

News Release 2008

Our Mountaineer Chapter of the National Audubon Society is sponsoring the annual Morgantown Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Anyone from beginner to advance birder is welcome to participate. During the winter months, over 80 species of birds may be seen.

On Saturday, December 6, the club will host a Winter Bird Identification Field Trip. Anyone wanting to participate is welcome. The trip will meet in the Cheat Lake area at Ruby and Ketchy's Restaurant for breakfast at 7:30 and depart at 8:15 am. The leader will be LeJay Graffious.

On the first official day (December 11) of the CBC count week a field trip is scheduled looking for water fowl on Cheat Lake. Alan Clark will lead search for count week birds. The trip will meet in the Cheat Lake area at Ruby and Ketchy's Restaurant for breakfast at 7:30 and depart at 8:15 am.

The Morgantown CBC will be Sunday, December 14. It is centered on the Morgantown Airport and, like all counts, is a circle with a diameter of fifteen miles. Our impossible goal is to count all the birds within 7-½ miles of where the two runways intersect. We don't worry about our impossible goal, but just have a fun day counting birds. The CBC circle is divided into areas, which are covered by teams. We encourage team efforts. The team is usually out from dawn to dusk, with individual participants joining in for as much of the day as they choose. Once again this year, LeJay Graffious is the compiler and will determine the number of teams based on how many people contact him about participating. Smaller areas give teams a better chance at getting a good sample of species and numbers. . The count usually has four teams covering the count area.

Owling is another phase of the count. It extends the time period up to the entire twenty-four hours. Owling is listening for owls, and the few other nocturnal calls or sightings that might be made. The Morgantown CBC Owling effort has great growth potential.

Feeder Counts are another phase of the count. People interested in this phase tally the greatest number of each species seen at their feeders at any one time during the day of the count and contact LeJay Graffious with their totals Sunday evening or Monday.

Count Week Birds are yet another phase of the effort. Species that are completely missed on count day can be footnoted as "seen during count week", if seen during either the three days prior to, or the three days following the count day. Count Week for the Morgantown CBC is Thursday, December 11 to Wednesday, December 17.

The Count Day Dinner is the most social phase of the effort. The teams join for the evening meal and tally up the day's results. The final count comes when all feeder counts, counts for teams not represented at the dinner, and any after-dinner owling birds are added in with any count week birds footnoted. The final tally of species and numbers of individual birds, participants, and miles covered in the effort, and number of feeder counts is submitted for inclusion in the collective record of National Audubon Society's 108th Christmas Bird Count.

The workshop and field trip are free to public. The cost of participating in the official Christmas Bird Count is \$5.00. People want to get involved may register on-line at <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc>, email lejay@frontiernet.net, or call 304-379-4492 to leave information. Come join one or all three events. Birding is great activity to enjoy outside and be with nature and friends.

Tuesday, December 9: Winter Bird Identification Workshop 7:00 at the City Municipal Building on Spruce Street. Cost: Free Presenter: LeJay Graffious

December 6 : Winter Bird Identification Field Trip: Meet in the Cheat Lake area at Ruby and Ketcy's at 8:00 am. Cost: Free Leader: LeJay Graffious

December 11: Water Fowl Field Trip: Meet in the Cheat Lake area at Ruby and Ketcy's at 8:00 am. Cost: Free Leader: Alan Clark

December 14: Audubon Christmas Bird Count :Teams in the field. Novice birders are welcome. Cost: \$5.00 Contact Coordinator, LeJay Graffious, to participate at 304-379-4492 or lejay@frontiernet.net.