

Annual volunteer effort for the birds

by UPI

SALT LAKE CITY -- Bird enthusiasts flocked to Utah's Zion National Park to help count beaks for the annual bird census. About 20 volunteers joined the 108th Annual Christmas Bird Count Saturday to participate in the nation's largest bird count, The Salt Lake Tribune reported Sunday. They were given paperwork and maps and then dispatched to various corners of the park to begin counting. They joined the approximately 55,000 birders in North and South America who participated in the event, which was started by the Audubon Society in 1900 in reaction to a traditional holiday hunting competition called the Christmas Side Hunt. Today, the volunteers' data is compiled at the society's offices in Washington. Lucky past volunteers in Utah have been treated with views of more than 90 bird species -- including jays, wild turkeys, eagles and hawks.

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