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One Bright Spot in the Pandemic – Watching Birds from Home! You can help birds from the safety of your own home by joining Project FeederWatch!

Staying home and observing nature and birds in our backyards or from our balconies has been an incredible source of entertainment and solace this year. Spending time with birds and nature, even through a window makes us feel happier and more relaxed. For many, the pandemic has reawakened their amazement at the natural world. Project FeederWatch is an easy way to build on this amazement to appreciate and help the birds in your yard.

Information from programs like Project FeederWatch and other Citizen Science initiatives are used to make decisions that will improve the story for birds.

The pandemic has taken and continues to take a terrible toll, but one bright spot of staying home and social distancing has been the opportunity for people to spend more time observing nature around their homes. As predictions of more waves of the pandemic are realized along with restrictions on indoor and outdoor activities please remember Project FeederWatch and the opportunity to turn your backyard bird sightings into research for conservation.

You don’t have to be an expert birder to take part in Project FeederWatch, and you can spend a little or a lot of time making your observations. It can take as little as 15 minutes every few weeks from 14 November to 9 April – or even just once in the season. Or you could record your sightings for an entire day every two weeks. More people participating across Canada provides a clearer picture of both bird and environmental health. People of all ages and experience can count the birds that visit their feeders in winter to help Birds Canada and Cornell Lab of Ornithology understand how our wild birds are doing.

There are just three simple steps to participate:

1-Feed the Birds, 2-Count the Birds, and 3-Enter your data online or through the Project FeederWatch app.

Project FeederWatch had its roots in Ontario in the mid-1970s through Canada’s Long Point Bird Observatory. In 1987, Long Point Bird Observatory (now Birds Canada) and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology partnered on Project FeederWatch to mobilize thousands of Citizen Scientists across North America to count birds in their backyards over the winter. Kerrie Wilcox, Canadian Leader of Project FeederWatch says, “FeederWatch data show us how our resident winter bird populations are faring and the winter movements of birds across North America. When there are food shortages up north, species like Common Redpolls (above photo by Phil Colwill), Pine Siskins, and Red-breasted Nuthatches descend on feeders in the south.”

Anyone can join Project FeederWatch in Canada by making a donation of any amount to Birds Canada. Visit [birdscanada.org/feederwatch](http://www.birdscanada.org/feederwatch), call 1-888-448-2473, or email pfw@birdscanada.org. In the United States, call 1-866-989-2473. The 2020-21 Project FeederWatch season runs from 14 November 2020 to 9 April 2021.

New FeederWatchers in Canada will receive a poster of common feeder birds, a calendar, last season’s results, and access to online data tools. Those making a minimum donation of $50 can also choose to receive the quarterly magazine *BirdWatch Canada,* produced by Birds Canada.

Project FeederWatch has launched a [FeederWatch mobile app](https://feederwatch.org/about/feederwatch-app/) in both the Apple Store and Google Play. Participants now have the option to use the app to keep track of counts, note snow depth and effort, and submit counts directly to our database.

**About Birds Canada**

Birds Canada ([birdscanada.org](http://www.birdscanada.org)) is Canada’s leading national charitable organization dedicated to bird science and conservation. Birds Canada operates scientific programs in all 13 Canadian provinces and territories as well as international research programs. The work of Birds Canada staff is supported by more than 60,000 Citizen Science volunteers.

**About Project FeederWatch**

Project FeederWatch is a joint research and education project of Birds Canada and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Armstrong Bird Food and Wild Birds Unlimited are national sponsors of Project FeederWatch in Canada. The conversation continues year-round on [**Facebook.com/groups/FeederWatchCanada/**](https://www.facebook.com/groups/FeederWatchCanada/)

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