

2020–21 Project FeederWatch

End-of-Season News Note

Thank you for another successful FeederWatch season! See inside this letter to read about FeederWatch scheduling changes, research using FeederWatch data, and more. As we begin to analyze the data from this past season, you can see initial results in the Explore section of our website. Look for more details in *Winter Bird Highlights*, which will be emailed to all participants in the fall.

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. FeederWatch is supported almost entirely by you, the participants, and renewing early helps us keep our expenses low and make the most of your financial support.

Save resources—skip the calendar

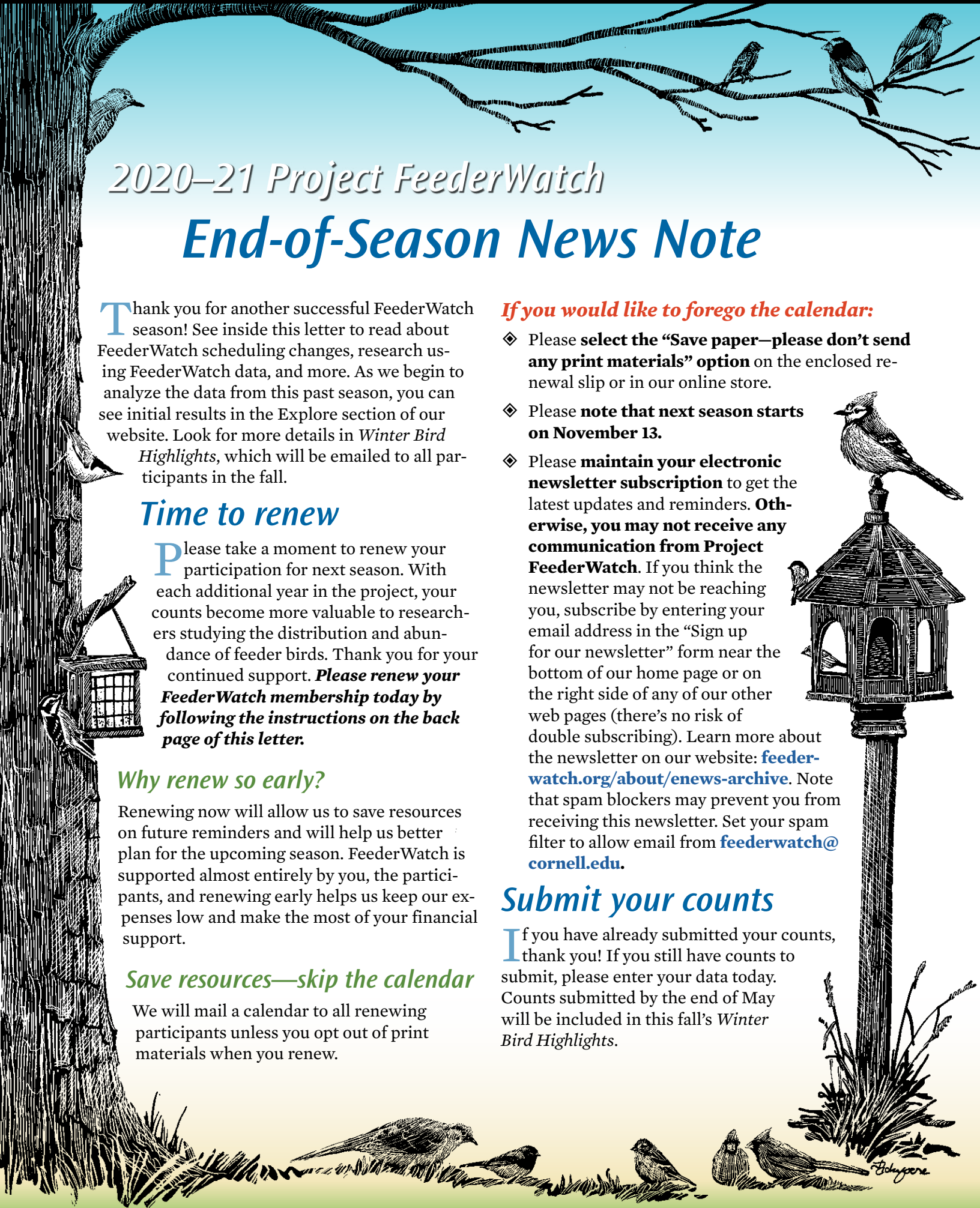
We will mail a calendar to all renewing participants unless you opt out of print materials when you renew.

If you would like to forego the calendar:

- ◆ Please **select the “Save paper—please don’t send any print materials” option** on the enclosed renewal slip or in our online store.
- ◆ Please **note that next season starts on November 13.**
- ◆ Please **maintain your electronic newsletter subscription** to get the latest updates and reminders. **Otherwise, you may not receive any communication from Project FeederWatch.** If you think the newsletter may not be reaching you, subscribe by entering your email address in the “Sign up for our newsletter” form near the bottom of our home page or on the right side of any of our other web pages (there’s no risk of double subscribing). Learn more about the newsletter on our website: feederwatch.org/about/enews-archive. Note that spam blockers may prevent you from receiving this newsletter. Set your spam filter to allow email from feederwatch@cornell.edu.

Submit your counts

If you have already submitted your counts, thank you! If you still have counts to submit, please enter your data today. Counts submitted by the end of May will be included in this fall’s *Winter Bird Highlights*.



FeederWatch Season and Counting Schedule Changes

A year ago, when the Covid-19 pandemic was just beginning, we extended the FeederWatch season through the end of April for the first time. This spring we decided to make the extension permanent! Now the FeederWatch season will always end on April 30.

In addition, we have removed the requirement that you leave at least 5 days when you do not count between each 2-day count. We still recommend that you

leave at least a 5-day gap between counts, we just won't require it. Counting every 5 days gives us a great idea of the birds in your yard, so there is no need to count more often. But if you enjoy counting more often, you are welcome to! We also request that you continue to schedule counts in advance to help assure that counts are not started just because an exciting species appeared at your feeder.

You Can Still Count Even if Your Feeders Are Down

If you have to remove feeders during the FeederWatch season because bears are out of hibernation or because sick birds have appeared at your feeders, you can continue to count birds for FeederWatch by counting birds attracted to water features or plantings that you maintain within your count site. On the Site Description Form just be sure that you indicate the number and types of feeders that you had up for the majority of your counts and the months that you provided food for birds. You can edit the Site Description Form from the Your Data home page by using the Create, Edit, or Describe Your Count Sites button.

Things to Keep in Mind While FeederWatching in the Spring Species Filters Need Time to Catch Up

If you submitted counts in April, you may have been asked to confirm species that are common in your area at that time of year. Up until now, many springtime species were uncommon in the FeederWatch database, and it will take some time for our filters to catch up. As more participants submit reports of spring and summer species, requests to confirm those species will decline.

If You Have Bears, Only Feed Birds During Hibernation

If there are bears in your area, please remove feeders when bears have emerged from hibernation. Putting any food outside can teach bears to associate homes with food, which is dangerous for bears and people.

Finch Influx and Salmonellosis Outbreaks

Lots of participants reported an influx of winter finches this season, like Pine Siskins and Common Redpolls. With these occasional influxes of finches, or irruptions, often come salmonellosis outbreaks, and this year was no exception. Whenever a sick bird comes to your feeder, we recommend that you remove feeders the sick bird is using for a couple of weeks to assure that disease is not being spread at your feeders. While the feeders are down, clean them thoroughly, scrubbing away all visible debris and using a diluted bleach solution or soap and boiling water; rinse them, and let them dry completely. Find more information about bird diseases and how to clean your feeders on our website at feederwatch.org/learn/sick-birds-and-bird-diseases.



PAM KOCH

An influx of winter finches, like these Pine Siskins, brought a number of salmonellosis outbreaks to participants' feeders.

Researchers Used FeederWatch Data to Discover Feeder Bird Movement Patterns in Winter

Ecologists Chris Latimer and Benjamin Zuckerberg used FeederWatch data to look at patterns between winter weather and bird occupancy and published their results in the *Journal of Animal Ecology* last fall. They found that some birds move to urban areas from the countryside to find refuge during extreme winter weather. The researchers looked at three winters in the past decade and FeederWatch counts for 14 species. They found that cold intolerant species, such as Carolina Wren and Northern Cardinal, as well as more cold tolerant species, such as Downy Woodpeckers and Red-breasted Nuthatches, all moved out of agricultural and forested areas and into urban areas during the coldest part of the winter, presumably to take advantage of warmer urban temperatures and more readily available bird feeders. Latimer theorized that feeders and warming temperatures may both be helping normally cold intolerant species expand their ranges north.



KATHIE JOHNSTON

Red-breasted Nuthatches and other winter feeder birds move into urban areas during the coldest part of winter.

FeederWatch membership grew by more than 30% this season! We'll report the final statistics in Winter Bird Highlights this fall, but we wanted to express our deep appreciation for all of your support!

FeederWatch Database Now "Open Access"

Project FeederWatch launched an open-access data portal last fall. Cornell Lab Center for Engagement in Science and Nature co-director David Bonter (a former FeederWatch project leader) and Project FeederWatch leader Emma Greig recently published an open-access article in *Frontiers in Ecology & Evolution* describing the FeederWatch dataset for interested researchers. Your FeederWatch counts can now be used more easily by researchers worldwide, making them even more valuable.

Renew Online for a Special Offer on Birds of the World

The Cornell Lab is offering a 35% perpetual discount on a new subscription to Birds of the World (BOW) to FeederWatchers who renew through FeederWatch's online store at feederwatch.org/join-or-renew/ (you pay less than \$32/year for the BOW subscription).

Birds of the World is the Cornell Lab's groundbreaking online field guide. This scholarly, in-depth resource provides endless exploration of the world's birds

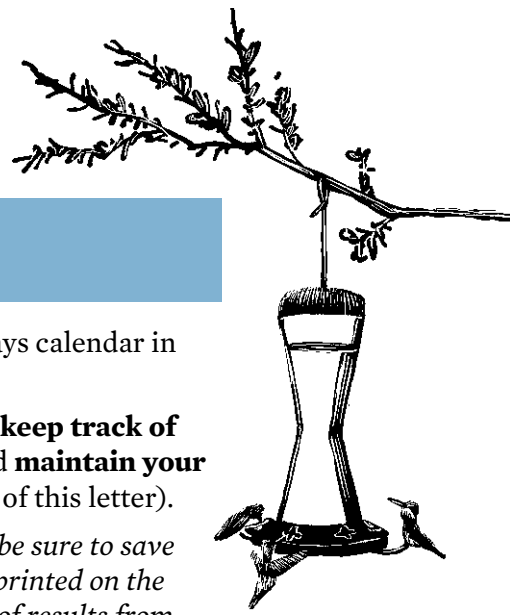
and provides insightful life-history details that will help you understand your local birds more deeply. Use BOW to look up photos and videos, do some armchair traveling, or just enjoy the breathtaking diversity of the feathered world. It's the perfect springtime birding tool, and we want all FeederWatchers to have it!

Birds of the World features include:

- Dynamic range maps, some showing migration routes and seasonal abundance
- Illustrations of every species and many subspecies
- Photos, videos, and sound recordings from the Macaulay Library
- Conservation status for every species

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Birds of the World

Renew today in two easy steps



Step 1. Select a renewal option

- ◆ **Please send a calendar.** With this option we will send you a Bird-Watching Days calendar in the fall and a letter with a summary of our counting instructions.
- ◆ **Save paper—please don't send any print materials.** We recommend that you **keep track of your ID number** (printed near your address on the enclosed renewal slip) and **maintain your eNews subscription** (see electronic newsletter information on the front page of this letter).

Note: Renewing FeederWatchers do not receive the Common Feeder Birds poster, so be sure to save the poster from your first kit. In the fall we will send a message to the email address printed on the enclosed renewal slip with a link to a PDF of Winter Bird Highlights, our summary of results from this season. Please use the provided line on the renewal slip or contact us at feederwatch@cornell.edu to correct your email address if needed.

Step 2. Send \$18 (\$15 for Lab members) annual fee

- ◆ **Over the internet.** Sign up using a credit card (VISA, Mastercard, DISCOVER, or American Express) or Paypal over our secure server at feederwatch.org by clicking on the **Join or Renew button** on our home page. *To receive the Birds of the World discount, remember that you must renew online.*
- ◆ **By mail.** Indicate your renewal option on the enclosed renewal slip and return it with your check or credit card information in the enclosed reply envelope.

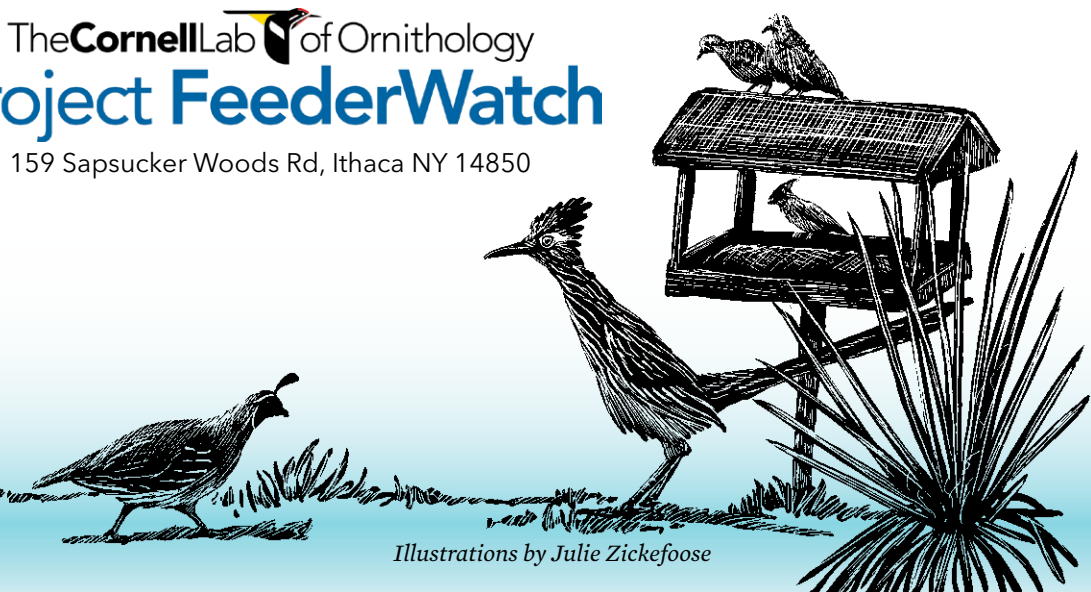
Note: A tax-deductible contribution to FeederWatch above your \$18 renewal fee will help fund bird research and conservation at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Thanks for your support!

Thank you for renewing your support of Project FeederWatch!

Your early renewal helps us plan how many kits to print and saves on the cost of sending future reminders. We transfer the savings into research, project improvements, and keeping the participation fee low.

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Project FeederWatch

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Illustrations by Julie Zickefoose