

HOW MANY BIRDS?

Every year, around the Christmas season, thousands of Audubon members in North and South America take to the fields, woods, waters and backyards to count birds.

This year, on December 19th, dozens of members of the Hot Springs Village Audubon Society will participate in this annual event called the Christmas Bird Count (CBC).

Four teams of birders with binoculars, spotting scopes and bird guides in hand will spread out through the Village and nearby areas in Garland and Saline counties. A fifth team will monitor backyard feeders. The task is to identify and count every bird seen or heard. Last year more than 62 million birds and 2200 species were tallied nationally. The birds of Hot Springs Village were part of that count.

The purpose of the CBC is far more than “birdwatching”. Information from more than 110 years of CBCs provides important data to ornithologists (bird scientists). It helps with studies, such as, how specific bird species are faring, how weather effects breeding success, if migration patterns are changing, or how environmental/ habitat changes impact birds.

Have you heard or seen a Bobwhite Quail lately? Although once common in Arkansas, the CBC information tells us that they have been in a steep decline. Do you know what an Eurasian Collared Dove looks like? If not, you might want to check your bird book; they’re slowly spreading to Arkansas and one just might visit your feeder some day soon.

If you’re interested in birds feel free to visit during one of the Village Audubon meetings. They are at the Coronado Center the second Friday of the month (except July/August) at 10 a.m.