

## Why Do We Collect Effort Data?

**Q.** What is Effort and why do we collect effort data?

**A.** Our data are “effort adjusted” to make the results more scientifically useful. Over the years the number and birding skills of CBC participants have increased dramatically. Simply stated, we have more volunteers counting birds every year such that the tallies of some bird species have increased independently of any actual fluctuations in their populations. The counts are adjusted using algorithms that “normalize” the data to account for changes in participation rate, miles covered, and hours spent afield from year to year.

In 2003 the CBC protocol was reviewed by an international panel of survey experts and changes to our sampling methods were proposed to reduce bias and create a data set that would be more useful to scientists. Our current effort forms embody many of the ideas set forth by the panel.

The report, titled *Improving the Christmas Bird Count: Report of a Review Panel*, is [here](#).

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