

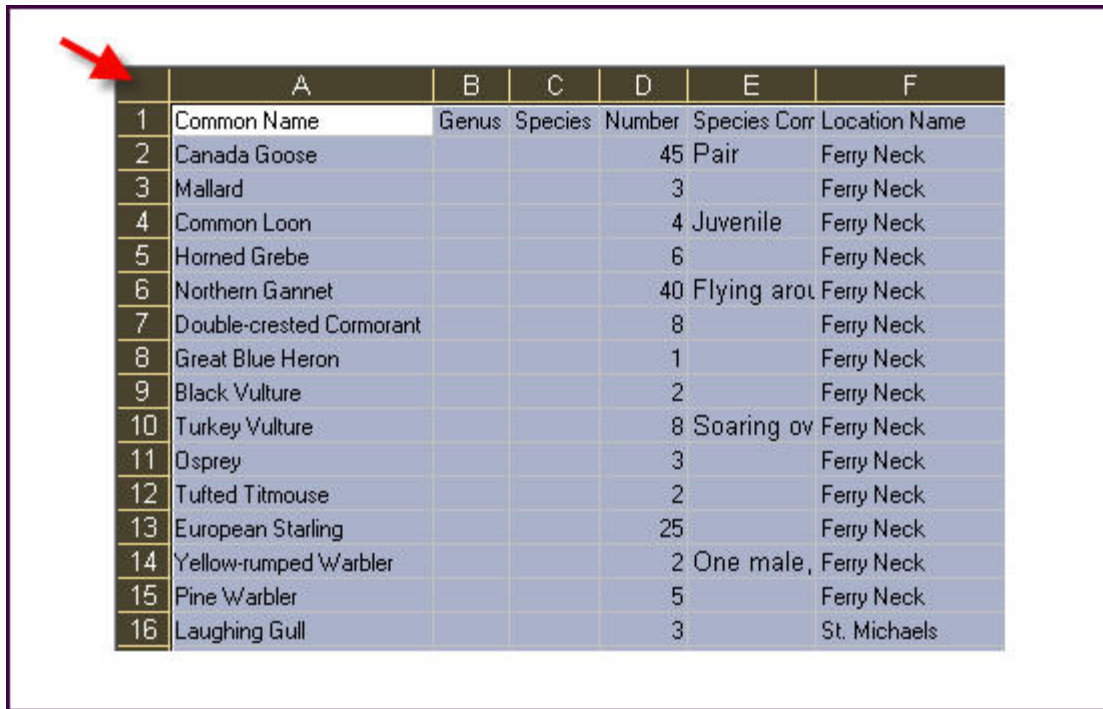
Preparing your data

After choosing a format in which to work by reviewing the two options below (see Formatting Your File for Import), you'll need to cleanse your data. When using the "eBird Record Format" for data import, there are some easy steps that you can take to clean up your data prior to importing by using Microsoft Excel. If using the "eBird Checklist Format" skip steps 2, 3 and 9 below, as they will damage the integrity of your file.

In general, you must first make sure that your data are as clean as possible. Once you pull your data into Excel, you can easily sort and modify data structure. If your data are "messy," meaning they have lots of errors and unknown values, your file will not be successfully imported. You'll then have to go back to square one and clean it up, so you may as well do it right the first time! Once you have gone through your data and given it an initial cleaning, you should proceed to the file formatting process. Remember to save your changes frequently by clicking "Save," and you should also frequently use the "Save As" feature to back up your data! Here are some basic steps for ensuring that your data are clean and ready for import using Excel:

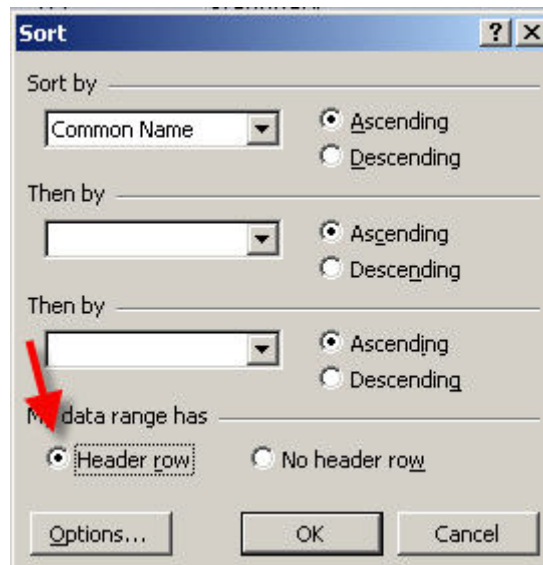
Data cleansing procedures

Step 1.—Open Microsoft Excel and then open the file containing the data you wish to import. ***Note—before sorting in excel make sure you understand how to select the entire spreadsheet by clicking on the cell in the upper left corner of the spreadsheet turning all cells from white to gray. This will maintain the integrity of your data during the sort and prevent single columns from being sorted apart from their corresponding data. This is *CRITICAL.*** See example below:



	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Common Name	Genus	Species	Number	Species Corr	Location Name
2	Canada Goose			45	Pair	Ferry Neck
3	Mallard			3		Ferry Neck
4	Common Loon			4	Juvenile	Ferry Neck
5	Horned Grebe			6		Ferry Neck
6	Northern Gannet			40	Flying aro	Ferry Neck
7	Double-crested Cormorant			8		Ferry Neck
8	Great Blue Heron			1		Ferry Neck
9	Black Vulture			2		Ferry Neck
10	Turkey Vulture			8	Soaring ov	Ferry Neck
11	Osprey			3		Ferry Neck
12	Tufted Titmouse			2		Ferry Neck
13	European Starling			25		Ferry Neck
14	Yellow-rumped Warbler			2	One male,	Ferry Neck
15	Pine Warbler			5		Ferry Neck
16	Laughing Gull			3		St. Michaels

Step 2.—Species. First sort the data by species. In excel select the entire spreadsheet by clicking on the uppermost left blank cell (see above). Then choose “Data” from the menu options on the top of the page. Choose “Sort” and then in the resulting box click the “Header Row” option (see example below), and then sort by “Common Name.”



Species common names follow the American Ornithologist’s Union 7th Edition Checklist found here: (<http://www.aou.org/checklist/index.php3>) It is important that your common names comply with this standard. For example, if you have simply “Cardinal” in your spreadsheet, eBird will not be able to match

that with a species in our database. Instead you must change these to “Northern Cardinal” to ensure data compatibility. Things like “Peep sp.” should also generally be changed to the genus name (e.g., *Calidris* sp.). In general, make sure that your data look scientific, and that all colloquialisms are taken out (e.g., no Red-tail, yes Red-tailed Hawk).

Step 3.—Numbers. Using the process described above next sort your data by number, meaning the number of individuals in each record. eBird likes to have numbers for each species in each checklist, but it will also take “X” to indicate presence. It does not like some birding constructs like ranges (e.g., 300-350) or approximations (e.g., 500+). If you find these, simply take the most conservative whole number and use that for count. Any conservative count is better than an “X” for presence.

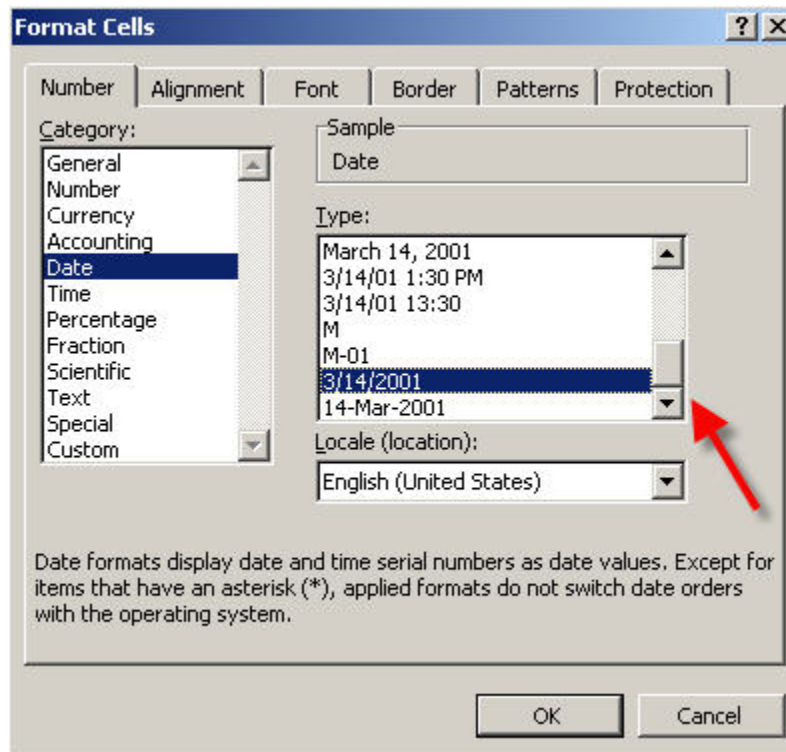
Step 4.—Comments. If you have comments written as text in some cells of your database you’ll need to search all of those for quotations (”) and replace them with blank spaces. The eBird import cannot handle quotations inside character strings such as comments fields. Here’s how to get rid of these. Click the uppermost cell in the header row of the column containing your comments. The entire column should turn gray. This means only that column is activated. Then press “Control+F” it will bring up a box that says “Find and Replace.” Click “Replace.” You can then enter a single quote (”) into the find window and leave the replace window blank. Then click “Replace all.”

Step 5.—Location Name. All of your observations must be associated with a location. Location names cannot contain quotation marks (”) so these must be removed. Locations can be private locations such as “My Backyard” to public birding locations like “Higbee Beach—Cape May Point.” When your data are imported eBird will ask you something like, “We don’t recognize the location ‘My Backyard’, please tell us where it is.” Then you can use a set of tools to either map the location, match it to an existing eBird private location or hotspot, or provide a latitude and longitude. If you know you have a birding “Hotspot” in your location names, but are unsure of the exact location name to match it with in eBird, you can find out by going to the eBird page called “View and Explore Data” and then choosing “I want to find out about birds at a location” and then choose “Birding hotspots in this state.” Choose your state and then you’ll see an alphabetical list of the hotspots available in eBird for that state. You can expedite data entry to these hotspots by exactly matching the hotspot names in your list with the desired eBird existing location.

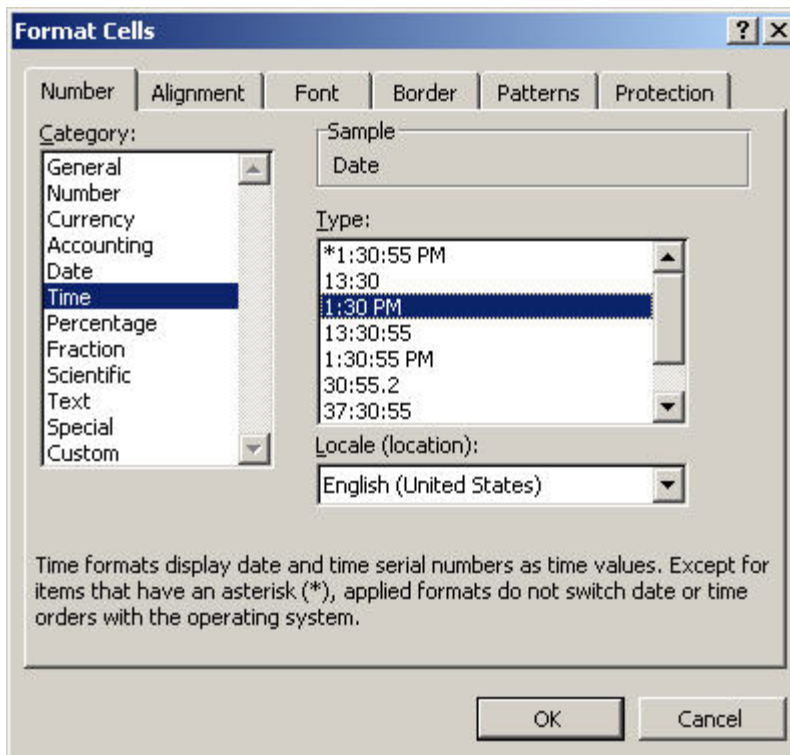
Step 6.—Latitude/Longitude. When using Latitude/Longitude to reference your birding locations (not required), you must first convert these to decimal degrees. A handy web site for doing these conversions is here: <http://www.fcc.gov/mb/audio/bickel/DDDMSS-decimal.html>. Next make sure that you have the minus symbol (-) in front of all your values for longitude in

North America (e.g., -121.345671), and all your values for latitude south of the equator.

Step 7.—Date. It is important to check to see that each record has a date, and that the date is in the appropriate format (e.g., 3/7/2007). In order to ensure that your observation dates are in the appropriate format you must format these cells as “Date.” To do this highlight the date column and then click “Format” from the menu options at the top of the page and then click “Cells.” In the resulting box choose the “Number” tab and then choose “Date” as the category, and then in “Type” select the option for “3/14/2001” as the example format (see below).

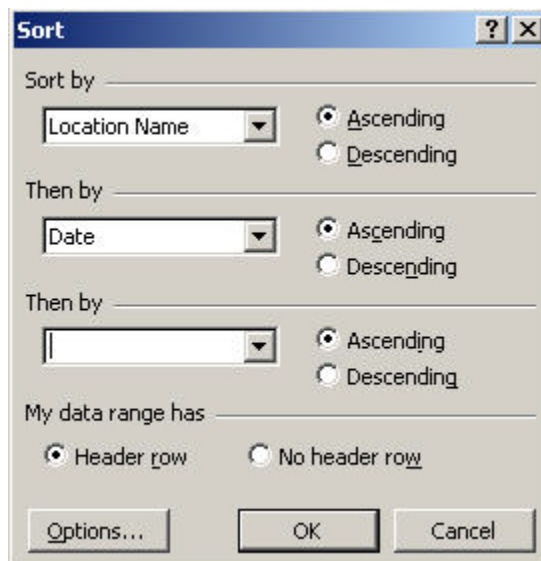


Step 8.—Start Time. If you have recorded the time of your observations, you can express that as either regular time or military time (e.g., 5:00 PM or 17:00). In order to ensure that your observation times are in the appropriate format you must format these cells as “Time.” To do this highlight the date column and then click “Format” from the menu options at the top of the page and then click “Cells.” In the resulting box choose the “Number” tab and then choose “Time” as the category, and then in “Type” select the option for regular or military time as the example format (see below for regular time).



Step 9.—State and Country Codes. If you have state and country listed in your data, make sure that they adhere to the standardized abbreviations found in Appendix B (e.g., for California it would be CA; and for United States it would be US).

Step 10.—Final Sort. As a final step it's important to sort your data by location and date, which facilitates the import process at eBird. To do this follow the steps outlined above to perform a sort, and then choose "Sort by" "Location" in the first drop down field, and "Date" in the second (see example below).



Step 11.—Back-up. It's always important to back-up your data. Once you have it cleaned up, choose "File" and then "Save As" to back-up your data. Rename the file something like "eBird_data_backup_1" and choose ".xls" as the file extension. These backed up data should be kept in a folder somewhere on your hard drive.