

# 2012–13 Project FeederWatch

## End-of-Season News Note

Thank you for another successful FeederWatch season! This was a big year for irruptive species. See inside this letter for details. As we begin to analyze the data from the 26th season, you can see initial results online in the Explore Data section of our website. Look for more details about the 2012–13 Project FeederWatch season in *Winter Bird Highlights*, sent to all project participants in October.

### Time to renew

Please take a moment to renew your participation for next season. With each additional year in the project, your counts become more valuable to researchers studying the distribution and abundance of feeder birds. Thank you for your continued support. **Please renew your FeederWatch membership today by following the instructions on the back page of this letter.**

### Why renew so early?

Renewing now will allow us to save resources on future reminders and will help us better plan for the upcoming season. Further, postage costs are greatly reduced if you renew early so that we may send your research kit via bulk mail in September. We are doing our best to limit expenses in order to keep the FeederWatch fee low. **Renewing today will help us keep the FeederWatch fee at the same rate it has been for more than 15 years.**

### Renew through our online store

Save postage and time by renewing through our online store. Click the Join/Renew button on our home page and select whether or not you would like to receive a kit. Note that you must renew by mail or phone to order paper data forms.

### Save paper—skip the forms, or skip the kit

All renewing participants receive a kit—either one with paper forms or one for submitting data online—unless you choose the “no kit” option. We discovered that we ship about 3,000 kits with data booklets but only received 2,000 data booklets back because many people requesting paper forms actually submit data online. **If you can submit data online** but would still like to receive a calendar and a tally sheet, please choose the kit for online data entry on the enclosed renewal coupon.

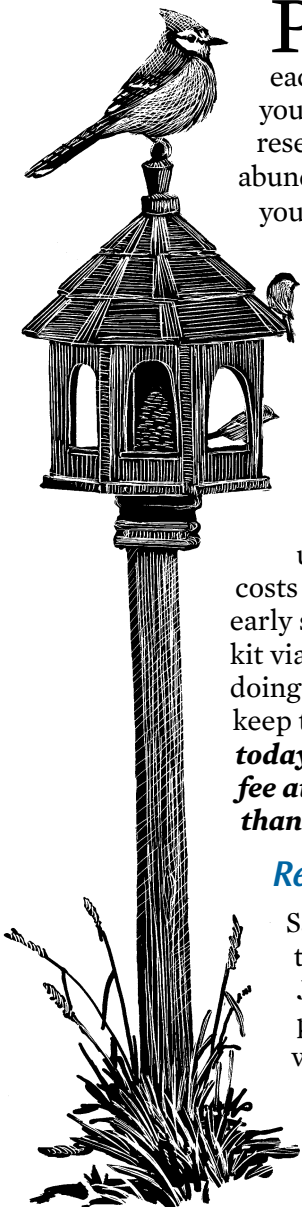
If you would like to forego the kit altogether, please select the “no kit” option on the enclosed renewal coupon. You will still receive *Living Bird News* (quarterly) and *Winter Bird Highlights* (in October).

### If you choose the “no kit” option:

- ◆ Please **write down your ID number** (printed near your address on the renewal coupon) and save it, as you will need this number to enter data next season.
- ◆ Please **note that next season starts on November 9**. Unless you are subscribed to our electronic newsletter, **you will receive no reminders by email.**
- ◆ Be sure to **maintain your electronic newsletter subscription** to get the latest updates and reminders. If you think the newsletter may not be reaching you, visit the Cornell Lab’s eNews management web page: [www.birds.cornell.edu/page.aspx?pid=1639](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/page.aspx?pid=1639) to check on your subscription. Note that spam blockers may prevent you from receiving this newsletter. Set your spam filter to allow email from **feeder-watch@cornell.edu**.

### Submit your counts

April 5 marked the end of the 2012–13 FeederWatch season. If you have already submitted your counts, thank you! If you still have data to submit, you may report your counts online through the end of August or via paper data forms at any time. We will use data submitted prior to May 31 in analyses to be published in this fall’s *Winter Bird Highlights*.



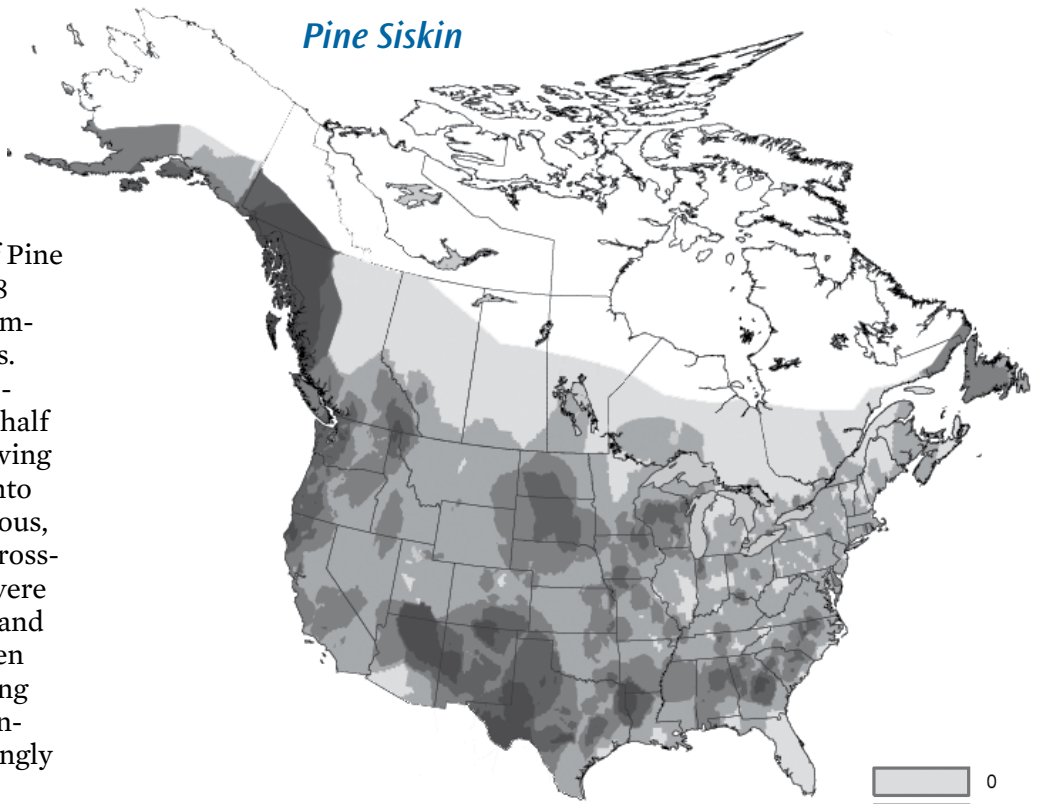
## Impressive winter finch and nuthatch irruption

The 26<sup>th</sup> season of FeederWatch was a record-breaking winter for seeing irruptive winter birds across the continent. This year's irruption started with a large movement of Red-breasted Nuthatches in August. Soon after, big flocks of Pine Siskins moved into the lower 48 states, showing up in record numbers in many southern locations. Common Redpolls followed, appearing all across the northern half of the continental U.S. and showing an unprecedented movement into Colorado. Although less numerous, White-winged Crossbill, Red Crossbill, and Pine Grosbeak flocks were scattered across the continent, and many FeederWatchers were even fortunate enough to host Evening Grosbeaks, a species with declining populations and an increasingly spotty distribution.

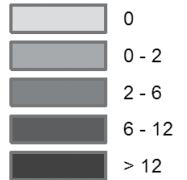
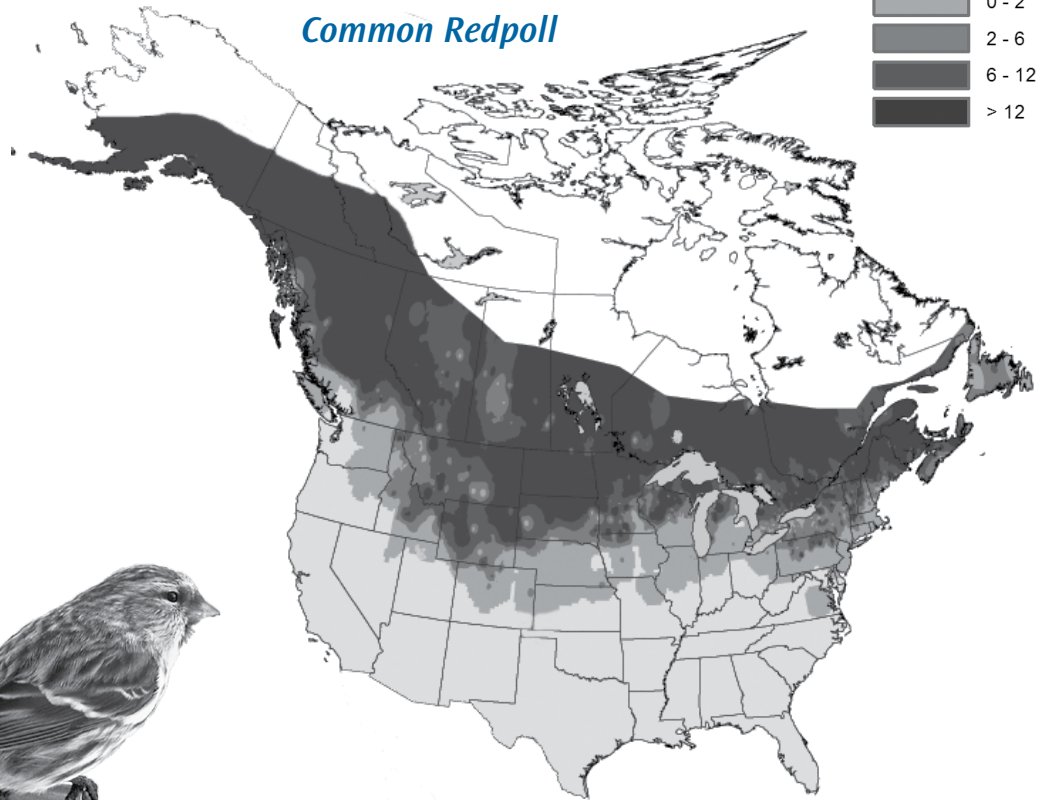
### Sign up a friend

Give FeederWatch to a friend by clicking the Join/Renew button on our home page and following the instructions for giving FeederWatch as a gift. You can also call the Lab's membership office toll free at (866) 989-2473.

### Pine Siskin



### Common Redpoll

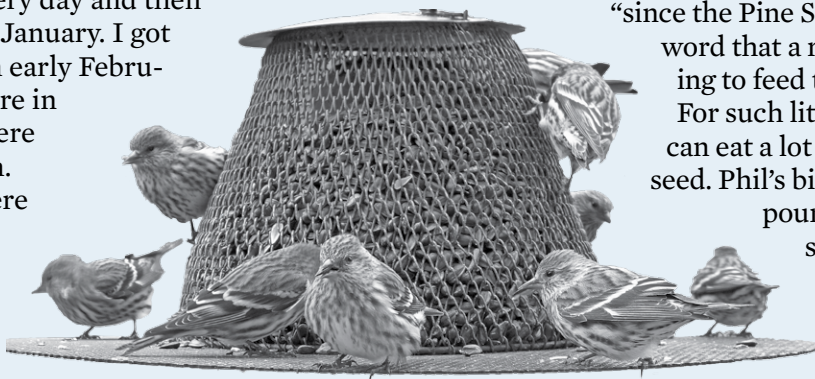


Common Redpoll

Pine Siskins were reported nearly everywhere, with the largest concentrations in the south central states (top map). Reports submitted online through early March show an impressive Common Redpoll movement in the northern half of the lower 48 states (bottom map). Note that reports are sparsely distributed from farther north in Canada and Alaska. The interpolated maps may overestimate the true abundance of birds in the far north. The white areas indicate no data or no birds reported.

## Louisiana site reports record siskin flocks

FeederWatcher Phil Bradley has enjoyed larger siskin flocks this winter than have ever been recorded in the state of Louisiana! Phil lives in rural Southwest Caddo Parish in the northwest corner of Louisiana where the siskins showed up in earnest in late December with flocks numbering more than 100. According to Phil, “By mid-January there were nearly 150 at a time every day and then 200+ every day by late January. I got a two-week reprieve in early February as the elm trees were in bloom; the numbers were only a dozen or so then. Since February 20<sup>th</sup> there have not been fewer than 200 per day with 300 to 544 per day from February 23<sup>rd</sup> until March 6<sup>th</sup>, when I only had 249 Siskins.”



*Pine Siskins in Crossville, Tennessee, by Bob Vuxinic*

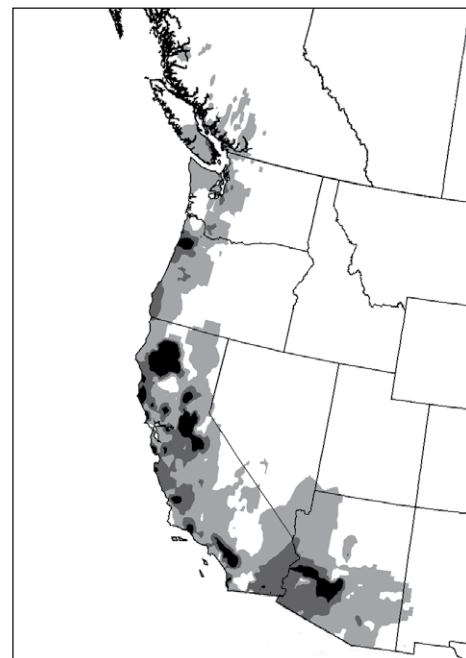
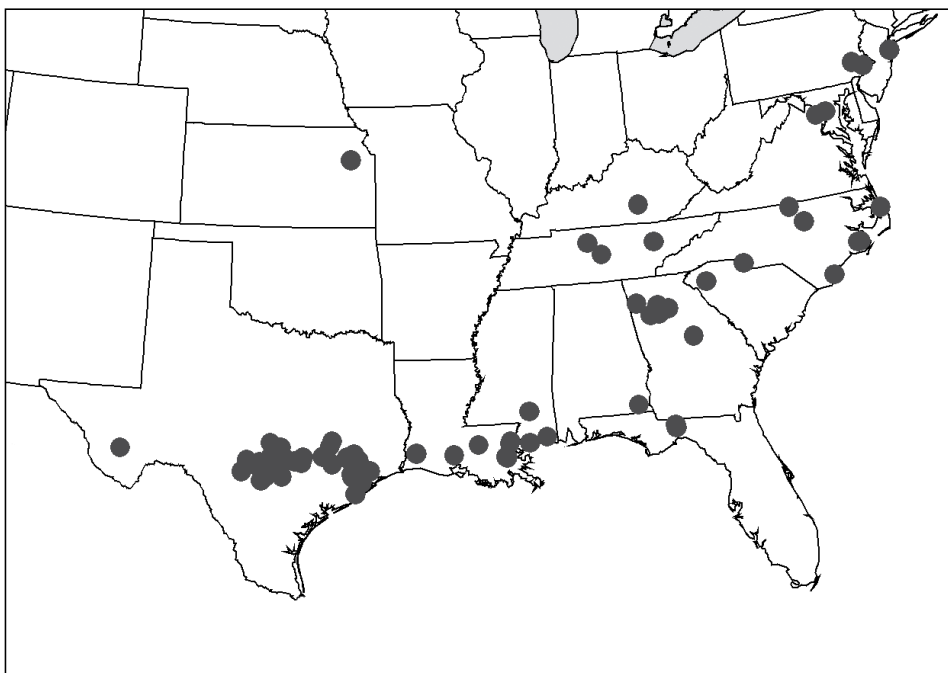
The previous record for Northwest Louisiana was 146 Siskins, and the state record was 300+ during an irruption in the late 1980s. In one day, February 28, Phil counted three flocks numbering 497, 544, and 518 siskins!

Phil maintains six feeder stations on his property but reports cutting back to four stations, “since the Pine Siskins spread the word that a real sucker was willing to feed them no matter what.” For such little birds, siskins sure can eat a lot of black oil sunflower seed. Phil’s birds ate at least 50 pounds a week, and their sheer numbers discouraged many other birds from visiting, including much larger birds like cardinals.

## The buzz about winter hummingbirds

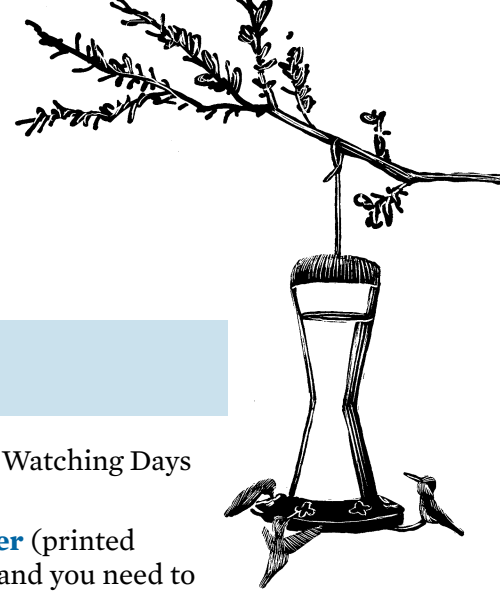
Dozens of “western” hummingbirds were recorded by FeederWatchers in the south central, southeastern, and mid-Atlantic states last winter. Most hummingbirds found in this region in winter

are Rufous Hummingbirds, with a few Allen’s, Broad-tailed, and other species mixed in. The dots on the map below show locations reporting one of these closely-related species in the *Selasphorus* genus.



Along the West Coast, Anna’s Hummingbirds are regular winter visitors as far north as southern British Columbia. The shaded areas on the map above indicate locations where Anna’s Hummingbirds are often seen, with darker shades of gray indicating more hummingbirds, on average.

# Three easy steps for renewing your FeederWatch participation



## Step 1. Select a renewal option

- ◆ **Receive a kit for online data entry.** This kit contains a welcome letter, Bird Watching Days calendar, and tally sheet and will be delivered in the fall.
- ◆ **Receive no kit.** With this option, you need to **keep track of your ID number** (printed above your address on the enclosed return coupon) in order to submit data, and you need to maintain your eNews subscription to receive project updates and reminders via email (see electronic newsletter information on the front page of this letter).
- ◆ **Receive a kit with paper data forms.** This kit contains a welcome letter, instruction booklet, paper data forms, and Bird Watching Days calendar. Please only select this option if you are unable to submit data online. To order this kit, you must renew by mail or phone. Your kit will be delivered in the fall.

**Note:** Renewing FeederWatchers do not receive the FeederWatch Handbook & Instructions or the Common Feeder Birds poster, so be sure to save them from your first kit. All FeederWatch participants receive the Lab's quarterly newsletter, Living Bird News, and The FeederWatch year-end report, Winter Bird Highlights, published in October.

## Step 2. Send \$15 (\$12 for Lab members) annual fee

- ◆ **Over the Internet.** Sign up using a credit card (VISA, Mastercard, DISCOVER, or American Express) over our secure server at [www.feederwatch.org](http://www.feederwatch.org) by clicking on the Join/Renew button on our home page. If you have a new name or address, please renew by mail and include your name or address change with your renewal to assure that you are not assigned a second ID number. If you would like to receive paper forms, you must renew by mail or phone.
- ◆ **By mail.** Indicate your renewal option on the enclosed renewal coupon and return the coupon with your personal check or credit card information in the enclosed envelope.
- ◆ **By phone.** Call our membership office toll free at 866-989-2473 to renew over the phone.

**Note:** A tax-deductible contribution to FeederWatch above your \$15 renewal fee will help fund bird research and conservation at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Thanks for your support!

## Step 3. Renew by May 31

Your early renewal helps us plan how many kits to print and saves us the cost of sending another reminder. We will transfer the savings into research and project improvements.

