

Annual Santa Maria Valley/Guadalupe Christmas Bird Count Carries on Tradition

The 2016 Santa Maria/Guadalupe Christmas Bird Count takes place Monday, December 26, 2016.

SANTA MARIA, CALIFORNIA, USA, December 6, 2016 /EINPresswire.com/ -- (Santa Maria, Calif.) – The National Audubon Society’s annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) began over a century ago and is now in its 117th year. Annually in December and January, people all over the U.S. and other countries go out on their chosen day to count their local birds.

The 2016 Santa Maria/Guadalupe Christmas Bird Count takes place Monday, December 26, 2016. Santa Barbara County also has five count circles in which birdwatchers can participate.

The CBC is a long-standing program of the National Audubon Society, with over 100 years of citizen science involvement. It is an early-winter bird census, where thousands of volunteers across the U.S., Canada and many countries in the Western Hemisphere, go out over a 24-hour period on one calendar day to count birds.

The 15-mile diameter [Santa Maria Valley](#)/Guadalupe count circle extends along the coast from San Antonio Creek to the south, the Santa Maria River estuary to the north and inland to approximately the Santa Maria Airport. This count circle encompasses an area that boasts an especially large number of bird species. It historically ranks among the top five percent of the some 2,000 counts conducted in the continental U.S. in terms of the number of species identified.

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Alex Abela

The count is conducted by teams assigned specific areas within the count circle. While most of the counting is conducted during the daylight hours, some intrepid team members extend the count into the nighttime hours looking for owl species. Sightings at birdfeeders within the count circle are also accepted. The organizers are always looking for someone with a boat that can cover the portion of the count circle extending out over the Pacific Ocean where a number of species can be found that do not occur on land.



Besides the various species of sparrows, finches, waterfowl, shorebirds, hawks, herons, warblers and blackbirds, some lucky teams are bound to come across that rare species which sends birdwatchers

from all over scurrying to add it to their life list. Rare finds in the past have included vermilion flycatcher, white wagtail, masked booby, glaucous gull, mountain plover and bald eagle.

According to Audubon, there is a specific methodology to the CBC, and all participants must make arrangements to participate in advance with the circle compiler within an established circle. Anyone can participate. The CBC depends entirely on donations to provide support to compilers and volunteers on count day, to manage the historic database, and to fund the technology to make historic data available to researchers. However, participants are not charged a fee. The data collected by CBC participants over the past century and more have become one of only two large pools of information informing ornithologists and conservation biologists how the birds of the Americas are faring over time.

For more information on the Santa Maria/Guadalupe CBC, please visit santabarbaraaudubon.org. For those interested in participating in this year's Santa Maria/Guadalupe count, please contact Alex Abela, abela@lightspeed.net.

About Santa Maria Valley:

Whether it is the perfect pairing with a renowned Pinot Noir, a bite of tasty simplicity with Santa Maria-style barbecue or gazing at the natural wonders of the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes National Wildlife Refuge, get together in Santa Maria Valley. You and your loved ones will discover the culture, tradition and authenticity of the Central California coast, with enough left in your pocket to do it all again tomorrow. For details on Santa Maria Valley lodging, wine tasting, travel deals, attractions, upcoming events and e-newsletter alerts, visit santamariavalley.com or call (800) 331-3779.

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