



## ***NEWS RELEASE***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Help the Birds; Participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count**

Carmel, Indiana – Thousands of bird feeding and bird watching enthusiasts will be paying a bit more attention to their backyard visitors as they participate in the Twelfth Annual [Great Backyard Bird Count](#) (GBBC), February 13 – 16. The GBBC is a joint project between the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, and it helps scientists get an immediate impression of bird populations across the continent.

[Wild Birds Unlimited](#) has been a major sponsor of the GBBC for the last ten years. The backyard bird feeding and nature specialty store franchise has also donated prizes for photo contest winners. Wild Birds Unlimited encourages everyone, especially families, to participate as a means of connecting with nature.

Participants can count for as little as 15 minutes on one day or for several hours each of the four days. More than 85,700 checklists (an all-time record) were submitted in 2008, recording the activity of 635 bird species. The top reported bird in 2008 was the Northern Cardinal. For more details on how to participate, go to [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc).

“This project really helps scientists understand bird populations,” explained John Schaust, Chief Naturalist at Wild Birds Unlimited. “This data will let scientists know if and where there are “irruptive” bird populations like winter finches and if there are population declines in certain regions of the country.”

The [BirdSource](#) web site is a revolutionary partnership between citizens and scientists. It gives participants almost instantaneous feedback through graphics, animated maps and other regularly-updated information.

“With just the click of your mouse, you can view which bird species other participants across North America have seen,” said Schaust.

Wild Birds Unlimited is the original and largest franchise system of backyard bird feeding and nature specialty stores with more than 275 locations throughout the United States and Canada. Wild Birds Unlimited specializes in bringing people and nature together with bird feeding and nature products, expert advice and educational events. Visit our Web site, shop online and learn about franchise opportunities at [www.wbu.com](http://www.wbu.com).

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