Point Count Protocol

What are we doing tomorrow?!
Why Point Counts?

- Cost-effective method of estimating the relative abundance of birds
- Least subjective method
- Most reproducible method
A series of points are established in an area.

Observer visits points during optimal times to detect birds of interest.

At each point observer records all birds detected (sight & sound), within specified time and distance.
Detailed Methodology

- Spacing of Points
  - Place far enough apart to avoid counting birds previously recorded.
  - Standards recommend 250 meters.
  - In more open habitats, 500 meters.
More Details

- Marking Points
  - Mark permanently with immovable object (post, metal tag on tree)
  - Locate on detailed map
  - use GPS
More Details

● Location of Points

- For an entire management unit, place points systematically.

- For specific habitats, stratify area by habitat, and assign points systematically.
Timing of Visits

- Sunrise to about 4 hours after sunrise.

- For breeding birds, best time is from territory formation to early incubation. This is June in many areas, probably March-April in the desert southwest.
More Details

- **Length of Count**
  - 5 minutes recommended. Can do longer counts (up to 10 minutes) if travel between point count stations is great. Track counts from 0-3 minutes for comparison to other programs such as BBS.
  - The longer the count period, the more likely to double count individuals.
More Details

● Counting Radius

- Fixed radius recommended. Record birds in 0-25 m, 25-50 m, and >50m. Can vary by habitat, with larger radii in more open habitats.
What to Record:

- Species - use 4-letter codes
- Distance interval or exact distance
- Age/sex
- Treat flyovers separately
Pros & Cons

- **Pros:**
  - Predominant technique used in North America
  - Recommended by PIF
  - More sample points per effort
  - May detect species missed by other methods
Pros & Cons

- Cons:
  - May flush birds as approach point
  - Not as efficient as transects in terms of detections per effort
  - Not useful for secretive, quiet species
  - Gives no information on productivity
  - Does not work equally well in all seasons
Variable Circular Plot (Point Count) Field Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Station</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Compartment</th>
<th>Road</th>
<th>Route #</th>
<th>Point #</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Observer</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**N-S Coordinate:** __________  **E-W Coordinate:** __________  **Zone*:** __________

(N-S=Latitude; E-W=Longitude) *Zone = 0 for lat-long (geographic); else enter a UTM Zone.

**Flyovers:** __________________________________________________________________

**Comments:** ___________________________________________________________________

--- LMJV March 2003 ---
### Variable Circular Plot (Point Count) Summary Sheet

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temp C</th>
<th>Wind</th>
<th>Sky</th>
<th>Habitat Type</th>
<th>Habitat Quality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Species Alpha Code

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0 – 25 m</th>
<th>25 – 50 m</th>
<th>50 – 100 m</th>
<th>&gt;100 m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- Species 1
- Species 2
- Species 3
- Species 4
- Species 5
- Species 6
- Species 7
- Species 8
- Species 9
- Species 10
- Species 11
- Species 12
- Species 13
- Species 14
- Species 15
- Species 16
- Species 17
- Species 18
- Species 19
- Species 20

#### Flyovers:

- Flyover 1
- Flyover 2
- Flyover 3
- Flyover 4
- Flyover 5
- Flyover 6
- Flyover 7
- Flyover 8
- Flyover 9
- Flyover 10
- Flyover 11
- Flyover 12
- Flyover 13
- Flyover 14
- Flyover 15
- Flyover 16
- Flyover 17
- Flyover 18
- Flyover 19
- Flyover 20

#### Data Compiler: ____________________________

#### Comments: ____________________________________________