



Hairy Woodpecker; photo credit Pixabay

YOU CAN BE PART OF THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT!

February 2024

From February 16th through the 19th you can be part of an annual global citizens' count of wild birds: the Great Backyard Bird Count! It's easy to join in from your own yard. Watch for, identify and count the birds you see in at least a 15 minute period during those days, and submit your sightings to the Merlin or ebird app from your smartphone. (These apps were described generally in our January column, below.) To participate in the Bird Count with Merlin, you will need to do the following easy steps: 1) install a 'bird pack' on your Merlin app, such as 'U.S. Northeast'; 2) create and use a free Cornell Lab account on the Merlin app; and 3) tap the 'start bird ID' feature. We suggest that you try this out before the actual Bird Count day starts, so you are familiar with it. You will also then be able to submit your Merlin photos to the Bird Count.

The Bird Count is for everyone: individuals and families, as well as community members in group bird watches. A local organization, the Birding Club of Delaware County, has information on some area group walks that weekend: www.bcdelco.org. Other area birding organizations include the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, www.dvoc.org, and Valley Forge Audubon Society, www.valleyforgeaudubon.org. As of this writing, Valley Forge Audubon is sponsoring a group walk in Swarthmore's Crum Woods at 8 a.m. on Saturday, February 17 (see website for details).

From your own yard, you can be part of this global activity, and can watch as bird sightings are reported from around the world! Also, if you don't have a smartphone, you can enter your sightings from your home computer. For more information on those details, and to answer questions, see www.birdcount.org

This is a great way for us all to enjoy and learn about the birds right around us, and to join our community and others in this fascinating effort!



Ruby Crowned Kinglet; photo credit Pixabay