



Attend our December 3rd community program, 7pm at the Homer Wright Event Center. Learn everything you need to know about the two upcoming bird counts from our experienced bird count specialist, Hugh Shaw. Hugh will explain how the programs work, how you can participate and what to do with your count. Note: Attending does not obligate you to participate.

We'll also take your questions.

1. First up is The Audubon Christmas Bird Count for Brunswick County takes place on Sunday, January 4th. This count is important because it provides valuable, long-term data on bird populations that helps scientists monitor species health, track trends, and inform conservation strategies. It is one of the world's longest-running citizen science projects, enabling researchers to understand the effects of factors like climate change and habitat loss on birds over time.

Key reasons the count is important

- **Tracks long-term population health:** The data collected over more than 100 years gives a long-term perspective on how bird numbers have changed, helping to identify declines or increases in specific species.
- **Informs conservation efforts:** Scientists and conservation organizations use the data to develop conservation strategies, decide on actions, and compile reports to protect birds and their habitats.
- **Monitors climate change impacts:** The data helps scientists understand how climate change is affecting birds, including tracking changes in their ranges and how they are responding to a warming climate.
- **Provides a massive dataset:** The count mobilizes thousands of volunteers across the Western Hemisphere, creating a large-scale dataset that would be impossible for scientists to collect on their own.
- **Supports scientific research:** The data has been used in over 300 peer-reviewed scientific articles and by federal agencies to make conservation decisions.
- **Encourages citizen science:** It provides an accessible way for people of all skill levels to get involved in a meaningful science project, learn about their local environment, and contribute to a collective effort.

2. The second bird count is a global. “The Great Backyard Bird Count”. The

Great Backyard Bird Count is important in 2026 because it provides crucial data for scientists to monitor bird populations and understand how environmental factors like climate change are affecting them. This annual citizen-science event helps create a global snapshot of bird distribution, allows for tracking trends in species diversity and migration, and encourages people to connect with nature and participate in conservation efforts at all levels.

Scientific importance

Population trends: The data collected from hundreds of thousands of volunteers helps scientists understand the current state of bird populations around the world.

Environmental monitoring: By tracking bird distribution and behavior, scientists can better understand how factors like climate change, habitat loss, and invasive species are impacting ecosystems.

Migration patterns: The February count provides a snapshot of bird distribution just before spring migrations, helping to track patterns and changes in how and where birds are migrating.

eBird database: All observations are submitted to the [eBird](#) database, creating a massive, real-time, and worldwide dataset for research.

Community and conservation importance

Connects people to nature: The event provides an accessible way for people of all ages and backgrounds to connect with birds, their local environments, and the global community of bird watchers.

Encourages habitat creation: Participating in the count can inspire people to create bird-friendly habitats in their own backyards and communities.

Promotes conservation awareness: By participating, people become more engaged in bird conservation and may be more inclined to advocate for birds at the local, state, and federal levels.

Fills knowledge gaps: The massive scope of the count allows for detecting patterns that no single, individual study could find.

Join us this year for either one, or both!

1. Your chance to be part of history
2. Help scientist collect vital information on bird populations
3. Learn something new in this conservation and citizen science activity
4. Enjoy the outdoors while having fun and doing something important
5. Being in nature has been proven to be good for mental health
6. It's one of the easiest collective events to get involved in

Our training program on December 3rd, is led by Hugh Shaw, a life-long birder with a passion for helping others understand the many positive aspects of birding. Attending our program does not obligate you in any way to take part in either count. The purpose is to introduce the St. James community to both programs, explain the process, how to prepare, how to count, and how to report your count. Everyone is invited to attend to learn and find out if this is something you wish to take part in. Join us and gain an understanding of the whys and hows of these two very important annual traditions.