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HELP COUNT BIRDS FOR SCIENCE DURING NEY NATURE CENTER'S 20TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Henderson, MN (Nov. 1, 2016) –The Ney Nature Center (NNC) invites birdwatchers to participate in the longest running citizen science survey, the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC). December 17 marks the 20th year NNC has participated in the count, when birders and nature enthusiasts at the NNC in Henderson, MN will take part in this tradition, many rising before dawn to participate.

During the 2015 CBC at NNC, Art Straub indicated that seeing American Bald Eagles was the exciting find for the day. “Twenty seven of the regal birds were discovered wafting upward in a ‘kettle’ immediately west of Le Sueur, and volunteers encountered numerous single and double eagles within the circle throughout the day!”

Birders of all ages are welcome to contribute to this fun, nationwide citizen science project, which provides ornithologists with a crucial snapshot of our native bird populations during the winter months. Each individual count is performed in a count circle with a radius of 7.5 miles. At least ten volunteers, including a compiler to coordinate the process, count in each circle. At the NNC circle, many volunteers conduct the count from their feeders.

For those wanting to participate, there will be a naturalist available at the NNC on December 17 from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm to help direct volunteers and answer questions. Interested parties are encouraged to obtain more information about the event on the NNC’s website at www.neycenter.org/nature/christmas-bird-count/ or call the office at 507-248-3474.

Each year, the Audubon Christmas Bird Count mobilizes over 72,000 volunteer bird counters in more than 2,400 locations across the Western Hemisphere. The Audubon Christmas Bird Count utilizes the power of volunteers to track the health of bird populations at a scale that scientists could never accomplish alone. Data compiled at the NNC will record every individual bird and bird species seen in a specified area, contributing to a vast citizen science network that continues a tradition stretching back more than 100 years.

To date, over 200 peer-reviewed articles have resulted from analysis done with CBC data. Bird-related citizen science efforts are also critical to understanding how birds are responding to a changing climate. This documentation is what enabled Audubon scientists to discover that 314 species of North American birds are threatened by global warming as reported in Audubon’s groundbreaking [Birds and Climate Change Study](#). The tradition of counting birds combined with modern technology and mapping is enabling researchers to make discoveries that were not possible in earlier decades.

The Audubon Christmas Bird Count began in 1900 when Dr. Frank Chapman, founder of *Bird-Lore* – which evolved into *Audubon* magazine – suggested an alternative to the holiday “side hunt,” in which teams competed to see who could shoot the most birds. 116 years of counting birds is a long time, but the program somehow brings out the best in people, and they stay involved for the long run. And so the tradition continues.

The Audubon Christmas Bird Count is a citizen science project organized by the National Audubon Society. There is no fee to participate, and the quarterly report, [American Birds](#), is available online. Counts are open to birders of all skill levels and [Audubon’s free Bird Guide app](#) makes it even easier to chip in. For more information and to find a count near you visit www.christmasbirdcount.org.



About the Ney Nature Center

Conveniently located halfway between the Twin Cities and Mankato, the Ney Nature Center (NNC), which sits on the bluffs of the Minnesota River near Henderson, MN, is home to 446 acres of native prairie and woodlands. This unique blend of biomes allows staff to educate youth and adults alike about the native plants and wildlife important to Southern Minnesota. Visit www.neycenter.org for more information and view a schedule of upcoming programs to attend.

About Audubon

The National Audubon Society saves birds and their habitats throughout the Americas using science, advocacy, education and on-the-ground conservation. Audubon's state programs, nature centers, chapters and partners have an unparalleled wingspan that reaches millions of people each year to inform, inspire and unite diverse communities in conservation action. Since 1905, Audubon's vision has been a world in which people and wildlife thrive. Audubon is a nonprofit conservation organization. Learn more at www.audubon.org and follow [@audubonsociety](https://twitter.com/audubonsociety).

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