

# BIRD SURVEY PROTOCOL – TRACY AVIARY - 2016

## BRING WITH YOU:

- ♣ Binoculars
- ♣ Range finder – spare batteries
- ♣ GPS – spare batteries
- ♣ Clipboard with: timer, compass, forms, **pencil & spare pencil**, **GPS guideline**. **NOTE: (forms shall only be filled in pencil)**, bird code list, survey protocol, and directions to the points.

## FIELDS OF THE FORM:

*Point*: The number/code of the point you are surveying

*Date*: mm/dd/yy

*Visit*: The number of the visit- Is it your first time there? Your third?

*Observer Initials*: of the scribe and observer. If you **DO NOT** have middle name use **X** in replacement. E.g. Steve Brahm = SXB.

*No. of people who asked about the project*: tally numbers if people asked you about the project before, during, or after the survey.

*Wind*: **0** = smoke rises vertically, **1** = wind direction shown by smoke (bring your cigars), **2** = wind felt on face and leaves rustle, **3** = leaves and small twigs in constant motion, **4** = wind raises dust and small branches move, **5** = head for cover (**DISCONTINUE after 3**) – Beaufort scale.

*Sky*: **0** = clear, **1** = partly cloudy (1%-50% cloud cover), **2** = cloudy or broken clouds (51-90% cloud cover), **3** = overcast (91%-100% cloud cover), **4** = fog, **5** = drizzle, **6** = hard rain; **7** = snow, **8** = showers (OK if drizzle or fog with 250 m or more visibility; **DISCONTINUE** if 6, 7 or 8).

*Temperature*: Record the temperature (in fahrenheit) of the area when you started the survey.

*Noise*: As there is “urban noise” or water noise, use the scale provided to assess **how much does noise affects your ability to hear birds. Rank noise using other points as reference.** **1** - Gentle noise, probably not missing any bird; **2** - Might be missing some of the higher pitched songs and calls or some distant birds beyond 75 m; **3** - Probably detecting mostly those birds within ~ 50 m might and may be missing the high-pitched songs and calls or **4** - Probably detecting only the very loudest calls and songs within 25 m might be missing calls and songs farther than 25 m (adapted from Huff et al. 2000).

*Type of Noise*: The type of noise will either be “urban” for traffic, highway, etc. or “water” for areas with rushing water.

*Survey start time*: The time that you actually start the survey. Fill it **ONLY** when you are done filling all the fields in the form, have gotten your bearings and distance references. **Not before then.**

*Water present*: Is there surface water around the point (within 50m)? For example, do you see water around the point that resulted from rain or flooding, or a pond, river or creek? If so check Yes.

*Snow present*: Is there snow on the ground at the survey point (within 50m)? Check Yes or No.

*Period*: **one-minute intervals**, and a total of **six (6)** periods.

*Species*: Write the 4-letter code. If unsure about the code, write the full name of the species or clarify to the code you wrote (e.g., SASP = Savannah Sparrow) in the Notes section.

*Cluster size*: Number of individuals seen and/or heard per detection. Birds within 20 m are considered a cluster. Birds detected >20 m = different cluster.

*Cluster Code*: If you notice e.g., a cluster with 7 individuals, of which 4 are BCCH, and 3 YRWA, you will use two separate lines for each species. In the column Code, write the letter A to imply these were all in a cluster. If you run into another cluster of different species, label it B, and continue using the alphabet letters.

*Detection*: How did you first encounter the bird? Was it Calling (C), Singing (S), or was it Visually (V)? Or maybe you heard its wings noise, like a Hummingbird or Dove, or the Drumming of a woodpecker? That would be Other (O). If you ever hear the bird SING or SEE the bird, and that is not how you first detected it, then add a S or V after the code for how you detected, separated by a coma.

*Direction*: Use the compass if needed, to note direction for each bird observation -where you first detected it- (north, south, east, west, northeast, northwest, southeast, or southwest).

*Exact Distance*: Use your range finder and record the exact estimated distance to the bird where you first saw it.

*Flyover*: Mark Yes (Y) only if the bird is flying far overhead and not using the habitat at all. Record distance category and direction of the flyover where you **first detected it. Only in the case** birds are detected flying directly overhead, **distance will be zero (0).**

*Sex/Age*: If you see these details, include in the appropriate column. **N** = nest; **P** = obvious pair; **J** = juveniles; **M** = male; **F** = Female.

## SURVEY GUIDELINES:

- ♣ *Let the birds settle*: when you arrive to the point, give birds 2 to 5 minutes to settle in case you flushed some before arriving to the point.
- ♣ *Start time*: Ideal start of survey is 10-15 minutes before sunrise. **Please start not later than 6:00 am.** Surveys are to be finished by **10:30 am** as the latest.
- ♣ *Procedure*: Start recording the **detections closer to the center of the point**, and work your way out.
- ♣ *Flyovers*: Flyovers = not using the habitat. **Record direction and distance** for flyovers. Flyover is different than **birds that fly from one spot to the other**, but that are using the habitat.
- ♣ *Distance*: Use your range finder as much as possible and give EXACT estimated distance.
- ♣ *Very important*: Make sure all the information is complete before you leave the point (date, noise, weather data, direction for detections, cluster size, **clear writing of bird names/codes**, etc.).
- ♣ **Keep record** of what you hear /see to avoid counting the same individuals twice during the survey. It is OK to count the same bird(s) at another point(s).
- ♣ If you see the same bird from different points, e.g., a raptor, **please make a note saying is the same bird, if you are certain.**
- ♣ If you are unsure about the ID of a bird, **do not spend too much time trying to figure it out**; write UNBI (unknown bird) and some notes. If time allows, **after you finish the survey** and if the bird is still around try to track it and verify. Otherwise, always write UNBI **instead** of writing a **wrong ID.**
- ♣ Record birds seen or heard before or after the actual count in the **Notes** section, especially if these are species you did not detect during the survey at the points.

## AFTER YOU FINISH THE SURVEY:

*Review your data sheets before turning them in*: With the busy work during the survey, there are chances that for example, codes are not legible, and that you needed to compare a call once you get home, etc. **Please review** your survey data sheet the very same day and **before submitting them.**

*TURN IN YOUR DATA*: Please turn in your data within **one week** of conducting the surveys.