

Backyard Winter Bird Survey Instructions (pg. 1)

Count your birds February 14 & 15, 2026



Thank you for participating! Your data helps us understand winter bird trends across NH. This survey began in 1967 as the “Cardinal-Tufted Titmouse Survey,” and, in 1987, expanded to include data on all winter birds. We hope you have fun during the Survey weekend learning about the birds in your yard and feel proud to be a part of this important science effort.

When should I watch?

Please remember to watch only on February 14th and/or 15th, and check off the dates you observed when submitting your data. This timing helps us capture a snapshot of winter bird activity across New Hampshire—even if it means missing out on some of the exciting birds you might have seen earlier in the week. Count for as little or as much time as you’d like, just be sure to record how long you watched.

How many birds, squirrels, and chipmunks should I record?

Record only the highest number of each species you see at one time during the survey weekend. For example, if you spot 3 Blue Jays at 10 am and 1 more at 11 am, report a total of 3 Blue Jays. If you don’t see any birds, please still submit your result—this data is equally valuable to us!

What counts as a backyard?

Count any birds you can see from your backyard, whether they’re at your feeder, flying overhead, or even swimming in a nearby river bordering your yard. If you can spot it from your house or yard, it counts. Note: If you watch from multiple residences, submit data from each location separately.

The bird I saw isn’t on the survey form. Does it still count?

Yes! Use the blank spaces to report the species and number seen. Write-ins are often unusual species so be sure to add a detailed description of the bird you saw in the comments. Photos also help our biologists confirm a rare sighting.

Instructions continue onto next page →



**White-breasted
Nuthatch**

Photo by Grace McCulloch

Donations support our work.

Contributions make the survey possible, but are not required to participate. If you are mailing in a form donations can be included. Donations are also welcome on our website.



Backyard Winter Bird Survey Instructions (pg. 2)

Count your birds February 14 & 15, 2026



Count only the birds you can identify.

Record only the birds you can confidently identify. If you are unsure take a photo and send it in or leave the bird off of your count. If you can identify a bird to group (e.g. hawk or sparrow) report it as such (e.g. unidentified hawk).

Share your photos.

Photos are a great way to confirm a species. Visit our webpage www.backyardwinterbirds.nh Audubon.org for instructions on how to upload your photos. With your permission, we would love to include them in our outreach materials. Tag @nh Audubon on Instagram or New Hampshire Audubon on Facebook. Use #BackyardWinterBirdSurvey to see your photos and other participants.

Pay close attention to commonly confused species!

A few species can be a little tricky to differentiate—even for the best of birders. If you have a Purple Finch (for example) please add notes on what helped you distinguish it from the more common House Finch. Sharp-shinned Hawks and Cooper's Hawks can also be difficult to distinguish. Check out our guide to *Commonly Confused Species* and if in doubt snap a photo!



**Red-bellied
Woodpecker**

Photo by Grace McCulloch

How will the data be used?

Our biologists use these data to monitor and research trends in winter bird populations across New Hampshire. Thanks to participants like you, we've documented notable increases in species like Red-bellied Woodpeckers, American Robins, and Eastern Bluebirds over the 35+ years of the survey! Each year, we prepare a summary of key findings and trends, which you can find on our website backyardwinterbirds.nh Audubon.org.

Need help identifying a bird?



Check out our free digital guides to *Common Winter Birds* and *Commonly Confused Species* on our webpage backyardwinterbirds.nh Audubon.org.



**Submit
your
data!**



- Submit your data online at backyardwinterbirds.nh Audubon.org.
- If you're unable to submit online, you can mail a completed paper data sheet to NH Audubon, 84 Silk Farm Road, Concord, NH 03301. Please ensure all sections of the survey sheet are filled out, as missing dates or locations may invalidate the survey.

Please email any feedback or questions to bwbs@nh Audubon.org. We want to hear from you!