



A fun activity to do as a family this weekend

Description

24th annual Great Backyard Bird Count can be done from your window or your own property



Black-capped Chickadee

While the public health measures associated with COVID-19 are still in effect, many people are looking for interesting things to do and learn. If you don't know what to do over the coming weekend, the **Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC)** has a suggestion for you!

The 24th annual *Great Backyard Bird Count* (GBBC) is happening from **February 12 to 15**. People across Canada and around the globe are invited to count the birds they see during at least a 15-minute period on one or more days



of the count, and then enter their findings on the [GBBC website](#).

The count is a snapshot of what is happening with birds in terms of population, migration and range.



American Goldfinch

The event is administered by the *Cornell Lab of Ornithology*, *National Audubon Society* and *Birds Canada*. The annual GBBC is a great way to enjoy the outdoors and connect with nature while respecting COVID-19 public health guidelines. NCC staff will be participating in different parts of the country.

NCC's project manager and experienced ornithologist **Claude Drolet**, says it is an opportunity to get involved in community science and be a part of something bigger in contributing to a global effort to collect new data on bird populations.

The count is a snapshot of what is happening with birds in terms of population, migration and range. Last year, participants in over 100 countries identified about 7,000 different bird species. Drolet says each participant chooses a location to count birds. Counting can be done while looking out a window, from outside in a backyard or in a nearby park or other outdoor spaces — essentially anywhere birds are. Participants can have any level of birding experience. It's family-friendly and a great way to spend time with household members.

'The Great Backyard Bird Count is also a great way to spend time outdoors and connect with nature, while respecting public health guidelines.'

"People may be able to see many species of birds in their backyard or their community," says Drolet. "House sparrows, black-capped chickadees, red-breasted and white-breasted nuthatches, American goldfinches, cooper hawks or downy and hairy woodpeckers may be seen around backyard feeders. Several species that visit only in the winter, such as pine grosbeaks, bohemian waxwings and common redpolls, may also be seen."



Mallard Duck

“If you can safely view a body of water from your backyard or neighbourhood, keep an eye out for mallards, American black ducks, common goldeneyes and common mergansers. Finally, look out for bald eagles, a variety of gulls and American crows along river shores or soaring over your home.”





Downy Woodpecker

For instructions and a step-by-step guide, visit birdcount.org/participate. Drolet says that thanks to the data that participants submit to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's *eBird* platform, it adds to species counts from around the world.

Nature Conservancy of Canada says the GBBC is also a time to think about the alarming decline in bird populations and their habitats here in Canada and around the world. In the 2019 State of Canada's Birds report, Canada lost 40 to 60 % of shorebirds, grassland birds and aerial insectivores (birds that feed on insects while flying, such as swallows). A North American study revealed that nearly three billion birds have disappeared since 1970.

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