



Preble County Historical Society, Inc.
7693 Swartsel Rd. Eaton, Ohio 45320

PRESS RELEASE

RELEASE; ASAP

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GREAT BACK YARD BIRD COUNT at the PREBLE COUNTY HISTORICAL CENTER

Take a mid-winter nature break with the Great Back Yard Bird Count February 12-15, 2010 from 9 am - 5 pm each day at the Preble County Historical Center, located at 7693 Swartsel Road, Eaton, Ohio (about 6 miles SE of Eaton 1 mile NW of Gratis off St. Rt. 122).

Join in the fun, hike the trails; it's a great winter family-oriented activity. Guided hikes will be offered each day led by Eric Lewis, or hike at your own leisure on 6-miles of trails throughout the Center's grounds. Children's activities will be offered: make a bird-house, suet, bird feeders, bird puzzles, bird word search, coloring pages, and plenty more! A parent or guardian must accompany all children.

Participants in the free event will join tens of thousands of volunteers of all levels of birding experience to count birds. Each checklist submitted by these "citizen scientists" helps researchers at the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#) and the [National Audubon Society](#) learn more about how the birds are doing—and how to protect them. Last year, participants turned in more than 93,600 checklists online, creating the continent's largest instantaneous snapshot of bird populations ever recorded.

“Taking part in the Great Backyard Bird Count is a great way to get outside with family and friends, have fun, and help birds—all at the same time. Anyone who can identify even a few species can provide important information that enables scientists to learn more about how the environment is changing and how that affects our conservation priorities,” said Audubon Education Vice President, Judy Braus. “Everyone who participates in the GBBC—families, teachers, and young people—will get a chance to hone their observation skills, learn more about birds, and make a great contribution to the future!”



Anyone can take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, from novice bird watchers to experts. Participants count birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the event and report their sightings online at www.birdcount.org. One 2009 participant said, “Thank you for the opportunity to participate in citizen science. I have had my eyes opened to a whole new interest and I love it!”

“The GBBC is a perfect first step towards the sort of intensive monitoring needed to discover how birds are

responding to environmental change,” said Janis Dickinson, the director of Citizen Science at the Cornell Lab. “Winter is such a vulnerable period for birds, so winter bird distributions are likely to be very sensitive to change. There is only one way—citizen science—to gather data on private lands where people live and GBBC has been doing this across the continent for many years. GBBC has enormous potential both as an early warning system and in capturing and engaging people in more intensive sampling of birds across the landscape.”



Bird populations are always shifting and changing. For example, 2009 GBBC data highlighted a huge southern invasion of Pine Siskins across much of the eastern United States. Participants counted 279,469 Pine Siskins on 18,528 checklists, as compared to the previous high of 38,977 birds on 4,069 checklists in 2005. Failure of seed crops farther north caused the siskins to move south to find their favorite food.

On the www.birdcount.org website, participants can explore real-time maps and charts that show what others are reporting during the count. The site has tips to help identify birds and special materials for educators. Participants may also enter the GBBC photo contest by uploading images taken during the count. Many images will be featured in the GBBC website’s photo gallery. All participants are entered in a drawing for prizes that include bird feeders, binoculars, books, CDs, and many other great birding products.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is made possible, in part, by generous support from [Wild Birds Unlimited](#).

For updates about the Preble County Historical Society sponsored Great Back Yard Bird Count on February 12-15, call 937-787-4256, or email: preblecohistsoc@brecnet.com, or visit our web site: <http://www.pchs.preblecounty.com>.

In addition to counting birds, during the Great Back Yard Bird Count, enter the Bird Photo Contest! Rules are as follows: All images must be in .jpg format and have been taken during the Great Backyard Bird Count, though photos may be submitted until March 1. Please submit images in as high a resolution as possible. You must agree to the [terms of use](#). In the “Note” section, please tell us any interesting information about where/how you took the image (optional). You will be asked for your name, address, phone, and email.

Three judges each from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society will review all the entries. Winners in each category will be notified by email and prizes awarded. All winners and finalists will be posted on the GBBC web site.

Photos are evaluated based on both technical skill and artistic ability. Winning photos are those that show the photographer’s skill in composing an image and using a camera. Some of the factors the judges consider when choosing photos include use of lighting, depth of field, sharpness of focus, color balance,

composition, framing, camera angle, originality, choice of subject matter, and the amount of patience (or luck!) required to get a shot.

Images will be judged in six categories: **Overall, Bird in its habitat, Behavior, Group shot (2 or more birds) Composition, People enjoying birds.**

When taking photos, use your imagination! Bird watchers could be photographed inside or outside, in the city, suburbs, or country. They might be at a nature center or retirement home, in unusual places, or photographed from unusual vantage points. Young children, seniors, or scout groups could be photographed marking tally sheets, talking to each other, looking up birds in a field guide, entering data on-line, filling feeders, making bird treats, mugging for the camera, or just having fun!

Don't forget to bring your cameras to **Preble County Historical Society's GREAT BACK YARD BIRD COUNT, Feb. 12-15! Good luck to the thousands of 2009 photo contest entrants! Visit the web site for more information: www.birdcount.org.**