

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



For information contact:

Dottie Head, Director of Membership & Communications, dottie@atlantaaudubon.org, or 678-973-2437 (office) or 404-388-8538 (cell)

CITIZEN SCIENTISTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR THE BIRDS

(Atlanta, Ga.) Oct. 5, 2017 – Whether you’re a hard-core birder or just a casual backyard bird watcher, you can help support bird populations and contribute valuable data to scientific research by taking part in one or more citizen science programs.

Citizen Science is the practice of public participation and collaboration in scientific research to increase scientific knowledge. There are a myriad of ways for regular citizens to participate, and the information collected provides valuable information that is used by biologists and others to study wildlife populations and trends around the world.

“People of all ages and mobility can participate in citizen science,” says Nikki Belmonte, Atlanta Audubon Executive Director. “Observations from a bird feeder or a favorite tree in a park is as valuable as day-long surveys in specific habitats. Knowing information about birds is important to understanding how we, as people, are affecting the natural world that supports us.”

Following are a sampling of bird-related Citizen Science Programs in which individuals may participate:

eBird: A real-time, online checklist program, **eBird** connects users with an online database to keep track of the birds seen, maintain personal bird lists, explore dynamic maps and graphs, share sightings with other birders, and contribute to science and conservation. www.ebird.com

Great Backyard Bird Count: This four-day count supported by more than 160,000 participants of all ages and locations each February helps to create an annual snapshot of the distribution and abundance of birds. The 2018 event will take place from February 16 to 18. <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/get-started/>

Christmas Bird Count: Founded in 1900 by the National Audubon Society, the Christmas Bird Count is the longest-running citizen science survey in the world. Christmas bird counts take place in a pre-set area on one day between the dates of December 14 and January 5. Several take place in Atlanta and all skill levels are welcome. <https://www.atlantaaudubon.org/citizen-science>

NestWatch: NestWatch is a monitoring program focused on understanding the reproductive biology of birds. As an official chapter of NestWatch, Atlanta Audubon provides workshops on this program as well as expertise on local nesting ecology. <https://nestwatch.org/>

Hummingbirds at Home: This program is designed to collect data on how hummingbirds interact with nectar sources so that we can begin to understand how hummingbirds may be impacted by changing flowering patterns and climate change. <http://www.audubon.org/content/hummingbirds-home>

Project Feederwatch: Run by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Project Feederwatch is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders at backyards, nature centers, community areas and other locales in North America. Participants count the birds at their feeders two consecutive days every two weeks for one winter. <https://feederwatch.org>

Nest Boxes for Nuthatches: The Brown-headed Nuthatch is steadily declining in Georgia. Help curb this trends by installing a nest box and monitoring nest activity. <https://www.atlantaaudubon.org/brown-headed-nuthatch>

Project Safe Flight Atlanta, D-bird Atlanta, and Lights Out Atlanta: Project Safe Flight Atlanta is a conservation effort to further understand the issue of bird/building collisions in the metro Atlanta area. The goal of this project is to determine what species are colliding with buildings, how many birds are affected, and what can be done to make Atlanta a more bird safe region. D-bird ATL is a webpage that allows users to submit data about birds that have collided with one's home. Lights Out Atlanta is a voluntary program encouraging building owners and residential homeowners to turn off or reduce lighting from midnight to dawn during the peak bird migration periods. The goal of all three programs is to create a safe path through Atlanta for migrating birds and to make the City in the Trees a Bird Friendly Community. www.atlantaaudubon.org/project-safe-flight, www.d-bird.org/atl, and <https://www.atlantaaudubon.org/lights-out-atlanta>.

Breeding Bird Surveys: Conducted by the Georgia Department of Nature Resources, the Breeding Bird Survey is an international monitoring program in Canada, the United States, and Mexico. Participants commit to at least one day per year to count birds by sight or sound on a car-driven route. <https://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/>

Neighborhood Nestwatch: The Fernbank Museum of Natural History has teamed up with the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center to study the impacts of urbanization on birds. <https://neighborhoodnestwatch.weebly.com/>

Atlanta Audubon Society is committed to building places where birds and people thrive.

###

Media Note: Photos: A MS Word version of this press release along with a few photos of citizen science activities may be downloaded from the Atlanta Audubon DropBox folder at <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/y3l9s32oktcs94e/AADL4n1VHbxzzwGhN455VJ-fa?dl=0>