



NEWS RELEASE

National Bison Range



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Share Your Passion for Birds

Give Mother Nature a valentine this year and show how much you care about birds by counting them for the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). Join Pat Jamieson on Valentine's Day, Saturday, February 14, 2015 to conduct a Great Backyard Bird Count at the National Bison Range. She'll lead the bird count along the Nature Trail between 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

You can drop in for the whole count or stop by anytime for as long as you like. Besides counting birds, we'll discuss how to use binoculars, how to navigate field guides, go over bird family identification tips, and anything else that will inspire participants to continue bird watching. All ages and skills are encouraged to attend and this is a great opportunity to "fledge" a brand new birdwatcher. So bring friends, neighbors, and the whole family! We'll also discuss how you can spend the rest of the weekend conducting your own Great Backyard Bird Count.

The staging area will be at the Nature Trail parking area, which is located about ½ mile straight in from the National Bison Range entrance (Highway 212 at Moiese). The trail travels around the Nature Pond and along Mission Creek. It is level and consists of about one mile of trails. Parts are paved but some parts may be snowy, muddy and rocky. The pace will be slow, to be better able to see and identify birds. There will be periods of standing and even sitting. Bring a chair and bird from the parking area if you'd like. Wear sturdy shoes and appropriate clothing for the changeable Montana weather. Bring water and snacks/lunch as needed and binoculars and field guides are recommended. Check out the website (www.fws.gov/refuge/national_bison_range) for updates or changes in the schedule.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is a joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, with Canadian partner Bird Studies Canada and sponsorship from Wild Birds Unlimited. It is held over the President's Day Weekend (February 13-16). This is a free, fun event held in February each year. Anyone of any age or skill level can participate by counting birds and entering their tallies online. All you do is count birds at your favorite location for at least 15 minutes on one or more days during the count weekend. You can even go to different locations as long as you enter those numbers as separate counts.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is a great way for people of all ages and backgrounds to connect with nature and show some love for the birds this Valentine's Day. To learn more about how to join the count, download instructions, a slide show, web buttons, and other materials, visit www.birdcount.org. While you're there, get inspired by the winning photos from the 2014 GBBC photo contest. As an added bonus, the National Park Service and National Wildlife Refuges are waiving fees at their sites on Saturday, Sunday and Monday of the President's Day weekend (February 14-16, 2015).

So plan at least a little time to get out and indulge your passion for birds. Not only will it be good for you, but you'll be contributing to our knowledge of our feathered friends.

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