

# Seabird Surveys at sea

## Background

Seabirds are useful as indicators of marine ecosystems, because they can tell us about what is going on under the ocean's surface without being as difficult to see in their natural habitat as fish or plankton. Studying them, however, often requires many hours of observation over large areas. This project collects observations of birds from expedition staff, assisted by guests, from many different vessels exploring the Southern Ocean and Antarctica, as part of the much larger eBird ([www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)) program, which is run by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology ([www.birds.cornell.edu](http://www.birds.cornell.edu)). Together, these observations can help us understand and conserve seabirds.





## What is required?

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This project involves at-sea surveys of birds seen while underway from the deck of a ship. All that is necessary is a staff member who is reasonably confident in bird identification in the region (they do not need to be an expert, but there should be someone present who has at least some familiarity with the present species).

The process of collecting data includes:

- Noting some initial data about the date, time, location, number of observers, etc.
- Counting (or estimating) the number of each species identified for a period of between 15 to 60 minutes.
- Recording some information at the end of the survey (time, location, etc.)
- Submitting the data (there are several options for doing so)

Participants collect these surveys from deck, when the ship is underway. You can do as many or as few surveys as you can fit into your schedule—every little bit helps!

## How do I (and my guests) get involved?

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If you are interested, please contact:

Dr. Michael Schrimpf

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He will direct you to all the required materials/training and will help you determine which method of data entry is best for your needs.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** It is recommended that you discuss permitting or authorisation needs with the project lead for any citizen science project in advance of the Antarctic season, engaging with your National Competent Authority as necessary. Please remember to add citizen science activities to your Post Visit Report form.

