EEB 4261: ORNITHOLOGY LABORATORY - EBIRD INFORMATION AND EXERCISE

eBird (www.eBird.org) is an online ornithological database; it allows you to archive your own birding records, and to discover what other birders have seen, and where. Use of eBird is completely free. You can post your bird sightings and see what other people are reporting. Unlike a rare bird alert webpage (like CTBirds - http://lists.ctbirding.org/pipermail/ctbirds_lists.ctbirding.org/), birders post all of their species sightings to eBird and you can see view these sightings by species, range of dates, or location. eBird will store all your sightings for future retrieval. Ornithologists use the avian sightings posted to eBird to monitor species trends, calculate abundances, and track migration. By contributing your sightings you can help scientists develop a clearer picture of bird populations in North America. This is citizen science at its best!

EXPLORING EBIRD DATA

1)   Go to www.eBird.org

2)   Click on the "Explore Data" tab.

3)   Click on "Submission Map". eBird is not just for the U.S., although it is easy to see from the map of submissions that it is used more frequently in the U.S. than in other parts of the world.

4)   Go back to the "Explore Data" page.

5)   Click on "Range and Point Maps". This map allows you to see where a species is sighted. It also allows you to specify a time frame; the default is year-round. Type "Red-shouldered Hawk" into the species entry box. (A number of options will come up – select the first.) It will automatically zoom in to just North America (minus some of Canada and Alaska), showing gradations of purple for frequency of sightings. Now change the date range to "Dec-Feb" and "Current Year" by selecting them in the pull-down menu. Note that you can choose custom time periods. Zoom into Connecticut to see how often they have been seen around our area this winter. Now type "Florida Scrub-Jay" into the species box. Because this species is endemic to Florida, it will automatically zoom the map to just Florida. Type "Barn Owl" into the species box (choose the first one). What sort of distribution do Barn Owls have?

6)   Click on "Explore Data" at the top left of the page.

7)   Click on "Bar Charts". Select "Connecticut" then "Counties in Connecticut". Click "Continue". Select "Tolland" and click "Continue". These bar charts show you when species can be seen in Tolland county, with the fatness of the bars indicating the frequency of sightings. Find "Belted Kingfisher". Is it a migratory species? What about Great Crested Flycatcher? (And how does the Great Crested Flycatcher compare to the Eastern Phoebe?)

SIGNING UP FOR AN EBIRD ACCOUNT AND ENTERING DATA

1) Click on the "Home" tab at the top of the page.

2) Click on "Sign in or Register as a new user" and set up a free account (if you have not already done so).

3) After registering, click on the "Submit Observations" tab at the top of the webpage. There are two ways to enter data into eBird. You can either type your observations in directly over the web or you can download a template Excel file from eBird (under the "Import Data" section click on "Learn how"), fill it in and upload it to your account. Both of these methods are very straightforward and easy to do. However, before you choose either of those options you will need to set up your birding locations (i.e. the HEEP site point count stations). eBird designates two types of birding areas: personal locations (your backyard, grandma's house, etc.) and hotspots (sites that receive a lot of birding traffic like Hammonasset State Park or Mirror Lake). For this exercise, you will set up one (or a few) personal locations.

4) Locate an entry in your field notebook. It may NOT be one of our class days.

5) Enter the location where you were birding by clicking on "Submit Observations" then "Find it on a Map".

6) Find your location on the map provided and click on the map to set a point. (It should show up as a green pointer. There will be other red pointers on the map that represent hotspot locations.) If you click in the incorrect place, you can always move your pointer by clicking on the correct place on the map. You can zoom in and out to find precise locations.

7) Enter a location name in the box provided. Click "Continue".

8) Enter your observation date.

9) Enter your observation type. (It should be traveling or stationary.)

10) Enter your start time, duration, distance (travelled - if you chose traveling), and party size. Click "Continue".

11) For each species you detected, fill in the number of individuals that you saw/heard in the boxes. Put an X if you don't know how many you heard/saw. There is no listing for "Unknown" species, so you won't be able to enter that data. Once you enter a number or X (e.g. "1" in the box next to American Robin), a button will pop up next to the species that says "Add Details". You can use this to add age or sex information if you have it.

12) Once you have entered all of your information, click "Yes" for whether or not you're submitting a complete checklist.

13) Select "Continue" to move to the next page

14) Review your information and data, and then click "Submit" (You can edit/delete your sightings later if you make a mistake.)

15) If you were birding in more locations, go through the directions again, starting with 3).

16) Create a year report of your observations.

17) Click on "My eBird" tab

18) Under "My Observations" click on "Summarize My Observations"

19) Select "Year Report" and "Jan 1 2013", click "Continue"

20) Select your location(s) for which you entered information, and click "Continue"

21) Very important! Select the "Species total" tab

22) After confirming that you are looking at the "Species total" report, select "Printable version"

23) Print the report form from the new window that pops up. Although eBird allows you to download this report to Excel, we will not accept anything but a report printed directly from eBird. No exceptions.

YOUR HEEP ASSIGNMENT REQUIREMENTS

To receive credit for your independent field observations, you will have to post the results of your point counts and your other birding activities at the HEEP sites to your online account. You must turn in a **Year Report** and **Week Reports** (directly from eBird) of your sightings by **Friday, May 10th**!