THE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Once again, RRAS is sponsoring 5 local Christmas Bird Counts between December 19 and January 5. This is the 116th count, involving over 50,000 observers throughout the U.S. and the world, and is not only fun but also a classic example of citizen science. The data gathered have been used over the years by researchers and other interested parties to track winter bird populations in a consistent way.

Ways you can participate:

• Give counters access to your property.
• Keep a list of birds that you see in your yard on that day (be a "feeder watcher").
• Join a team to cover a territory near your home.
  (New birders are paired with veterans, so you don't have to be an expert.)

All are welcome! Call the contacts listed below to participate at any level. If you don't have a team, you will be assigned where needed and according to your skill level.

ARCATA - Saturday, December 19. The count circle is centered on Arcata, stretching north to McKinleyville south of Murray Road, west to Samoa and Manila, east to Bayside up to the Baywood Golf Course, south including Freshwater, and to Eureka (including Myrtle town and Cutten) along the waterfront to include Hikshari’ Trail. Contact: Daryl Coldren (707) 407-0793, FineFeatherRanch@gmail.com

DEL NORTE - Sunday, December 20. The count circle includes Crescent City, Smith River, Fort Dick, Lake Earl, ledediah Smith Redwoods State Park/Redwood National Park, and the western portion of the Smith River National Recreation Area. Contact: Alan Barron (707-465-8904; flockfinder@yahoo.com) or

WILLOW CREEK - date to be determined (weather permitting). The count circle, centered on Willow Creek, includes Horse Mountain, portions of the South Fork and Main Stem of the Trinity River, the small community of Salyer, and the southern Hoopa Valley. Contact: Daryl Coldren (707) 407-0793, FineFeatherRanch@gmail.com

CENTERVILLE BEACH TO KING SALMON - Sunday, January 3, 2016. The count circle is centered on Loleta, divided into geographic sectors of (1) Fields Landing, King Salmon, College of the Redwoods; (2) Table Bluff; (3) Loleta; (4) Fortuna; (5) Ferndale; (6) Centerville Road; (7) Port Kenyon Road; (8) Grizzly Bluff Road; (9) South Spit; (10) Centerville Beach; (11) Elk River Valley; (12) Humboldt Hill; and (13) Salt River. Contact: Sean McAllister (707-496-8790; whiteouters@gmail.com).

TALL TREES - Tuesday, January 5, 2016. The count circle extends from Big Lagoon to Orick and Lyons Ranch. Contact: Ken Burton (707-499-1146; shrikethree@gmail.com).

To help counters prepare for identifying the birds they see, RRAS is sponsoring a brush-up session and potluck dinner on Friday, December 18. Look for the announcement under December Program.