eBird

https://ebird.org/

Visited: Fall 2019

Reviewer: David R. Scott, Librarian, University of Lethbridge

eBird is a free, online database of bird sightings around the world. Marking itself as the largest biodiversity-related citizen science project globally, eBird is managed and supported by a team of developers and researchers based at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in Ithaca, New York.

Users of eBird can submit avian sightings in the form of checklists. A checklist comprises information on the date, time, and location of the observation, the distance travelled, the number of observers, and the number of each species observed. Ideally, checklists include all birds the observer was able to identify. They may be submitted through the website or a free eBird app for mobile phones, which helps users keep track of observations while in the field. Any unusual records are reviewed by volunteer moderators in an effort to maintain data quality.

Over 100 million bird sightings are now contributed to the project annually. The majority of these data are freely available online and can be explored through interactive range maps and bar charts representing species' abundance through the year. Photographs and audio recordings uploaded to eBird can be accessed through the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Macaulay Library and filtered by location, date, contributor, and the age and sex of the bird.

Instructors and librarians seeking to introduce their students to citizen science will find eBird to be an excellent tool for this purpose. Even beginners can contribute meaningful data to the project, and free resources like the online eBird Essentials course and the Merlin Bird ID app are helpful in getting started. The rich and ever-growing data are also useful to a wide range of

library patrons, from the ecologist studying the status of naturalized parrots in Florida to the gardener wondering when to put up their hummingbird feeders in spring.

In Short: eBird is a free online resource providing access to a wealth of data on the geographic distribution and seasonal occurrence of birds globally. It also affords a great opportunity to engage in a citizen science project by contributing to this growing body of data.

Highly Recommended.