Christmas Bird Count (CBC) Data Entry Manual

Updated June 2025

Audubon

Contents

Getting Started

In order to use the CBC data entry application, you must first be set up in the system and assigned a circle. If you have not already completed these steps, please reach out to cbcadmin@audubon.org and a member of the Christmas Bird Count team will create an account for you and provide instructions on how to set up your password. If you need to gain access to a different circle or an additional circle than previously, please contact us at cbcadmin@audubon.org to ask for assistance.

Computer Requirements

The CBC Data Entry Application has the following computer requirements:
If you use a PC:
- Windows XP or Windows 7 operating system
- Internet Explorer 9.0 and higher, Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox or a recent version of Safari as your browser, which should be set to allow "cookies"

If you use a Mac:
- OSX or higher operating system
- A recent version of Safari as your browser, which should be set to allow "cookies"

How to Log In & Resetting Your Username and Password

Use the link below for your data entry session (do not use a saved link or bookmark):

christmasbirdcount.org

There, when you scroll below the photo of the birders you'll see a dark blue section with button links. Click the "Enter Your CBC data" button, and that will take you to the login page (see below). Your "username" is your email address in full, and your "password" will be whatever you set up.

To reset your password, click the hyperlinked "here" in the sentence "Non-Audubon employees, click here to reset your password" underneath the "Login" button. You will be directed to a reset request form.
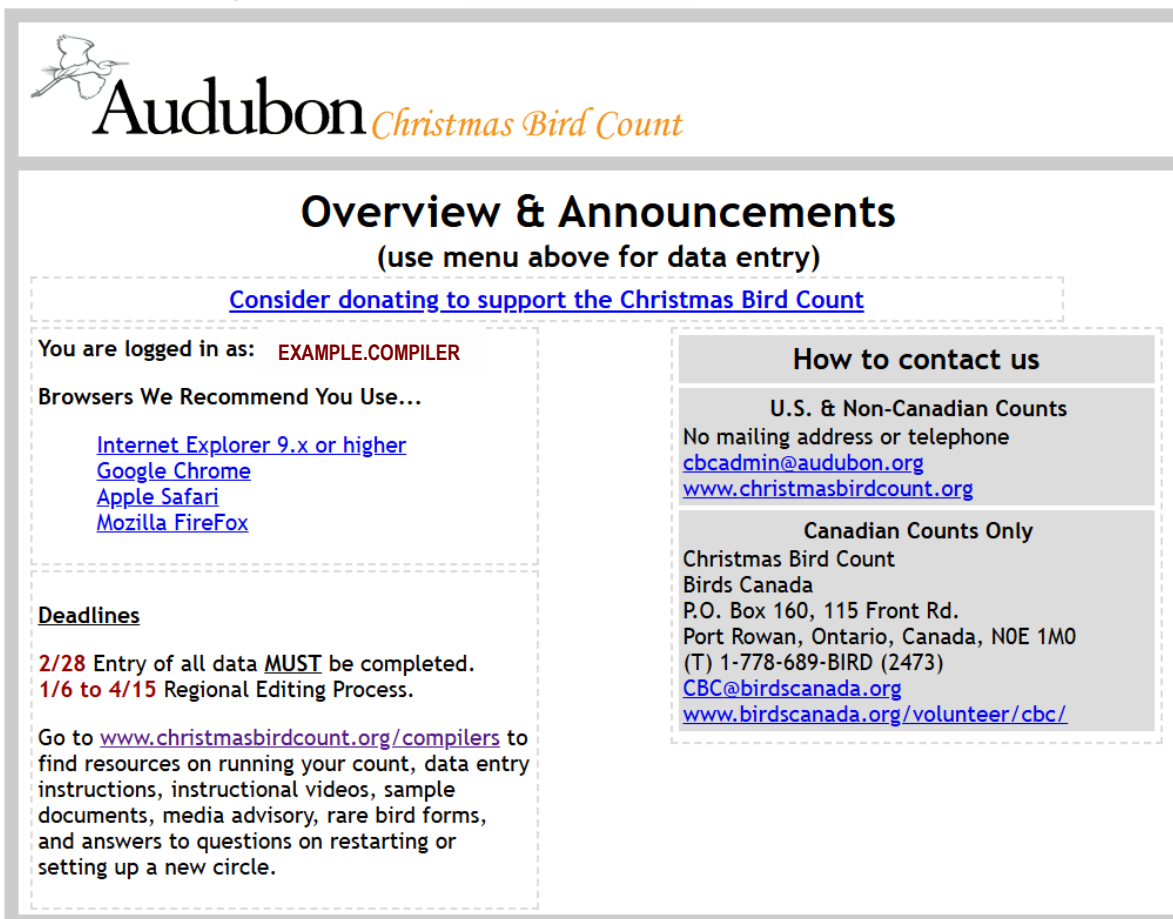
Your username will be your email address in full. If your email address has changed and you need a new one to be assigned to your account, please email cbcadmin@audubon.org and a member of the CBC Team can update your email address for your account. If you have forgotten your password, enter your e-mail address, then click submit. An email will be sent to the email address you have provided to reset your password. Follow the instructions emailed to you to reset your password. The password reset link will expire in 24 hours, but you can resend the link to yourself if you miss this time window.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Once logged into the system, if you change your email address under your profile information, that email address will become your new username.

The Christmas Bird Count Information Page

Once you are logged in you will see the Christmas Bird Count Information screen. If you log in and find some of the tabs missing from the top of this page (the Compiler Tab, Select Circle, etc.), try logging out and back in again, or try navigating again to the data entry application by visiting christmasbirdcount.org and clicking the "Enter Your CBC Data" button. Contact cbcadmin@audubon.org if you continue to experience access issues.

Info   Admin ▸   Compiler ▸   Select Circle   EXAMPLE.COMPILER

Audubon *Christmas Bird Count*

Overview & Announcements
(use menu above for data entry)

Consider donating to support the Christmas Bird Count

You are logged in as: EXAMPLE.COMPILER

Browsers We Recommend You Use...

Internet Explorer 9.x or higher
Google Chrome
Apple Safari
Mozilla FireFox

Deadlines

2/28 Entry of all data **MUST** be completed.
1/6 to 4/15 Regional Editing Process.

Go to www.christmasbirdcount.org/compilers to find resources on running your count, data entry instructions, instructional videos, sample documents, media advisory, rare bird forms, and answers to questions on restarting or setting up a new circle.

How to contact us

U.S. & Non-Canadian Counts
No mailing address or telephone
cbcadmin@audubon.org
www.christmasbirdcount.org

Canadian Counts Only
Christmas Bird Count
Birds Canada
P.O. Box 160, 115 Front Rd.
Port Rowan, Ontario, Canada, N0E 1M0
(T) 1-778-689-BIRD (2473)
CBC@birdscanada.org
www.birdscanada.org/volunteer/cbc/

The info screen contains:
- Contact information for the US and Canadian offices of the CBC.
- Links to the Compilers resources webpage that contains the compiler's manuals, sample documents, rare bird forms, answers to questions, and other details.
- Data entry deadlines
- Recommended browsers

While logged in you can always return to this screen at any time by clicking on "Info" in the upper left part of your screen.
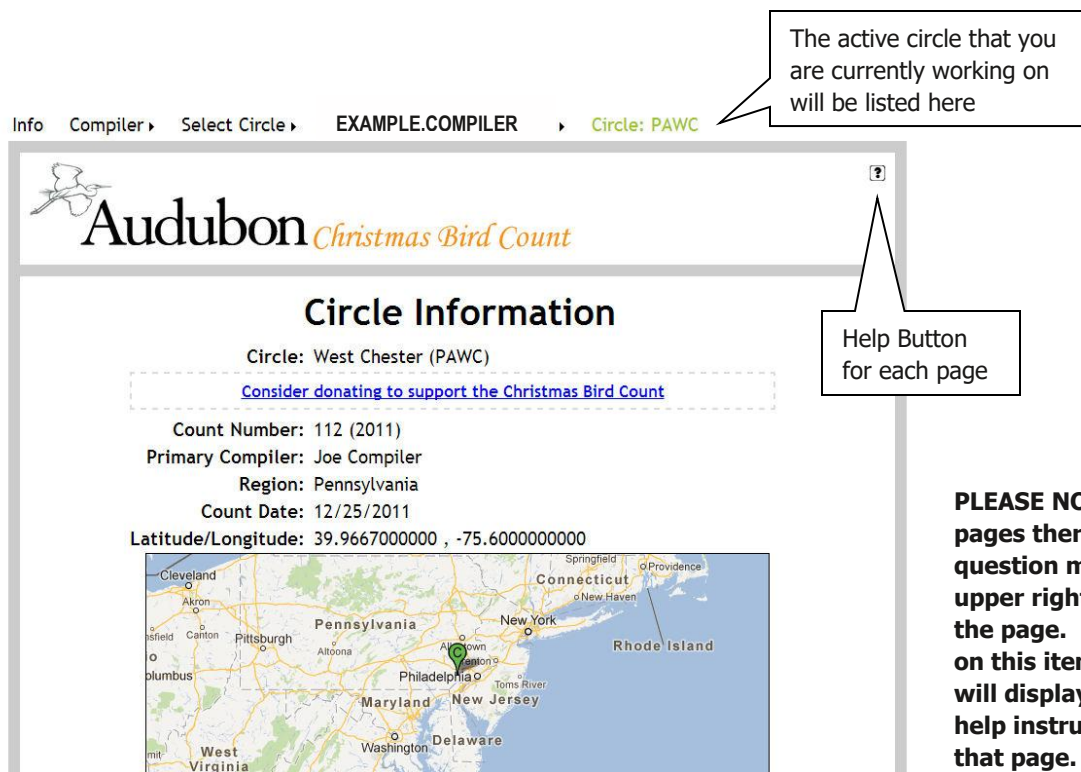
Entering Your CBC Data

Selecting your CBC Circle

Next, you will need to "Select Circle". If you move your cursor to the "Select Circle" portion at the top of the screen you will see listed any circles to which you are assigned. To access a particular circle, click on the circle name you wish to access:
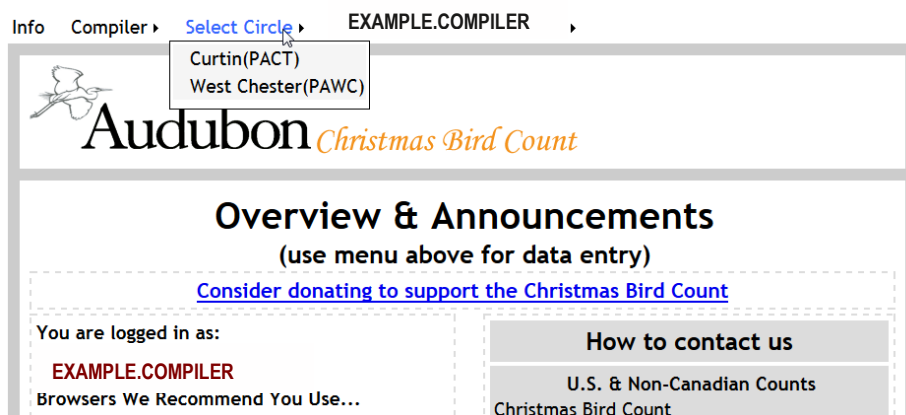
This will take you to the Circle Information page. Your active circle will be listed in green as below.

The active circle that you are currently working on will be listed here

Help Button for each page

PLEASE NOTE: On all pages there is a (?) question mark in the upper right corner of the page. If you click on this item, a pop-up will display that gives help instructions for that page.

Updating your contact information in the system – Compiler's Profile

If you need to update your contact information, hover over the tab that displays your username at the top and click "My Profile."

This page is where you can change any of your personal information. Any changes you make here will be reflected anywhere you are listed in the system – as compiler or participant.

PLEASE NOTE: If you edit or change your email address THIS WILL NOW BECOME YOUR USERNAME for all future access into the system.

Working with the menus once you are inside your Circle Pages.

To enter data for your CBC circle, you will need to make your way through the data entry pages under the Compiler tab. You will be able to view these pages after you have selected your circle and it appears in green at the top right side of the screen. Note that some sections will not be available before December 14th, only the Reports, Post Count Date, Compilers and Participants sections are available. When you first hover over the Compiler tab, you will only see three pages: "Circle Home," "Reports," and "Count Date, Status, and Information." To view any of the other data entry pages, you need to access the "Count Date, Status, and Information" page, as this is the first step.

Once you have visited the "Count Date, Status, and Information" page, all the other pages should appear if you hover over the Compiler tab: Circle home; Reports; Count Date, Status, and Information; Compilers; Participants; Start/End Time; Effort; Weather; Bird Checklist/Add; Total Species; Special Aspects.

Working in the data entry system will involve opening each page to make additions or edits.

Be aware that a Green Check Mark will appear next to the section name ONLY when you have gone into each section and started entering data. The green checkmark does NOT necessarily indicate that the section entries are complete, but indicates progress on that section. Eight green checkmarks listed with your menu items are required in order to verify that your count is completed and display your data to the public system for the year. In order to do that, check the **RED** "Count Complete" box. When you click the "Count Complete" box, this will then turn from **RED** to **GREEN** and it will allow your results to be viewed by the public on the "Current Year's Results" reports, and will also indicate to your regional editor that your count is ready for review.

Info   Compiler ▸   Select Circle ▸   **EXAMPLE.COMPILER** ▸   Circle: PAWC

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[?]
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Count Completed ☐

Circle Information

Info   Compiler ▸   Select Circle ▸   **EXAMPLE.COMPILER** ▸   Circle: PACT

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[?]
113
Count Completed ☑

Circle Information

Posting your count date for the upcoming season

When you are ready to post your count date for the upcoming season, hover over the Compiler menu and click on "Count Date, Status, and Information" to open the page below.

Info   Admin ▸   Compiler ▸   Select Circle   EXAMPLE.COMPILER   Circle: NYZZ

Select your count date using the calendar tool that pops up when you click on the down-arrow. Reminder: CBC count days are **Dec 14-Jan 5**each season, and counts must be conducted within one midnight-to-midnight calendar day. Posting the date of your count is an important first step. By posting the date, it is available on the website for any interested CBC participants to view. If the date is not posted, the circle is not "advertised" on the web. In addition, the count date is required before you can enter your bird checklist.

This page is also where you set up your "Count Status" settings for your circle. There are three choices that appear on this page, but note that the ability for participants to sign up for a circle without contacting the compiler ahead of time is not currently available. Whether the first or second choice is selected, participants must reach out directly to you. The selection will determine the color of the circle as it is displayed on the online map (the first Yes will display green, the second Yes will display yellow, and the third choice, No, will display Red). Because we aim to share the joy of birding with as many people as possible, we encourage you to only select the third option if you do not have the capacity to support additional participants.

In the "Compiler's Comments" section please enter any information about your count that you want displayed to the public in advance of your chosen CBC day. This can include contact information for you, meeting spots, information about the day, or notes about any post-CBC compilation gathering. For example: "The count circle is divided into 8 teams and team leaders set start and end times for their birding area. Please contact [name] at [email or phone number] if you are interested in participating, and you will be assigned to a team. A post-count potluck will be held at [time and location] with team reports and count tallies". You can also list any sponsoring organizations that help with your count in the Sponsoring Organizations field.

As you make these additions and/or changes, your entries will automatically be saved in the system and a RED **Saved** will appear for each section either added or changed

Updating the Compilers for the Circle

The next page down under the Compiler menu is the Compilers List page. This is where you can list the primary and secondary compilers for the count in the database. The name and email address of the primary compiler will be displayed on the public web site as contact for the circle. This information should be reviewed and updated each year. Note that removing a compiler from this list will result in that person losing access to the circle within the data entry platform.

The person who is the primary compiler should be flagged under the right-hand "Primary" column. Only one name can be flagged as primary. Any other names on this list are included as secondary compilers. When reporting count data, remember that if compilers also participate in the field on count day they should also be listed on the participant list.

To mark the primary compiler, you can click in the "Primary" box across from the name in the right-hand column or you can click the blue **Edit** link to the left of the person's name. That will open the record for editing (below). Check the **Primary** box and then click on **Save/Update** to save your changes.

To add a compiler to your count, use the following steps.
1. Click on the blue **Add Compiler** in the top gray bar. A search window will appear.
2. Enter the first name, last name and/or e-mail address into the boxes, try to be as specific as possible so that you can find the person if they are already in the database.
3. Click on **Search**. The system will search for a match. If a match is found, you can select it from the drop-down box. Once you've selected the match, press "**Update**" to insert it into your list.
4. If no match is found, you can complete the rest of the form and then click **Update** to insert it into your list.

To delete a compiler, click the "delete" button in front of the name. They will be removed only from the Compliers List for your count, but not removed from the database.

Participants List

The next page under the Compiler's tab is the Participants page. This page will display all of the participants previously associated with your circle. They will appear in Alphabetical order, by Last Name. You can re-sort this list on any of the first four column headers by simply clicking on the column header title.

To add a new participant, click here and follow instructions in the following section

To edit the listed name click here and make the changes on the listed form and click **Update**

Searching the Participants List

If your circle has a lot of participants, you can search for them by first name, last name, email or residence by entering as much information as you have. The results of your search will show immediately.

Adding a new name to your Participants List

You can add a name using the following steps.
1. Click on the blue **Add Participant** in the top gray bar. A search window will appear.
2. Enter the first name, last name and/or e-mail address into the boxes, try to be as specific as possible so that you can find the person if they are already in the database.
3. Click on Search. The system will search for a match. If a match is found you can select it from the drop-down box. Once you've selected the match, press "**Update**" to insert it into your list.
4. If no match is found, you can complete the rest of the form and then click **Update** to insert it into your list.

Edit Participants List

You can filter your participant list in three ways. With the drop-down menu on the top right-hand portion of the page, you can choose to display all names associated with your circle ("all"), names currently active ("available"), or names that have been removed from your list ("removed").

On the main list, to indicate that a participant attended this year's count, click the "**Inc**." or "include" box for each participant on your CBC this season. Any names not marked as "include" will not appear on this year's participant report, but will remain available on this screen to re-use for next year's participant list. To remove a name from this list, check the box under "**Rem.**" or "Remove." Only remove a name if they have moved or something similar. Do not mark names as removed if someone did not participate, but might next year. Clicking the "remove" or "include"

checkboxes will auto save. If they do not participate, you can un-check the include box to remove them from your Participants Report.

All participant contact information that was previously entered for your count circle is brought forward for the current year for you to update and mark as include as appropriate. In addition, you have a link to enter any new participants for your circle.

To edit a participant record, click on the blue **Edit** link just to the left of the first name. This will open the screen to edit the record. Make sure to click on **Update** in the bottom right of the participants record to save your changes. **Note** that you cannot edit the records for any pre-registered participants, though if they cannot attend the "include" box can be un-checked.

Primary and secondary compilers should be included in the participant's list.

Reports: Blank Field Form, Participants List, or Count Summary

The downloadable blank field form is for your use in providing a customized checklist and field form for participants to note species, weather conditions, and effort while they are out in the field. This form will not replace the current data entry methods for the circle but is to be used offline. Currently there isn't the capability to upload circle data using a spreadsheet.

To download the form, hover over the Reports link and then click on the link **Blank Field Form**.

Depending on the browser, your Blank Field form download may show at the bottom of the screen or may pop-up on your screen. You MUST click to open it and then save this file to your computer. Once the file has been saved, you can open this file with Excel or other spreadsheet program that can read *.CSV formatted files.

Once you open the file, it will look something like the sample below, with a list of the species seen on your circle within the last 50 years, in taxonomic order. Also included will be areas to complete the effort, time and weather information. You will need to format the document for your individual printer.

The Participants List and the Count Summary reports are generated in the same way and show up in the same lower left location except as Adobe .pdf documents which you must open and then save on your computer.

Sample of a Blank Field Form

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1	Region: Ne	Count Date:									
2	Circle: TES	Count Code: NJZZ									
3											
4	Species	# or cw	US	HC	LC						
5	Common Loon										
6	Gila Woodpecker										
7											
8	Weather										
9	Temperature										
10	Minimum	Maximum	F or C (circle one)								
11											
12	Wind										
13	Direction	Minimum	Maximum	MPH or KPH (circle one)							
14											
15	Snow Depth										
16	Minimum	Maximum	in. or cm. (circle one)								
17											
18											
19	Water Typ	Unknown	Open	Partly Froz	Partly Ope	Frozen					
20	Still Water (check one)										
21	Moving Water (check one)										
22											
23	Cloud Cove	Unknown	Clear	Partly Clou	Partly Clea	Cloudy	Foggy	Local Fog			
24	AM(check one)										
25	PM(check one)										
26											
27	Precipitatic	None	Light	Heavy	Unknown						
28	AM Rain (check one)										
29	PM Rain (check one)										
30	AM Snow (check one)										
31	PM Snow (check one)										
32											
33	Effort										
34	Total Obse	Minumum	Maximum	Total Observers at Feeders							
35											
36	Party Hours and Distances										
37	(excludes viewing at feeders and nocturnal birding)										
38	All Distanc	Miles or Kilometers									
39											
40	Mode of Tr	Hours	Distance								
41	By Foot										
42	By Car										
43	Add Other Modes here										
44											
45											
46											
47											
48											
49	Hours at Feeder										
50	Hours at Nocturnal Birding										
51	Distance Nocturnal Birding										
52											
53	Observer N	Observer Addresses									
54											

.csv]NJZZ_blankForm(1)

Ready

Working on the Bird Checklist

The bird checklist contains a grid that lists all of the birds reported in your count circle's history displayed in taxonomic order.

To complete your checklist, enter the number observed into the **#/cw** box next to the scientific name and any flag information that is relevant for all of the species seen on your count. If you saw your bird "count week" only, you enter **cw** into the **#/cw** box, with no number. You can sort your checklist by Common name, Scientific name or by # Occurrences. To resort by the default, taxonomic order, click on the **Taxonomic sort order** on the top right-hand side. You can either scroll through the pages of your checklist, or you can search for species by entering the name into the white box in the gray area, searching by common name or by scientific name. To get back to the full list, click the blue **Clear** on the left, next to the search name.

The count numbers will save automatically when you hit enter or move to another species on your checklist. If you need to make any edits or corrections to your data, just find the line item and change the entry as needed.

To add a NEW species to your checklist, click on the word **Add Species** in the top gray bar, this will bring up a search box and enter the specific bird's name (such as "blackpoll" instead of just "warbler") and then choose your species from the dropdown list. You will need to add the count and flag information here on this screen and click **Update** or the new information will NOT be saved.

Start/End Times, Effort, Weather forms

Start/End Times: You can enter one or more start and end time periods within your count day by selecting the values and clicking on the ADD button. Click on the Delete button to remove the time from the listing.

Effort: Make sure to FIRST complete the Observers Section, list the number of Observers in the Field and counting at Feeders and the Minimum and Maximum number of Parties. These will auto save as they are entered. Then complete the Party Hours and Distance section, entering your total hours, total distances, and selecting the units used. These will also auto save and a RED **SAVED** will stay on each line to let you know that you have entered data and it has saved properly. If you only enter the hours, it will prompt you to enter the distance information too. Then complete the Other Time and Distance Section if this applies to your circle, which will also auto save.

Note that the total amount of time you entered on the Start/End times screen will affect the effort information you enter as the total number of hours times the maximum number of parties will give you the highest value you can enter for total number of party hours.

Info   Compiler ›   Select Circle ›   **EXAMPLE.COMPILER** ›   Circle: PAWC

Click on the Help button for any questions about this section

Reminder: On all pages there is a (?) question mark in the upper right corner of the page. If you click on this item, a pop-up will display that gives help instructions for that page.

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Count Completed ☐

Effort

Observers

In Field
Total Number: 67
Minimum Number of Parties (daylight): 20
Maximum Number of Parties (daylight): 20

At Feeders
Total Number: 24

Party Hours and Distance (excludes viewing at feeders and nocturnal birding)

Transportation	Hours	Distance	Units	
Foot	80.91	65.90	Miles	Delete
Car	43.42	354.70	Miles	Delete
Air			Miles	Delete
All-Terrain Vehicle			Miles	Delete
Bicycle **Distance, Hours, and Units are required.**	2		Miles	Delete
Dog Sled			Miles	Delete
Golfcart			Miles	Delete
Horseback			Miles	Delete
Motorized Boat			Miles	Delete
Non-Motorized Boat			Miles	Delete
Skis/Xc-Skis			Miles	Delete
Snowmachine			Miles	Delete
Snowshoe			Miles	Delete
Wheelchair			Miles	Delete

Total Party: Hours: 124.33 Distance in miles: 420.60 (676.89 km)

Other Time and Distance

At Feeders
Hours: 11.00

Nocturnal Birding
Hours: 22.00 Distance: 33.00 Units: Miles

Delete

Weather: Complete all items, using the drop-down menu to make you selections, or entering your numerical values. Make sure your units are set correctly. Make sure you SAVE at the bottom of each of the sections for your information to save. If you have questions as to which terms to use, please check the **?** button at the top right, where these are all explained.

Info Compiler ▸ Select Circle ▸ .EXAMPLE.COMPILER , Circle: PACB

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[?]
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Click on Help button for listing of terms and definitions to use for this section

Temperature:	Minimum	23	Maximum	39	Units	Fahrenheit
Wind Direction:	Variable					
Wind Velocity:	Minimum	0	Maximum	5	Units	Miles/hour
Snow Depth:	Minimum	0	Maximum	0	Units	
Still Water:	Partly Frozen					
Moving Water:	Open					

Save

AM and PM Conditions

Cloud Cover: AM Cloudy   PM Partly Cloudy

Select all conditions existing during the morning
AM Rain: ☑ None ☐ Light ☐ Heavy ☐ Unknown
AM Snow: ☑ None ☑ Light ☐ Heavy ☐ Unknown

Select all conditions existing during the afternoon
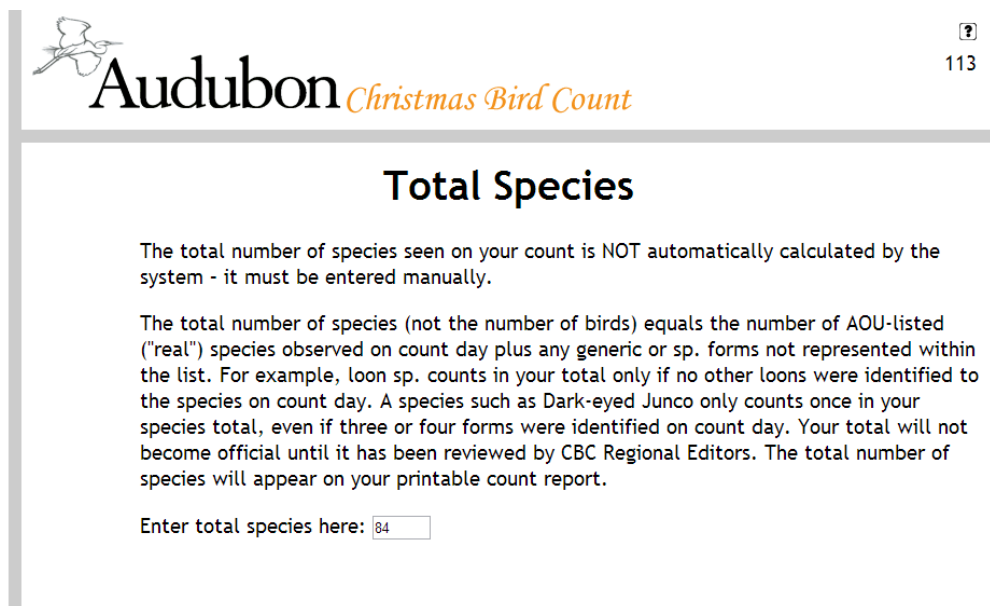PM Rain: ☑ None ☐ Light ☐ Heavy ☐ Unknown
PM Snow: ☑ None ☐ Light ☐ Heavy ☐ Unknown

Save

Add Total Species, Special Aspects

The system does NOT automatically calculate the total number of species seen on your count. Please read the definition of how to calculate a species on the **Total Species** page and then enter the total number. Please remember that birds seen during count week only (cw) do not count toward your species total. Your entry will auto save once you type it in.

The **Special Aspects** form is for the purpose of relating special aspects of this count. Information in this field is not displayed publicly but allows you to comment to regional editors about the season's report and becomes part of the official historical record of the count. This field should <u>not </u>to be used to ask questions – email should be used for that. You have a limit of 4000 characters and your typing will auto save. This section is totally optional and not required for data completion.

Marking your circle as completed and submitting your data for the year

Once you have saved any data into each of the forms, you will see a green checkmark for that section under the compiler heading. Having a green checkmark however, does not indicate that you have completed that section, only that you have entered some data there. Once you have green checkmarks for all 8 sections (the Special Aspects section is optional and not required for completion) you will see a RED **Count Completed** box appear in the upper header of every form. Check this box when you have COMPLETED all of your data entry. Once you have marked your circle as Completed, **your data will display to the public through the Results: Current Year reports, your access to data entry is completed, and your regional editor will be able to start the review of your count for the season.** If you find that you need to make any corrections after you check the "Count Completed" box or your count has been reviewed, please contact your Regional Editor or the CBC Administrator. Your Regional Editor must approve any edits after you have marked your circle as complete. Please carefully review your submissions before completing your count.

Additional Resources and Support

Additional resources and information can be found on the Compiler Resources webpage. This page includes instructional videos on how to enter data, a complete compiler manual, a guide to CBC party miles and hours, and many other helpful tools.

Please reach out to cbcadmin@audubon.org if you have additional questions or need support with any CBC-related inquiries.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: I am retiring as compiler for my circle. How do I change the compiler to another person?

A: If you wish to change/add a compiler of a circle please contact the CBC administrator at cbcadmin@audubon.org. We will need to know the following items to set a new person up in the system:
- First name
- Last name
- Email address

Circle to which you need access (name and 4-digit code)

Q: When I log into the data entry application, I don't see the usual tabs at the top and can't access my circle. What should I do?

A: If you log in and find some of the tabs missing from the top of this page (the Compiler Tab, Select Circle, etc.), try logging out and back in again, or try navigating again to the data entry application by visiting christmasbirdcount.org and clicking the "Enter Your CBC Data" button. Contact cbcadmin@audubon.org if you continue to experience access issues.

Q: When is the deadline for data entry for CBC data?

A: The Data Entry Deadline is February 28 each year. The Regional Editing process is February 1 to April 30 each year.

Q: It appears that the latitude and longitude of my CBC circle center is incorrect in the data entry platform. How can I get this changed?

A: Please email the accurate latitude and longitude values in decimal degrees and center point descriptions to cbcadmin@audubon.org. Be sure to include your count's name and four-letter code in the email. Visit this page for instructions on how to determine the correct latitude and longitude.

Q: I am confused by an abbreviation on one of the data entry pages. What should I do?

A: Each page has a question mark box [?] in the upper right-hand corner. If you click that box, it will provide detailed information on everything within that page, define any abbreviations, and provide helpful tips and instructions. If you are still confused, please email cbcadmin@audubon.org.