



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Death Valley National
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Death Valley News Release

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Death Valley to Hold Annual Christmas Bird Count

On Monday, January 2, Death Valley National Park will hold its annual Christmas Bird Count. The Count is held each winter as part of the international Christmas Bird Count sponsored by the National Audubon Society. Birdwatchers will canvas a 15-mile diameter count circle from dawn to dusk in an effort to record each species and individual bird. The resulting count data is used to assess the status of winter bird populations. Begun in 1958, the Death Valley Christmas Bird Count has been conducted nearly annually since its inception.

Interested birdwatchers are invited to participate in the Death Valley count. The count will begin at 7:00 a.m. Counters should meet at the Furnace Creek Ranch golf course parking lot. Count participants should bring transportation, warm clothing, binoculars, food, and water. The count will conclude by late afternoon. Count participants should plan on spending the entire day in the field. Routes will involve considerable walking. Prior bird watching experience is desirable, but not required. Beginning birders are welcome.

The Christmas Bird Count was started in December 1900 when Frank Chapman implored readers of the journal *Bird-Lore* to count birds during the Holidays, rather than shoot them, as had been past tradition. Twenty-seven people turned out for Chapman's first count. Last year, 2,022 counts were conducted during the 105th year of the Christmas Bird Count, and 56,623 observers took part in the event. The Christmas Bird Count is now the largest bird survey ever conducted and the ultimate source of data about winter bird populations.

For more information on this year's Death Valley Christmas Bird Count, contact Vicki Wolfe at 760-786-3277 or 760-786-2108.

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