

What is the Great Backyard Bird Count?

Each February, for four days, the world comes together for the love of birds. Over these four days people spend time in their favorite places watching and counting as many birds as they can find and reporting them. These observations help scientists better understand global bird populations before one of their annual migrations. One simply **watches birds for 15 minutes or more, at least once over the four days.** This year the Bird Count was February 12-15, 2021.



Can you identify the birds in these pictures? Answers at the bottom.



There are many reasons why one should try and attract birds to their garden: They keep the insect population under control in your garden. They can be something of a natural pesticide for your garden. Smaller birds that drink nectar from the flowers are responsible for cross pollination in the garden. Larger birds, including kestrels, owls, and hawks, will provide excellent rodent control by hunting mice, voles, rats, squirrels, snakes, and other less-welcome critters.

Three of us from the Class of 2019 Master Gardeners - Cecelia (our expert) Carol and Hilary, met in The Three Sisters Demonstration Garden [maintained by the Madera Master Gardeners] February 15th. We spent about an hour walking through the garden, then along the row of eucalyptus trees through parking lot to the baseball playing field.



Using the eBird mobile app for entry, our team sighted 22 different birds and with a count of 410 birds. Here is the list:

50	House finch
5	Lesser Goldfinch
1	American Goldfinch
28	White-crowned Sparrow
25	Golden-crown Sparrow
23	Savannah Sparrow
1	Orange-crown Warbler
100	Yellow-rumped Warbler
2	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
9	European Starling
3	Northern Mockingbird

29	American Robin
50	American Pipit
50	House Finch
5	Canada Goose
8	Eurasian Collared-Dove
4	Morning Dove
6	Anna's Hummingbird
1	Costa's Hummingbird
4	Killdeer
1	American Kestrel
5	California Scrub Jay

Birds pictured from top: White-crowned Sparrow, American Kestrel, Yellow Warbler
Photos by Cecelia Sheeter