



## Home for the Holidays

**By: Greg Martin**  
**Liberty Wildlife Publications Volunteer**

When we think of "home," certain stereotypes, albeit customized by our own specific circumstances, invariably prevail. Birds, in their own way, are not so different. While they might have a more practical relationship with December trees than we do, they likewise crave warmth, safety, and quite often, solidarity. Their needs are perfectly relatable from our perspective. The only thing that really differs is where and how they seek those comforts. Because despite popular portrayal to the contrary, home sweet home is seldom ever a single location.

For non-owls, home is wherever they happen to be when the lights go off. There is no singular domicile that calls them back. Nests serve an invaluable purpose during breeding season, and many individuals may indeed return to the same precise spot year after year. For the rest of the time, however, such sedentary living is just not practical. Like hunter/gatherers in ages past or nomadic peoples today, fluctuating levels of resources from one moment to the next make it difficult to know just where a bird will end its day. Keeping to a singular locale is seldom worth the risk unless there are flightless baby birds involved.



Mallard at rest

So where is home, then? Diurnal birds - those active in daylight hours - want someplace warm, dark, and quiet in which to ride out the night. A fourth criteria goes without saying: safe. Diurnal birds typically possess wretched night vision, and when the sun goes down, the monsters (as far as they're concerned) come out. Even the largest birds of prey are vulnerable when they can't see. The perfect home, on a nightly basis, is someplace offering both height and concealment: height to protect from threats on the ground, and concealment to guard against foes from the air, namely owls. The cozier, the better; needing to react to what's available, birds can make do almost anywhere,



Sleeping hawk

from rural trees to suburban alcoves.

Owls (excluding the trend-bucking Burrowing Owl who both favors the day and lives underground) also require



Warm, dark and quiet...

safe places to sleep. Trees packed with dense branch thickets often hide owls within, as they need to secure themselves as tightly as possible from the dangers of a daylight world full of hazards all its own. Hawks hate owls as much as owls hate hawks, and no quarter is given when the foe is found. All the more reason to ride out the most vulnerable periods as securely as possible.



Custom Hummingbird home

At Liberty Wildlife, we have the capability of providing idealized conditions appropriate to rehabilitating 9,000+ injured animals annually. Since we provide both the lodgings and the food, our patients experience a habitat stability that is rather alien to creatures so frequently on the move. Few outside of the domestic can truly afford to stay where they are. We spare no effort, as every bit helps when nursing patients back from the brink. For rabbits, it's custom burrows lovingly stuffed with hay. For squirrels, we provide multi-tier

enclosures with all the enrichment, climbing opportunities, and foodstuffs they could ever want. Our medical facility employs heated brooders for the most serious cases, along with a gamut of enclosures, from single-animal cages to massive flight enclosures. We also provide variable perching options to accommodate the fact that different species prefer specific surfaces/sizes/shapes to stand on. What fits one foot like Cinderella's slipper can be downright hazardous to the feet of a different species.

In the end, there are far more commonalities than differences. Young or old, injured or healthy: while more transient than our own notions of what makes heart and hearth, our desires and theirs are practically just the same. A place to call home; a place to feel safe.

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# New Year's Resolutions

**By: Claudia Kirscher**  
**Liberty Wildlife Volunteer**

Easy to make, hard to keep and often forgotten by February. Consider a different approach and spread out your resolutions throughout the year rather than trying to accomplish them all at the beginning of the year.

Keep it simple. Even a small change can and will make a difference. Each month, make a change in your buying habits, disposal of trash, and water use until it becomes routine. The following month, change another habit. Before you know it, you can look back on a year of accomplishments!

January - Do a home inspection for water leaks in toilets and faucets. It is

estimated that 90% of all water used in a single-family home during a three-month winter averaging period goes into the sewer system and that the remaining 10% is used for drinking, cooking, landscaping, and other outside uses.



February - Place a rain barrel or extension on the roof downspout to catch or redirect rainwater. Use it to water your garden and houseplants. Consider installing drip irrigation. Remember, we are in a drought.



March - Watch for things that go into your trash that should go into the recycle bin including plastic bags (recycle at your grocer; better yet start carrying reusable shopping bags). Cut up six-pack rings, slash yogurt cups, put lids back on glass containers, avoid buying Styrofoam. Start a compost bin.

April - Consider xeriscaping your decorative garden and yard with drought-tolerant native plants, and flowers or bushes that are natural deterrents to bugs. Help Monarch Butterfly migration by planting milkweed.



May - Keep in mind those soil-scratching songbirds and the occasional little owl that may be utilizing your garden as a hunting ground. The poisonous insecticides we use in, on, and around our yards and gardens can migrate up the food chain (all the way up to us). Instead of toxic weed killers, how about a little exercise and elbow grease to pull up those weeds!

June - Summer parties and picnics ? Plan ahead with an eye towards recycling and reducing your food waste. Use paper plates not plastic, find one with biodegradable content, or better yet reusable. A water jug with paper cups instead of plastic disposable cups or individual plastic water bottles. Buy reusable personal water bottles.



July - When enjoying our lakes and rivers, pack out what you pack in, everything - especially your garbage. Pick up what others have left behind especially monofilament.

August - Find an opportunity to educate your

family, friends, neighbors and homeowners' association about the dangers of sticky traps, rodenticides, and seasonal tree trimming.



September - Switching to non-lead fish line sinkers and non-lead hunting ammunition can potentially save a condor, bald eagle, hawk or mammal from lead poisoning as a result of scavenging.



October - Start planning your wildlife-friendly holiday decorations. Did you know that small owls and songbirds can get tangled in Halloween webbing? How about a birdseed holiday wreath this year?

November - There is a 25% average increase in landfill trash and food waste between the holidays of Thanksgiving and the New Year. Look at ways your household can reduce, reuse, and recycle before, during, and after the holidays.



December - Reconsider your gift-giving habits. Why not donate time or money to a nonprofit group or any organization that supports and works for your environmental beliefs and goals.

Resources: The archives of Nature News; reprinted in part from Wing Beats 2011 and 2010.

MAKE IT PERSONAL AND BE PART OF THE SOLUTION !!

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# Christmas Bird Count

**By: Gail Cochrane**  
**Liberty Wildlife Volunteer**

Prior to the turn of the 20th century, hunters engaged in a holiday tradition known as the Christmas "Side Hunt." They would choose sides and go afield with their guns-whoever brought in the biggest pile of feathered (and furred) quarry won. Conservation was in its beginning stages in that era, and many observers and scientists were becoming concerned about declining bird populations. Beginning on Christmas Day 1900, ornithologist Frank M. Chapman, an early officer in the then-nascent Audubon Society proposed a new holiday tradition-a "Christmas Bird Census" that would count birds during the holidays rather than hunt them. Thanks to the inspiration of Chapman and the enthusiasm of 27 dedicated birders, 25 Christmas Bird Counts were held that day. The



Black-throated green warbler.

locations ranged from Toronto, Ontario to Pacific Grove, California with most counts in or near the population centers of northeastern North America. Around 90 species were tallied on that first census on all the counts combined.

The Christmas Bird Count census of birds in the Western Hemisphere, has been performed annually in the early Northern-hemisphere every winter since by volunteer birdwatchers. The program is administered by the National Audubon Society. The purpose is to provide population data for use in science, especially conservation biology, though many people participate for recreation. As of 2015, the CBC was the longest running citizen science survey in the world.

From December 14 through January 5 each year tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas brave wintery weather, and take part in the effort. The data collected contributes to studies of the long-term health and status of bird populations across North America. When combined with other surveys such as the Breeding Bird Survey, the data provides a picture of how the continent's bird populations have changed over the past hundred years. The long term perspective is vital for conservationists. It informs strategies to protect birds and their habitat, and helps identify environmental issues with implications for people as well.



Red-breasted nuthatch

Audubon's 119th Christmas Bird Count will be conducted between the dates of Friday, December 14, 2018 through Saturday, January 5, 2019.

A map view of the circles expected to be included in the 119th CBC can be found [here](#). If you're interested in participating, check out the map to find a count near you; more circles will be added as they are approved. Green and yellow circles are open for new participants, and red circles are full.

There is a specific methodology to the CBC, and all participants must make arrangements to participate in advance with the compiler within an established circle, but anyone can participate. Online registration is not available, please contact compilers by email using the information on the pop-ups on the map. Each count takes place in an established 15-mile wide diameter circle, and is organized by a count compiler. Count volunteers follow specified routes through a designated 15-mile (24-km) diameter circle, counting every bird they see or hear all day. It's not just a species tally-all birds are counted all day, giving an indication of the total number of birds in the circle that day.

If you are a beginning birder, you will be able to join a group that includes at least one experienced birdwatcher.



Dusky flycatcher

If your home is within the boundaries of a CBC circle, then you can stay at home and report the birds that visit your feeder on count day as long as you have made prior arrangement with the count compiler. Check out the sign-up link above during the sign-up season for information on how to contact the compiler.

For more information contact the Audubon Society at <https://www.audubon.org/conservation/join-christmas-bird-count>

## **KidStuff** by Carol Suits

Kids Stuff  
Nurturing Nature



**Start 2019 with a song and a pledge to reuse, reduce waste and recycle! These kids get it.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQjhgYNoLO0> Recycle rap!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LBQUuB9foyU> A 4thgrader cleans up the environment

### **Homes**

Everyone has a home or habitat. Learn about animal homes here.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xj1ASC-TlsI>

### **Annual Christmas Bird Count**

For kids and adults! Here is some information on this year's Christmas Bird Count (CBC)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nNYTUZZoZgE> What is the Christmas Bird Count?

<https://audubon.maps.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=fadfb421e95f4949bde20c29a38228bd>

CBC locations

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q67BprRtvVE> 10 most reported birds seen during a CBC.

### **Puzzles!**

<https://www.jigsawplanet.com/?rc=play&pid=2d2241bb85d7> Reuse, Reduce, Recycle!

<https://www.jigsawplanet.com/?rc=play&pid=144362e13920> Join the CBC this year!

# Calendar

## You're Invited!

### Liberty Wildlife Calendar of Events

#### Liberty Wildlife Public Hours

When: Every Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday 10:00 - 1:00pm

Where: 2600 E Elwood St, Phoenix, AZ 85040, USA

Self-guided tours: Adults \$6 Seniors/Veterans \$5 Students \$4, four yrs. and under free.

We are closed Sunday December 2nd for our annual Volunteer Picnic

### January Theme: Rehabilitation of Wildlife

- **Story Hour**

When: Wed. January 16th, 9:45am

Where: 2600 E Elwood St, Phoenix, AZ 85040, USA

After the story, we will have some take home crafts to create.

- **Movie Night - "The Lorax"**

When: Fri. January 18th, 6:30 - 9:00pm

Where: 2600 E Elwood St, Phoenix, AZ 85040, USA

Free movie night at Liberty Wildlife

Bring blankets to sit in our amphitheater or bring your own chairs to set up at the back of the area

Make sure to bundle up!

SNACKS AND DRINKS FOR SALE (CASH ONLY)

- **Speaker Series - "Stump the Vet!"**

When: Sun. January 27th, 11:00 - 12:00pm

Where: 2600 E Elwood St, Phoenix, AZ 85040, USA

#### Hyatt Birds of Prey Presentations - January

When: Fri. January 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th, 4:00 - 5:00pm

Where: Hyatt Regency Scottsdale Resort & Spa at Gainey Ranch,  
7500 E Doubletree Ranch Rd, Scottsdale, AZ 85258, United States

#### Verde Canyon Train Ride with Sonora

When: Sat. January 5th, February 2nd 1:00 - 5:00pm

Where: 300 N. Broadway, Clarkdale, AZ 86324

#### Verde Canyon Railroad Booth

When: Wed. January 16th, 11:30am - 12:45pm

Where: 300 Broadway, Clarkdale, AZ

#### Desert Rivers Audubon Society Bird Walks at Gilbert Riparian Preserve

When: Sat. January 19th, 8:00 - 12:00pm

Where: 2757 E Guadalupe Rd, Gilbert, AZ 85234, USA

#### OdySea's Conservation Expo

When: Sat. January 19th, 9:00 - 3:00pm

Where: OdySea Aquarium, 9500 East Via de Ventura A-100, Scottsdale, AZ 85256, USA

### **White Mountain Eagle Festival**

When: Sat. January 26th, 9:00 - 12:00pm

Where: 425 N Woodland Rd, Lakeside, AZ 85929, USA

### **Liberty Wildlife Volunteer Orientation**

When: Sat. January 12th, 8:00 - 9:00am

Where: 2600 E Elwood St, Phoenix, AZ 85040, USA

Submit application through this link: <http://www.libertywildlife.org/volunteer/volunteer-application>

Go to <http://libertywildlife.org/events/> or [www.facebook.com/liberty.wildlife](http://www.facebook.com/liberty.wildlife) for more event information