

# COUNTING IS FOR THE BIRDS by Frank Mazzola, Jr.

A single bird feeder waits in the early morning fog for the day to begin and for the birds to begin to feed. There is someone else waiting, too. The hungry cat is waiting for the activity to begin so it can catch an unsuspecting bird. The birds begin to arrive in pairs and the numbers grow quickly. The first birds to arrive feed directly from the feeder, but then some ground feeders come - the cardinals.

The cat begins to stalk and plan his attack. He waits until there are twenty birds before he decides there are enough to pounce. But someone pounces first! The grey squirrel dives for the feeder and scares away the birds. There is no lunch for the cat.

**MATERIALS:** bird feeder outside classroom window, binoculars (optional), space for viewing feeder, cubes for counting birds at feeder, data chart (see teacher notes)

**ACTIVITY:** Establish a time each day for observing the birds to identify which birds visit the feeder. Once this is determined, decide on the amount of time your class wants to spend counting birds at the feeder. The months of January and February are good months for counting birds.

**TEACHER NOTES**: You can make a simple data by listing the birds that visit your feeder and keep a tally of the number of visits during the established time. If you take one additional step and join Project Feeder Watch at Cornell School of Ornithology, you will help in a nation-wide project. The website is <u>http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/</u>. The attached data sheets can be downloaded from this website. Next year, I hope to have our middle school students help the PreSchool students enter and send the data they have collected. Project Feeder Watch has just turned 20!

**RECIPE FOR SUET:** 1 cup of peanut butter, 1 cup vegetable shortening (Crisco),  $\frac{1}{2}$ 

cup of any or all of the following: corn meal, peanuts, raisins, cracked corn. You can vary the amounts as long as the mixture stays together. The square wire/plasticcoated baskets work best and they are easy to refill. You can "mold" your suet in a deli container as long as you don't make it too thick. The "Crisco" suet keeps better.

## STANDARDS:

BSL: 1.1, 1.2, 1.5, 1.7, 1.9, 1.11, 1.13, 2.2, 5.1, 5.3, 9.1, 9.4, 12.2, 12.7
NCTM: 3d, 4a, 4b, 4d, 4e, 6a, 6b, 6c, 10a, 10b, 10d,
SCS: A1, A2, C1, C3, G1, H3

Mazzola, Jr., Frank. <u>Counting is for the Birds</u>. Charlesbridge, 1997. ISBN#0-88106-950-7.

# Project FeederWatch Tally Sheet for online data entry

ransfer data from this worksheet to online data forms. Do not sumbit Tally Sheets to Project FeederWatch. Ielpful hint : Copy this page into a word processing documen,t add the species that commonly visit your feeders, and then print a copy for each of your counts.

### FeederWatch ID number:

Password:

Login name:

## The dates of this count are

When did you watch your FeederWatch Count Site?

Day 1, afternoon
Day 2, afternoon Day 1, morning Day 2, morning

Estimate the cumulative time that you watched your FeederWatch Count Site.

Less than 1 hour 4+ to 8 hours 1 to 4 hours More than 8 hours

# **Species Seen**

and

Use the space below to tally the numbers of birds of each species you see at one time. Then report your highest counts to Project FeederWatch. (Do not add your counts together--report only the highest number seen at one time).

**Species Name** 

**Highest Number** Seen at One Time

I watched my feeders, but no birds were present.

# Weather

Effort

## Daylight temperature

Mark the temperature extremes for each Count Day. Report to Project FeederWatch only the extreme low and high for the two-day count.

Low		High
Day 1 Day 2	Temperature	Day 1 Day 2
	Under -18°C (under 0°F)	
	-18º to -10ºC (0º to 14ºF)	
	-9° to 0°C (15° to 32°F)	
	1° to 10°C (33° to 50°F)	
	11º to 20ºC (51º to 68ºF)	
	Over 20°C (over 68°F)	

## Daylight precipitation

Indicates the kind of precipitation that occurred during the two-day count.

Туре	Duration
None	Under 1 hour
Rain	1 to 3 hours
Rain/Snow	3 to 6 hours
Snow	Over 6 hours

## Snow depth and snow cover

Mark the conditions during the majority of your twoday count.

- None
- \_Under than 5 cm (under 2")
- 5 cm to 15 cm (2" to 6")
- Over 15 cm (over 6")
- Hard crust or ice covers snow.
- Snow cover is patchy (less than 50% cover).



Project FeederWatch Lount Form - Eastern & Central \*DIEACE LICE DENI\* 5657254116

	"PLEASE	"PLEASE USE PEN"	
PLEASE USE PEN. Fill in oval or print neatly ir	PLEASE USE PEN. The scanner cannot read pencil. All information in this box is required Fill in oval or print neatly in box to indicate your answer.	nformation in this box is required. Please right-justify text. Example:	ed. Example: 1234
1) Mark average depth of snow/ice	6) Mark extremes during the two-day count. LOW HIGH Daylight temperature O D Under -18°C (under 0°F)	7) Mark ALL periods when you watched your feeders O Dav 1 morning	Your ID Number
O under 5 cm (2") O 5–15 cm (2"–6")		O Day 1, afternoon	
O over 15 cm (6")	123	O Day 2, morning	State
2) Mark if hard snow or ice cover O	O O 1° to 10°C (33° to 50°F)	O Day 2, afternoon	
3) Mark if snow is patchy (<50%) O		alive	Zip Code
4) Which type of precipitation occurred O none O rain & snow	4) Which type of precipitation occurred during two-day count? (MARK ONE ONLY) O none O rain & snow O rain O snow	nour	Enter date of the first day of your two-day count period
5) Mark cumulative duration of all daylight precipitation during two-day O under 1 hr O 1–3 hr O 3–6 hr O over 6	ight precipitation during two-day O 3–6 hr O over 6 hr	O 4 to 8 hours O more than 8 hours Month	th Day Year
O Mark oval if NO birds were seen during your count.	Blue Jay	Hermit Thrush	Northern Cardinal
I C	Florida Scrub-Jay	American Robin	Pyrrhuloxia
Example: 8 Species Name	Western Scrub-Jay	Northern Mockingbird	Painted Bunting
Ring-necked Pheasant	Pinyon Jay	Brown Thrasher	Red-winged Blackbird
Wild Turkey	Black-billed Magpie	Curve-billed Thrasher	Brewer's Blackbird
Northern Bobwhite	American Crow	European Starling	Common Grackle
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Common Raven	Bohemian Waxwing	Boat-tailed Grackle
Cooper's Hawk	Carolina Chickadee	Cedar Waxwing	Great-tailed Grackle
Rock Pigeon	Blk-cap / Carolina Chick.	Yellow-rump. Warbler	Brown-headed Cowbird
Eurasian Collared-Dove	Black-capped Chickadee	Pine Warbler	Pine Grosbeak
White-winged Dove	Mountain Chickadee	Spotted Towhee	Purple Finch
Mourning Dove	Boreal Chickadee	Eastern Towhee	Cassin's Finch
Inca Dove	Juniper Titmouse	Canyon Towhee	Mark and if you looked for sime
Common Ground-Dove	Tufted Titmouse	American Tree Sparrow	
Greater Roadrunner	Black-crested Titmouse	Chipping Sparrow	House Finch with eye infectic
Ruby-throated Humm.	Verdin	Field Sparrow	Red Crossbill
Rufous Hummingbird	Bushtit	Black-throated Sparrow	White-winged Crossbill
Red-headed Woodpecker	- Red-breasted Nuthatch	Fox Sparrow	Common Redpoll
Acorn Woodpecker	White-breasted Nuthatch	Song Sparrow	Hoary Redpoll
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Pygmy Nuthatch	White-throated Sparrow	Pine Siskin
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Brown-headed Nuthatch	Harris's Sparrow	Lesser Goldfinch
Ladder-backed Woodp.	Brown Creeper	White-crowned Sparrow	American Goldfinch
Downy Woodpecker	Cactus Wren	Dark-eyed Junco	Evening Grosbeak
Hairy Woodpecker	Carolina Wren	Snow Bunting	House Sparrow
Northern Flicker	Bewick's Wren Record	Write-in Box	Report birds seen on count days only.
Pileated Woodpecker	Ruby-crowned Kinglet listed on form	form	
Gray Jay		ach ach	
Steller's Jay	Townsend's Solitaire comments on separate sheet.	s on sheet.	