

## Guidelines for Participating Bird Counts

The first step is to contact the County Compiler for the area where you wish to participate; you can find this information on the chapter pages or the calendar. The compiler assigns each observer a specific area that needs coverage. If there's an area you'd prefer, please inform the compiler, who will determine whether anyone else will also be working in or near the area. Working in teams is acceptable and encouraged.

To record and report your observations, please use the **Field Checklist** provided by the compiler. This list is in the correct taxonomic order, as determined by the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) and incorporates recent nomenclature changes. This checklist is also posted on the MOS web site <http://www.mdbirds.org> under Counts Birds and the appropriate seasonal count (there are obviously distinct lists for each season).

Species names followed by one or two asterisks means details must be provided. Some species that require full details, but are very rarely reported, have been removed from this checklist. If you observe a species that is not listed, full details are required in order for the observation to be accepted by the compilers and possibly the Maryland Records Committee. The MOS web site contains a form with guidelines on reporting rare birds. Provide as many of the requested details as possible. If you have questions, please discuss them with the county compiler.

The report form may contain space for reporting "sp" sightings for certain species that occur in large, mixed flocks. Identifying and/or counting the individuals of each species in these flocks is very difficult. Rather than disregard the large number of individuals, it is acceptable to report "sp" sightings. However, please do not report *buteo sp*, *sparrow sp*, *warbler sp*, etc, as these species often occur as single individuals that can be identified with a little extra work. *It is acceptable to not report birds if you are unable to confidently identify them.*

The field checklist contains areas for recording your hours, miles, and weather conditions. Be careful not to double-count hours spent owling when you total your hours for the entire day. And don't count the same birds when you retrace your steps returning to the starting point. Please include the miles you travel *while counting birds* in your assigned area. (Don't count miles traveled to reach your area, or to reach a food establishment, etc.) Please list all the persons who counted with you in your area.

Provide your completed field checklist to the county compiler no later than a week or so after the count (or as directed by the compiler). If you cannot meet this deadline, please inform the county compiler as to when your results may be expected.

Have an enjoyable day in the field and thank you in advance for volunteering your time to this effort.