

2019 Washtenaw County May Count Procedure

Updates for 2019:

- This year, the main change is that the Area Leaders are now asked to share the individual eBird lists from their township team up to the County-wide eBird account.
 - Last year, the Overall Compiler team did this last bit of eBird list sharing, but we think it makes more sense for the Area Leaders to share the lists up as they are reviewing them.
 - **Also a Late Clarification (20apr19)** – The Area Leaders must *Accept* the lists into their township's eBird Master Township Account (eMTA). This isn't really a change, but we wanted to make it clear.

Goals for the 2019 May Count:

- Continue to use eBird to collect and organize data.
 - Using eBird will allow us to keep the data separate by township for historical comparisons.
 - No hand-written, paper lists for the compilers to fumble through!
- We will, once again, use everybody's data to create a County-wide list in eBird, then publish a report from the aggregate data.
- Provide printable tally lists available in both alphabetical and taxonomic order.
 - Create separate lists for the expected birds and for the rare & unexpected ones.

Procedure:

- Birders:
 - Use eBird!
 - Put the eBird *Master Township Account (eMTA)* name in the comments of your list.
 - Your Area Leader will provide the *eMTA* names. These have not changed from 2018.
 - Share your completed eBird lists with the eBird *Master Township Account*.
 - **Please try to complete your sharing by the end of the May Count weekend.**
 - Only share lists from Count Day unless you get other specific instructions.
 - Let your Area Leader know when you are done sharing.
 - Let us know if you need help with eBird or eBird List Sharing!
 - Be sure to provide appropriate documentation for Rare Birds!
 - **Let us know if you do find something rare so we can share the information with the rest of the birding community before the bird goes away.**
 - If you later find that corrections are needed, make them in your own lists and also let the Overall Compiler know, so we can keep the data up-to-date.
 - Area Leaders
 - Check your *eBird Master Township Accounts* to verify that your team's lists have been shared properly. eMTA access information will be provided separately.
 - **Late Clarification (20apr19)! Please Accept the shared eBird lists from your area birders to the eMTA. You will not receive notification via email – this is why the birders in your team must let you know when they are done, and also why we have provided the eMTA usernames and login info to you.**
 - **(New for 2019) Once you have Accepted and reviewed the data in the individual lists, please share the lists up to the County-Wide ebird account: WASMayCount.**
 - If you need to correct data before sharing it up to the County level, please make sure that the birders also correct their personal eBird lists.
 - If issues are discovered later, please let the birders and the Overall Compiler know. This will help keep the data clean at all three levels.
 - **Please try to complete your sharing by the next weekend following Count Day.**
 - Let the Overall Compiler know when you are done reviewing and sharing everything.
 - Overall Compiler (and compiling team)
 - eBird accounts that we set up last year will be used again in 2019.
 - We're constantly reviewing the process to find ways to make it easier and clearer.
 - We will use the report-generating functions of eBird to consolidate the data by township and county.
 - We will make the data available in the newsletter and on the website for all to see!
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Key Responsibilities and Details:

- Everybody:
 - If you aren't sure about *anything* in this procedure, please ask us! It's still very new, and we welcome any feedback or suggestions for how to make it clearer.
 - If you know anybody that is interested in participating in the May Count, please let the Overall Compiler know!

- Overall Compiler
 - **Find volunteers and direct them to Area Leaders based on where they will bird.**
 - **Get this Count Day procedure sorted out so everybody can understand and use it.**
 - Create eBird *Master Township Accounts (eMTAs)* and an overall County account.
 - Participants will be provided with the account names (the eBird usernames) well in advance of Count Day.
 - The account names are the same in 2019 as they were in 2018.
 - Accept all of the shared lists into the County eBird Account.
 - Compile the County-wide list using the submitted data.
 - Report the historical comparisons on a Township and County basis.
 - Share the Area Leaders' contact information to help with township boundary and other questions.

- Area Leaders (Township Compilers)
 - **Help recruit, organize, and train volunteers.**
 - Make sure the birders on your team know their township and territory boundaries.
 - Provide maps as needed.
 - **Do you need help finding good township maps? Washtenaw County's GIS site is a great resource: <https://gisappsecure.ewashtenaw.org/mapwashtenaw>**
 - Contact the Area Leaders in neighboring townships to resolve boundary questions.
 - Make sure that the individual birders know how to use eBird and how to share their lists.
 - Make sure that the lists from your birder team are entered into eBird and properly shared with the eBird *Master Township Account*.
 - Make sure that the individually shared eBird lists are clean, and include no overlapping counts of birds and locations, and no out-of-area sightings.
 - **Late Clarification – 20Apr19: Please Accept the lists that your team's birders have shared into the eMTA.**
 - **(New for 2019) Once you have Accepted reviewed the data in your township birder's lists, share the lists up to the County-wide account: WASMayCount.**
 - Let the Overall Compiler team know when the data is ready for compilation.

- Individual Birders
 - Use eBird to record your sightings.
 - **Include the assigned eMTA name in the comments on your list.**
 - Let us know if you need help with eBird!
 - Make sure that you know the boundaries of your assigned township and territories. If you aren't sure, please ask. Your area leaders should be able to provide maps.
 - Create a unique eBird list for each location that you bird, rather than a single list for your entire territory.
 - Use known eBird hotspots when appropriate.
 - If you are using Personal Locations, try to create them in advance.
 - This will help you to check that locations are within your assigned territory, and should generally speed things up on Count Day.
 - **Do Not** share your "scouting lists" with your eMTA for inclusion in the final data. (But let us know if you find anything unusual while scouting!!)
 - If you need additional lists, such as for cleanup or incidental birds, new Personal Locations with names like "abc Road List – xyz Twp" might be appropriate.
 - Verify then share your eBird lists with the appropriate eBird *Master Township Account* **by the end of the weekend** if possible.
 - eMTA usernames will be shared with everybody well in advance of Count Day.

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- Make sure that there is no overlap in birding coverage between you and other birders;
 - If overlap does somehow occur, please let your Area Leader and the Overall Compiler know so we can avoid multiple tallies of the same birds. Please send a specific email or written note (not just verbal) to document this. Notation within the eBird list is NOT enough.
- Collect the appropriate information required to document Rare Birds.
 - This may be as simple as providing the normal eBird documentation. But for exceptionally rare birds, you may be asked to fill out a Michigan Natural Features Inventories (MNFI) or Michigan Rare Birds form. Links to these forms are on the *Rare Birds List*.
 - Photos, audio, detailed description of the bird's appearance and behavior, as well as location information such as habitat, weather conditions, etc., should be collected whenever a rare bird is sighted.
 - We will provide a *Rare Birds List*. This list will indicate in **Bold Letters** those birds that require the strongest documentation, but always collect what you can when you see an unexpected bird.
 - **Let us know if you do find something rare so we can share the information with the rest of the birding community before the bird goes away.**