



GBBC Bird observations can be done via the GBBC website birdcount.org or via eBird <https://ebird.org/>. Since the GBBC data entry platform is powered by eBird, a basic understanding of how eBird works is essential. From the home page at eBird.org the link to the **Help Center** is the right most link on the same line as the green and black eBird logo. <https://support.ebird.org/support/home> I strongly encourage everyone to read ALL the eBird Help Files. **They will help you make the best of all your bird sightings!**

Getting started:

Create or use an existing account through birdcount.org OR eBird <https://ebird.org/>. Your bird sightings will be entered **in the form of a checklist**, into either **website**, OR by using the **eBird App** on your **smartphone or digital device**. **GBBC dates are February 14 – 17, 2020.**

Every checklist must have these four key elements:

Date - a single calendar date. Do not create one checklist for multiple dates.

Location - Use a **known hotspot** or a specific location selected on a map. If you visit different places, **use different hotspots** or specific locations.

Observer - (at least one observer must be noted on the checklist)

Birds seen or heard - As long as you were able to **confidently identify** the bird. Enter it regardless of whether you heard or saw it. But **don't guess** at the ID. Count **Fledglings, nestlings, and baby birds of all types**. Count **Introduced species**. Count **Living birds**. **Do not report** Eggs, Captive birds, Dead birds.

Other important checklist elements:

Start and End time - of your birding session. Make sure you have AM or PM checked correctly

Distance traveled - if you are traveling, please record **ONE-WAY distance only** if your route is in and back the same trail, **but count all birds – add birds** you observed on the way out even if you did not observe them on the way in. If your route is a **large loop that starts and ends** in the same spot **but covers different ground** the entire loop route is **one-way**.

Submit COMPLETE checklists - the most useful checklist to science and researchers include all the birds you can ID in one birding session, not just the ones that interest you most. **The fact that you cannot ID every bird seen or heard is OK**. It is still a **complete list**, even if you were not able to ID every bird you saw.

Incidental Checklist – use this protocol if your primary activity was not intentionally birding, but happened to see a bird of note while you were doing something else.

Document Rare Birds

If you report a bird, and you are prompted to add details, that means the bird is either rare for the time of year or is simply rare. SAS has a checklist of birds of San Mateo County which will help you understand seasonality or what is rare. Link to checklist here <http://www.sequoia-audubon.org/SMClis.pdf>. Try to get a photo or audio of the bird. Please add notes in your checklist comments providing details of the bird, **describing what the bird looked like**, add field marks that confirmed the ID, and what physical characteristics you used to uniquely ID the bird and separate it from similar species.

Counting large numbers of birds

"X"s are OK.....But It is best to use real numbers rather than "X". If you want to report a large group of shorebirds, waterfowl, or a large gull flock, try to count 10, then from 10 figure 100, then from 100 figure 1000 etc. Please indicate in your checklist notes how you arrived at your estimate.

Working with the eBird Reviewer - If the eBird reviewer requires more information about your sighting, please don't be alarmed or dismayed. It is the job of the reviewer to ask questions and engage in conversation with the ultimate goal of ensuring that the data in eBird is reliable and useful not only for other eBird users, but for scientists, researchers and conservationists, now, and for many years to come. Your contributions are greatly appreciated and it is exciting to work together to achieve these goals. **Please feel free to email me with any questions.** Most importantly – Get out and go Birding! **Happy Great Backyard Bird Count 2020 everyone!**