



*Editor's note: This article is a reprint of an article previously posted in Chapter News. We reprint it here in anticipation of the 2017-18 Christmas Bird Count.*

The 118th annual Christmas Bird Count is scheduled for December 14, 2017 to January 5, 2018. Organized by the National Audubon Society, this all-volunteer effort takes a snapshot of bird populations to monitor their status and distribution across the Western Hemisphere. The results are compiled into a database that is shared with federal, state, and private authorities. Past data can be viewed on Audubon's website.

Counts are open to birders of all skill levels. Novices are placed in groups with more experienced birders.

There is no fee to participate in Christmas Bird Counts. The annual CBC report will be an online publication and National Audubon will rely on donations for funding. Detailed information will be posted on the calendar when available:

<http://refugefriends.org/calendar/index.htm>

Christmas Bird counts are supported by the Houston Audubon and are accredited by the National Audubon Society. For a complete list of all Texas Bird Counts see the Houston Audubon website at:

<http://tinyurl.com/CBCs-2017-08>

### TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS PLEASE NOTE

Participation in any Audubon-accredited bird count is approved for volunteer service hours provided that you sign in and participate in the counting activity, "Counting activity" includes all time spent in the field plus training meetings, lunch, travel among count sites (if any), the countdown (including dinner), and your travel time to and from the meeting points.

**VMS Code: FR: Field Research/Citizen**  
**Description: CBC + location of event**

## SOME INTRODUCTORY WORDS

by Tom Morris, David Plunkett, and Neal McLain

The Audubon Christmas Bird Counts is a North-, Central-, and South-American campaign to count as many birds and species within a fixed circle 15 miles in diameter. The first Christmas Count was in the Northeast in 1900 on Christmas Day.

The data from the counts are compiled in a database and results are printed annually and the raw data is available to researchers and amateurs. Population trends have been used to help protect species that show marked decreases.

A typical count day requires a lot of walking — two to three miles — and you are exposed to the elements a good part of the day. However, in case of bad weather such as rain, we resort to birding by car. In the evening we meet at a "countdown" for dinner and to tally results.

Good hiking shoes, hat, rain gear, repellent, layers, water, light snacks, and binoculars are the basics.

Less experienced birders are welcome to participate. If you wish to participate, please contact the Count Coordinator as soon as possible. Names of coordinators are posted on the next page of this newsletter. The coordinator will assign you to a specific group, and let you know where to meet your group on the morning of the count.

Every Bird Count is named for something — a city, a park, or some geographic feature — located inside the 15-mile-diameter circle. These names can sometimes be confusing. For example, the Brazoria Bird Count is named for the City of Brazoria, but it includes a much larger area. Similarly, the Freeport Bird Count is named for Freeport, but it also includes a larger area.

During these counts, we typically meet early in the morning, around **6:30 am** and work in small groups with at least one knowledgeable birder in each group. Each group covers a specified territory in the morning, and usually covers another in the afternoon, with a break for lunch. Less-experienced birders thus have an opportunity learn from experienced colleagues.

*Continued next page*

# LOCAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT SCHEDULE 2017-18

Following is the schedule of local Audubon Christmas Bird Counts in 2017-18. For further information contact the following :

David Plunkett  
979-297-3322 (h)  
979-418-1411 (c)  
[doplunkett@sbcglobal.net](mailto:doplunkett@sbcglobal.net)

Tom Morris  
979-297-4678 (h)  
[tmorris44@comcast.net](mailto:tmorris44@comcast.net)

## December 18, 2017

### Matagorda Co. - Mad Island Marsh CBC (TXMM)

Most of the count is on private land and participation in the CBC is the only way to gain access to some very productive wildlife lands. The diversity of the CBC is great and most sections have multiple exclusives. The CBC features extensive native grasslands, brushlands, floodplain forests, beaches and coastal marshes

Count circle: <http://tmn-cot.org/cbc/TXMM.kmz>

Brent Ortego - 361-576-0022  
[brentortego@hotmail.com](mailto:brentortego@hotmail.com)

## December 20, 2017

### Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR (TXAP)

This is a wonderful opportunity to bird the Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR. This CBC is open to all birders and is one of the highest inland CBCs for diversity in the country.

Count circle: <http://tmn-cot.org/cbc/TXAP.kmz>

Sumita Prasad - 832-453-4374 - [sumita@utexas.edu](mailto:sumita@utexas.edu)

## December 14, 2017

### Guadalupe River Delta—McFaddin Ranches (TXGF)

This is a unique fun count surveying riparian forests near the Coast. The count is usually sponsored and the CBC will likely provide you access to property not available otherwise. This count was designed by Mark Elwonger and Brent Ortego to maximize the number neotrops.

Count circle: <http://tmn-cot.org/cbc/TXGF.kmz>

Brent Ortego - 361-648-9773  
[brentortego@hotmail.com](mailto:brentortego@hotmail.com)

2017 DECEMBER						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

## December 15, 2017

### San Bernard National Wildlife Refuges (TXSB)

This unique count provides opportunities to bird areas of the refuge not normally open to the public, including a newly-acquired tract along the west end of County Road 306, the Bludworth tract along Cocklebur Slough (2003 acquisition), and the nearby McNeill tract which now boasts the San Bernard Oak, the official state champion Live Oak

Count circle: <http://tmn-cot.org/cbc/TXSB.kmz>

Ron Weeks - 979-299-0066 - [ronweeks@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ronweeks@sbcglobal.net)

## Saturday, December 16, 2017

### Brazos Bend State Park (TXBZ)

We encourage participants young and old, and all levels of experience to join the fun. Areas inside and outside the park available. Park entry fee is waived for participants. BBQ Count dinner sponsored by the NRG W.A. Parish Plant. See <http://brazosbendcbc.com> for further information.

Count circle: <http://tmn-cot.org/cbc/BBSP.jpg>

Justin Bower - 832-746-2140 - [jbower47@hotmail.com](mailto:jbower47@hotmail.com)

## December 17, 2017

### Freeport (TXFR}

The count is consistently one of the top ten in the country and finds the largest number of species of any on the Upper Texas Coast. Habitat includes seashore, barrier islands, prairie and woodland. The circle is divided into ten areas, each with its own leader and unique habitats.

Count circle: <http://tmn-cot.org/cbc/TXFR.kmz>

Mike Austin - [mj\\_eh@comcast.net](mailto:mj_eh@comcast.net)

## December 30, 2017

### Brazoria—Columbia Bottomlands (TXBR)

This CBC includes Bar-X Ranch, Columbia Lakes, Hudson Woods unit of SBNWR, Brazoria Reservoir, Harris Reservoir, and southern Nash Ranch. This count was done from 1984-1994 by the Brazosport Birders. In 2009, the count was successfully revived with 45 participants and 145 species recorded.

Count circle: <http://tmn-cot.org/cbc/TXBR.kmz>

Tom Taroni - 979-297-5563 - [taronitom@gmail.com](mailto:taronitom@gmail.com)

For further information —  
<http://tinyurl.com/cbcs-2017-08>