## FEEDER OBSERVER INSTRUCTIONS

OBJECTIVE:

To identify and count as accurately as possible all the birds using your feeding station and the area within a 100-metre radius of it on count day. This is your **Feeder Observer Area (FOA)**, and the field party covering this zone of the Count will exclude your FOA from their count. Count only birds that at least one of the observers sees or hears **on** count day, not those that are “always there”, but were not observed on that day. Do not include anything you observe outside your FOA circle but note it separately on back of page if it was an additional species. Also note on back of page, with details any additional “Count Week “ species (3 days either side of count day).

Please observe the birds as continuously as your time permits and note on the form the **maximum count for each species for each 2-hour block of time**. This maximum should be the **highest count that you get in the FOA at any one time for each species**, plus others which you are certain (because of markings, behaviour, etc.) are different. This will probably result in figures that are lower than your actual number of visitors for some species, but this is preferable to inflated numbers, and will tend to offset the possibility of duplication by the field party counts, since many species routinely travel more than 100m in their daily search for food. The **highest of these 2-hour maxima (not their sum)** goes in the column "Maximum for Day". If you cannot observe in each time block, simply leave blank any periods missed. If there is another feeder observer close enough that there is likely some duplication of the birds observed, you may get special instructions from your **Feeder Observer Coordinator (FOC)** concerning the counts.

To get good counts of birds such as chickadees or House Sparrows that hide in trees and shrubbery, try going outside and making a "spishing" noise; they are curious and will often come out and show themselves, permitting a quick count (often lining up on branches or a fence). They will stay out longer if you remain motionless or hidden while spishing.

Please include names of **all** persons at this station, including children, **who observe** on count day (fees are not required, so the more who get involved the better) and indicate **time** and intensity **of observation** in the report. All these data are considered by the compiler in calculating the observer-hours for the count, an essential bit of information for scientists wanting to compare results between years or areas. Especially if your feeders are not visible from the road, as little as a half hour of observation can be important.

**If you need help with identification, or have rarities (species not listed below), please advise me or your FOC before Count Day**. Sparrows of several species could occur, so if you are not certain which you have, please call us. You may also wish to take part in one of the free winter-bird identification workshops held on request in early December. To do this, contact your FOC or the Count Compiler before the end of November in any year.

**For problems or rarities that appear on Count Day, call the Compiler at 902-824-4375,** and I will endeavour to answer your questions or have someone investigate a possible rare bird, either on count day or soon after. Remember to try to get a photograph if you can. In any case, please write a description of what you saw or heard of the unusual bird on a blank sheet or the back of the form (or draw a picture if you’re artistic). **If you have had a rarity visiting, but do not see it Count Day morning, please call me** by noon if possible, to allow time to get someone to your area on count day to check the neighbourhood for it. Thanks for taking part in this great citizen science project.

Enjoy the day and have a good holiday season.

Larry Neily, Compiler

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