

# Get Ready for the Great Backyard Bird Count

■ Great Backyard Bird Count starts February 16th and combines the fun of bird watching with conservation for individuals or even school classes

NEW YORK -- What mid-winter activity is fun, easy, free, and helps bird conservation? What can parents and teachers do with children that connects them to a whole new world of natural wonders? This February, the tenth annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, will give everyone a chance to discover the birds in their neighborhood and "Count for the Record."

During February 16-19, 2007, people of all ages, from beginners to experts, are invited to join this event which spans all of the United States and Canada. Participants can take part wherever they are - at home, in schoolyards, at local parks or wildlife refuges.

Observers simply count the highest number of each species they see during an outing or a sitting, and enter their tally on the Great Backyard Bird Count web site at [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc).

Visitors to the web site can also compare their sightings with results from other participants, as checklists pour in from throughout the U.S. and Canada. Together, these counts offer a real-time snapshot of the numbers and kinds of birds that people are finding, from Boreal Chickadees in Alaska to Anhingas in Florida.

"The Great Backyard Bird Count is a community celebration of birds, birding, and nature," said Janis Dickinson, director of Citizen Science at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

"We often fail to notice how rich our surroundings are, but counting birds, even for just 15 minutes, is not only educational—it can provide a lasting source of enjoyment, turning a daily walk into a treasure hunt."

"We are encouraging people to go outside and count birds for the first time this year," said Paul Green, Audubon's director of Citizen Science. "By submitting their counts online, birdwatchers can quickly see



Cedar Waxwing

how the dots they put on the map form new patterns that tell new stories about the birds that share the world in which we live, including our own backyards and parks."

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the GBBC, and Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology are challenging people everywhere to "Count for the Record," by participating in greater numbers than ever before. Greater participation, with more checklists submitted, provides more information about bird population trends - and helps to better inform conservation efforts.

Last year, participants submitted more than 60,000 checklists - and reported 7.5 million birds overall and 623 different species. The count helped chronicle the early spring migratory routes of Sandhill Cranes, documented lingering migrants such as Orange-crowned Warblers and Tree Swallows, revealed the ongoing range expansion of introduced Eurasian Collared-Doves, and recorded declining numbers of American Crows.

Gilbertown resident Teresa Thorn has participated in the GBBC for the last two years and wants more Choctaw Countians involved.

"Last year I was the only Choctaw County resident to participate," remembers Thorn. "We have wonderful birds in this area, it would be nice to see a better count from Choctaw County."

Thorn has already seen numerous gold finch, chipping sparrows, and most recently Cedar

Waxwings.

Participants who want to hone their bird watching skills can learn more from the Great Backyard Bird Count web site, which offers identification tips and access to photos, sounds, maps, and natural history information on more than 500 bird species. People can also submit photos to an online gallery showcasing the dazzling array of winter birds found during the GBBC. Competitions add another element of fun, including a photo contest, rankings for most numerous birds, and the coveted "checklist champ" title for towns, states, and provinces with the highest participation.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is a free event, sponsored in part by Wild Birds Unlimited. For more information, visit [www.bird](http://www.bird)

## Choc-Wa Little League registration starts this week

GILBERTOWN- On February 3rd and February 10th the Choctaw Washington Little League will hold registration at the Gilberttown Sports Complex for players ages 9-12.

Sign-ups begin at 9 a.m. and end at 11 a.m. on the 3rd. On the 10th, sign-ups start at 9 a.m. and go all the way until 1 p.m. All registered players must attend the Saturday, February 10th try-outs starting at 1 p.m. following registration.

If you are unable to make either Saturday registration date, you may register any time between February 1st through February 10th by going to either Sammie Bonner Construction in Toxey or NAPA Auto Parts in Gilberttown.

Bring a copy of your birth certificate and a \$40 registration fee.

Any questions call Mike Nelson at (251) 843-5269 or Pam Chapman at (251) 843-4623.

## Big Bucks on 'Turnip Hill'

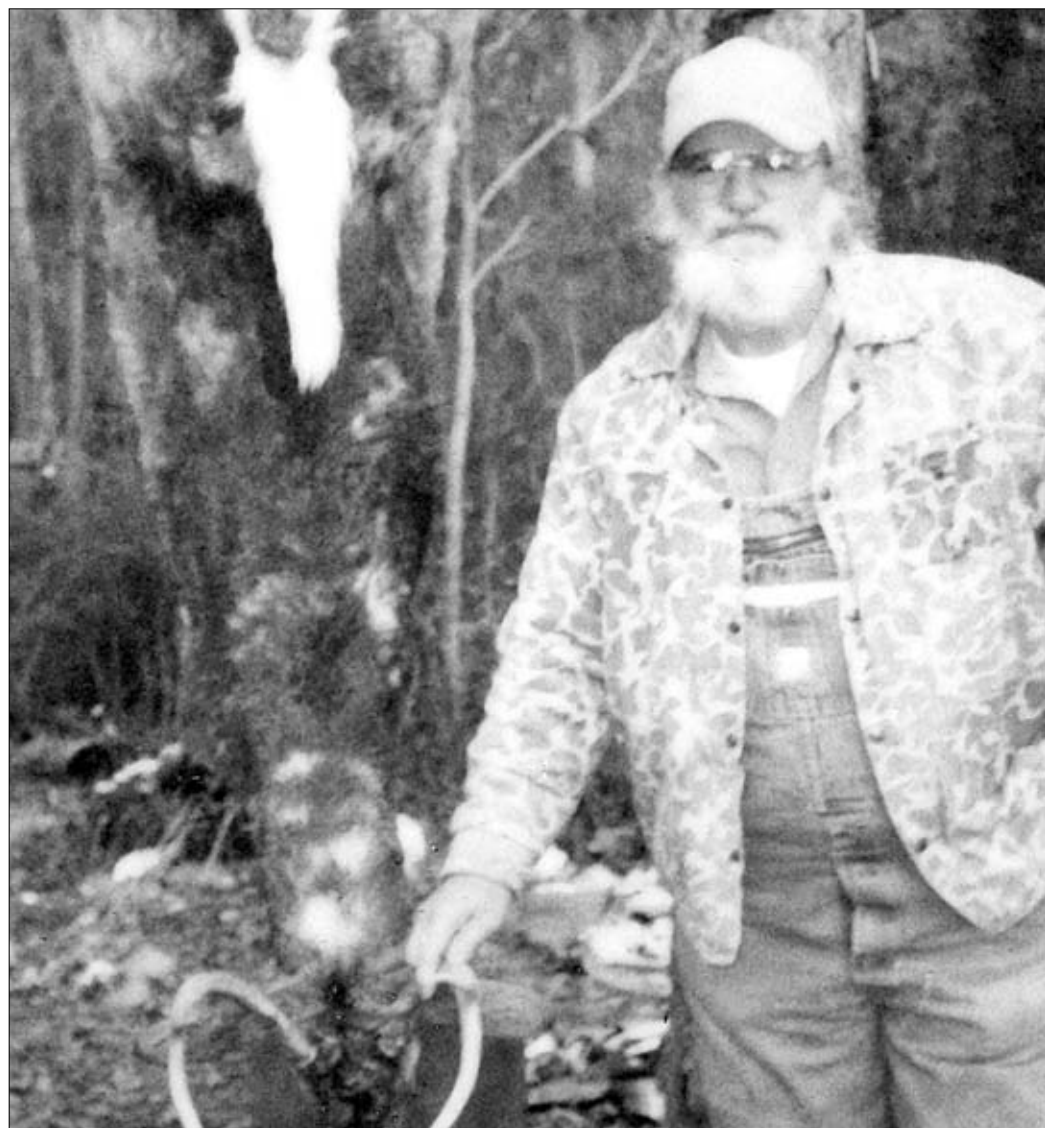
Terry Sikes of Silas took these two bucks while hunting on Turnip Hill on the Bear Head Hunting Club. Sikes first took a 6-point (below) that weighed 176 pounds and sported patches of white hair on its back. Then, the following week on the exact same location, Sikes took a 7-point (right). Now that's a hot spot!!



Photo by Mickey Bryant

### Coody 9-point

Matt Coody killed this nine point somewhere around Gilberttown



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