we are continuing to evolve Audubon's original CBC-based *State of the Birds Reports* to a multi-group effort that garners attention at the highest levels of government and enhances the opportunities for the latest information on bird population trends drive important changes in national conservation policy.

In short, your love of birds and commitment to conservation are at the core of Audubon's role as America's leading advocate for birds and habitat and as one of the nation's most respected conservation organizations. You also are setting an example and keeping alive a tradition that will connect people to nature and to its stewardship for generations to come. I hope you take great pride in your important contribution to the Audubon network and to our conservation mission. And, I invite you to discover more about the combined impact of our work by signing up for updates on Audubon conservation accomplishments and opportunities. Simply visit www.audubonaction.org/cbc. We are gratified that you are a part of the Audubon Christmas Bird Count and of all we accomplish together.

Thank you. And, for those participating in the 111th CBC, happy counting!

Sincerely,

David Yarnold
President & CEO