

# Christmas Bird Count

The [Christmas Bird Count](#) (CBC) is an event that Jim and I look forward to each year. It's part of our holiday tradition. This year it was coooold!! The morning started with 6 degrees, which only increased 4 degrees by the time we finished that afternoon with wind chills of -5!!!

The CBC is grassroots citizen science sponsored by The National Audubon Society. Every year between Dec 14 and Jan 5, citizens all over the US take a poll of every bird they see within a given territory. Jim and I have been on counts in Dane County and Columbia County for about 10 years and just this year, we worked with a count in Green County; it's much closer to our home! The count is conducted in a variety of ways; some folks count from their car, others count feeders at their home, and others count on foot or with snowshoes, depending on the weather. And then there's those who do a little of all of it! It's great fun!

The CBC originally began as a time to shoot all the birds and then count them. We're certainly glad that has changed. The data collected helps to ascertain trends in our bird populations. These trends are then used to create conservation strategies and policies.

It's well organized so there's no double counting. A Count Compiler is assigned to a certain 15-mile diameter territory (called a Count Circle). It's a fun day of being outside with nature and helping our bird friends. Our Green County count met for lunch so we could get to know each other better and compare notes on the birds we had seen.

In 2013, Jim and I found 25 different species in our 57 miles of driving and 1 mile of walking. It was a bit cold for the birds and the wind wasn't helping either! Some of the unusual birds that Jim and I counted this year include 3 Rough-legged

hawks, 1 immature Bald Eagle, and 1 Northern Shrike.