

Managing Christmas Bird Counts



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<https://iowabirds.org/Connections/CBC.aspx>

Iowa has a long history of documenting the state's Christmas Bird Counts. Since 1937 the IOU has compiled and published the summary of each year's data in *Iowa Bird Life*. This requires the help and cooperation of many different compilers across the state. In recent years this process has moved from publishing large, and difficult to read, spreadsheets of information to storing the data in a database and generating reports from that. This document should provide guidance to compilers to enter their information.

Account Login

All count compilers/contacts must have a login on the IOU website. If you do not yet have one, it is easy to create one by selecting "Login" and then the "Create Account" button.

Count Circle Information

There are currently 59 counts in the database, both current and historical. These are mapped and have a count circle map included. You may view them on the CBC page by clicking on the Map of Counts.

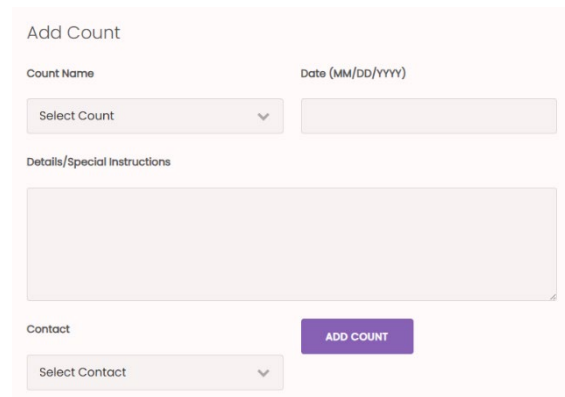
If you want to create a new count, work with the Iowa compiler and enter the information into the database using the available forms on "Create New Count".

Count Date

Each year you need to add your count to the calendar. You must be logged in to make this function available.

Add New Date

1. Select your count name
2. Enter the date
3. Type in any special instructions such as a meting place or plans for dinner and compilation
4. Select a contact. This must be someone with a website account so that an email address is available. Generally it will be you.

A screenshot of a web form titled "Add Count". The form has a light pink background. At the top, it says "Add Count". Below this, there are two fields: "Count Name" with a dropdown menu labeled "Select Count", and "Date (MM/DD/YYYY)" with a text input field. Below these is a large text area labeled "Details/Special Instructions". At the bottom, there is a "Contact" dropdown menu labeled "Select Contact" and a purple button labeled "ADD COUNT".

Edit Date



Sometimes weather requires postponing your planned count. Edit the date or any other information to keep the calendar (and data) accurate.

1. Click the pencil icon to edit.
2. Click the green checkmark to save changes.

Edit Count

Select your count and make changes as necessary.

Cedar Rapids

Count	Cedar Rapids
Date	12/20/2025
Details	Contact Jim at 319-721-1593 if you want to help
Contact	Jim Durbin

Update Map

You may also upload an updated map from this form if you wish.

Add/Update Map

Maps must be in jpg or png format for uploading.

Des Moines

Choose File No file chosen

ADD MAP

Enter Data

Once you have gathered all the information from your field parties, you are ready to compile it and enter the data into the IOU site as well as the National Audubon site if you have registered your count there.

LOG IN TO ADD A COUNT TO THE CALENDAR OR
EDIT A CURRENT ONE AND ENTER YOUR COUNT
DATA.

ADD/EDIT EXISTING COUNT

ENTER COUNT DATA

The following documents may be downloaded and used for your count:

CBC REPORT FORM

CBC SPECIES LIST

CBC SPECIES DETAIL

Be sure to enter your count data or send your results to [Christopher Caster](#) for the annual IBL summary.

Begin by selecting the season and your count. You may return to any of these sections to edit up until it has been reviewed and approved by the state compiler.

Season

Count

2025 - 2026

De Soto NWR

☒ Weather/Effort

☐ Species

☐ Count Week Species

☐ Review Entries

☐ Note to Compiler

Weather/Effort

Weather and effort data is straightforward. Total all the party hours and miles and get the weather readings from the day. Click the Update button to save.

The Total No. of Species Recorded field allows compilers to add a taxa to their totals in the event unidentified species were recorded. For instance, if your count had no identified Western or Eastern Meadowlarks seen, but did have 15 meadowlark sp., you may want to add those to your total species.

Total No. of Species Recorded	
<input type="text" value="62"/>	
Weather/Effort	
Weather	
High Temp (deg. F)	Low Temp (deg. F)
<input type="text" value="35"/>	<input type="text" value="27"/>
Snow Cover (inches)	Wind (direction and speed)
<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="NW 10-15"/>

Effort					
Observers		Field Parties		Field/Party Hours	
<input type="text" value="13"/>		<input type="text" value="9"/>		<input type="text" value="67"/>	
Car Miles	Foot Miles	Owl Hours	Owl Miles	Feeder Parties	Feeder Hours
<input type="text" value="473"/>	<input type="text" value="21.75"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>
<input type="button" value="UPDATE"/>					


Species

The species list consists of only species seen in recent years on Iowa CBCs. The state compiler can add a rarity for you if needed to complete the form. Contact through email or by using the Note to Compiler form.

Scroll through the list and add a number to any species recorded on count day. Click the Update button to save. Note any species preceded by ** that require details or documentation be sent to the state compiler.

Species		
Species preceded by ** require details or documentation. This list contains species recorded on previous counts. If you have one to add, please send a message to the compiler.		
Be sure to check any count week only species on the Count Week Species page.		
Snow Goose Individuals	Common Loon Individuals	Winter Wren Individuals
<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Ross's Goose Individuals	Double-crested Cormorant Individuals	**Marsh Wren Individuals
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="button" value="UPDATE"/>		


**Great Black-backed Gull
Individuals



Count Week Species

Once you have saved your species, go to the Count Week Species list and check the ones which are count week only. Update when finished.

UPDATE
















This list shows all Iowa species not entered as seen on count day. Check any which were recorded count week only and update.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Snow Goose	<input type="checkbox"/> Mute Swan	<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Duck
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue-winged Teal	<input type="checkbox"/> American Wigeon	<input type="checkbox"/> American Black Duck
<input type="checkbox"/> Green-winged Teal	<input type="checkbox"/> Canvasback	<input type="checkbox"/> Redhead
<input type="checkbox"/> Ring-necked Duck	<input type="checkbox"/> Greater Scaup	<input type="checkbox"/> Surf Scoter

Review Entries

Once the three sections are complete, you may review your entries for accuracy and make any edits as needed.

Weather/Effort		Species 62 entered		
		Species	Individuals	CW
Total Species	62	  Snow Goose	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Observers	13	  Canada Goose	5036	<input type="checkbox"/>
Field Parties	9	  Trumpeter Swan	30	<input type="checkbox"/>
Field Hours	67	  Tundra Swan	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Car Miles	473	  Mallard	341	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foot Miles	21.75	  Green-winged Teal	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Owl Hours	2			
Owl Miles	2			
Feeder Parties	0			

Note to Compiler

This is used to send a request for a species addition or anything else you wish.

Note to Compiler


If you have additional species recorded on your count that are not on the list, or simply have a few additional comments for the compiler, send them via this message.


Your Name

Your Email

Subject

Message

 I'm not a robot
reCAPTCHA is changing its terms of service.
[Take action.](#)

 reCAPTCHA
[Privacy](#) • [Terms](#)