



TUG HILL BIRD QUEST INSTRUCTIONS

Thanks so much for participating in the Tug Hill Bird Quest! We hope these instructions will help answer any questions you may have about watching and counting the birds at your feeder for our event.

HOW TO WATCH

Watch your feeders for a cumulative total of 15 minutes each day. You DO NOT need to watch for a full 15 minutes consecutively, just a total of 15 minutes per day. Some people can only watch before and/or after work, for example.

Correctly identifying the birds at your feeder is important. We encourage you to acquaint yourself with the birds in your area by studying the Who's Who at the Feeder slideshow found at www.tughilltomorrowlandtrust.org/bird-quest/ page, plus our Bird of the Day emails and Facebook posts, and the Common Feeder Birds Poster provided.

If you cannot identify a bird, sketch or photograph it. Pay attention to its field marks (beak size/shape/color, face, eye or wing markings, foot shape/color, tail length or position) before consulting a field guide. If you see the bird when you are counting, include notes about when you saw the bird and how many you saw so that you can add the observation to your count if you are able to identify the species later.

To identify a mystery bird, consult a current field guide or visit Cornell Lab's online field guide at www.allaboutbirds.org/guide. For help with similar looking birds, such as finches or woodpeckers visit Cornell Lab's Tricky Birds ID page at www.feederwatch.org/learn/tricky-bird-ids. If you'd like one-on-one assistance, contact Lin Gibbs (lgibbs@tughilltomorrow.org or cell # 315-783-4250).

HOW TO COUNT

To ensure that Bird Quest data is most useful, it helps for all of us to count birds in the same way. Please observe the following when counting:

- Keep a tally sheet and field guide handy.
- Each time you see a species within your count site during your observation time, count the number of individuals in view simultaneously and record that number on your tally sheet. (For example, if the first time you look at your feeder you see one Northern Cardinal and two Blue Jays, record these numbers next to their names.) If later during your observation time you see more individuals of a species in view simultaneously, revise your tally sheet to reflect the larger number. (For example, if you see two Northern Cardinals and three Blue Jays later during your observation, change the number of Northern Cardinals on your tally sheet from one to two, and the number of Blue Jays from two to three.) Do not add your counts together; record only the largest number of individuals of each species in view simultaneously over the day's observation time. This should avoid your tallying an individual bird more than once.
- If no birds visit your feeders, this information is important. If you see no birds, please enter '0' on your tally sheet.

- At the end of your observation time for the day, the largest number of individuals that you saw simultaneously becomes your final tally, and is the number for each species that you should report on your tally sheet for the day.

PLEASE COUNT...

- all of the individuals that are in view simultaneously. For example, if two House Sparrows are on your feeder and six more are waiting their turn in a nearby bush, count all eight.
- birds that are attracted to your feeder because of something you provided or by the activity around your feeders even if they do not eat food or take a bath. For example, count birds like Brown Creepers and warblers that forage with feeder birds but don't necessarily come to your feeders themselves.
- birds that are attracted to fruits or plantings that you maintain in your count site. Examples include Cedar Waxwings and American Robins.
- hawks, owls, and other predatory birds that are attracted by birds at your feeders, even if the predators are not successful in catching a meal.

BUT DON'T COUNT...

- birds that simply fly over your count site, such as Canada Geese or Sandhill Cranes.
- birds that you observe outside of your observation times. If you see a bird at another time that you wish to tell us about, you may report the sighting in the comment space on the tally sheet.