

# Advanced Atlasing: Revisiting Confusing Aspects of WBBA II Protocols



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# Top 7 issues that caused confusion

1. Atlas eBird vs. Regular eBird
2. Mobile Checklists
3. Complete Checklists
4. How often to enter codes
5. Block lines and hotspots
6. Spatial precision
7. Night checklists





# 1. There are multiple eBird portals

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II. The header includes the title "Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II" and a navigation menu with "Home", "About", "Submit Observations", "Explore Data", "My eBird", and "Help". The main content area features a "Welcome to Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II" message, a "News and Features" section with a link to "Come Work for the Atlas! Seasonal Technician Positions Available", and a "Major Partners" section listing the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources, and WBCI. There are also images of a person birding and a bird in flight.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Wisconsin eBird portal. The header includes the title "Wisconsin eBird" and a navigation menu with "Home", "About", "Submit Observations", "Explore Data", "My eBird", and "Help". The main content area features a "Welcome to eBird" message, a "News and Features" section with a link to "Spring has sprung in Wisconsin!", and a "Wisconsin eBird Portal Sponsors" section listing the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources, and Western Great Lakes Bird & Bat Observatory. There are also images of a bird's face and a bird in flight.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the eBird portal. The header includes the title "eBird" and a navigation menu with "Home", "About", "Submit Observations", "Explore Data", "My eBird", and "Help". The main content area features a "Welcome to eBird" message, a "News and Features" section with a link to "Ed Corey, February eBirder of the Month", and a "Help Support eBird" section with a "Donate Now" button. There are also images of a bird in flight and a person birding.

Atlas eBird  
ebird.org/atlaswi

Wisconsin eBird  
ebird.org/wi

eBird  
ebird.org

Minimal difference

# When to use Atlas eBird portal

Did you have a breeding code on your checklist?

YES

Entire checklist goes into Atlas eBird portal

NO

Entire checklist goes into traditional Wisconsin eBird portal



[www.ebird.org/atlaswi](http://www.ebird.org/atlaswi)



[www.ebird.org/wi](http://www.ebird.org/wi)

# When to use Atlas eBird portal

- In practical terms, this means that you will be using the atlas portal exclusively in June and July
- You will be using regular portal in winter and offseason
- During transition months (primarily March-May, August-September) may have to pay more attention to which portal you're on.

# Why separate portals?

If you used the atlas portal with no breeding codes

-Non-atlasing hours tallied as atlasing

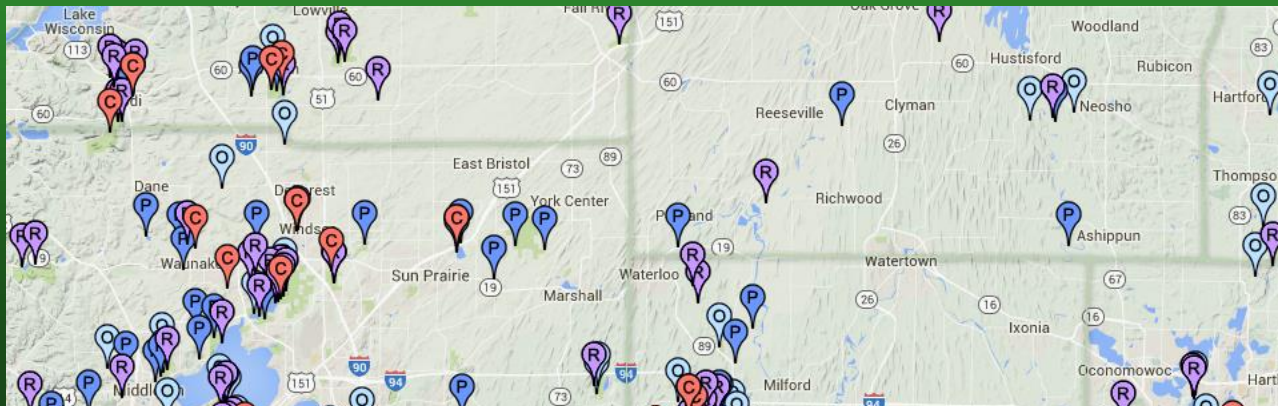
WBBA II Effort Hours  
(Diurnal/Nocturnal):

**45.15 / 2.00**

If you put breeding codes into the regular eBird portal

-We won't know if you stayed in block lines

-Your observations will not appear in atlas results!



# How do I check the portal on a list?



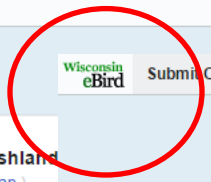
## Checklist S28481835

**Location** Hot Pond (Xcel Energy), Ashland  
Block: Ashland West NE ( Map )

**Date and Effort** Tue Mar 22, 2016 8:15 AM  
Protocol: Stationary  
Party Size: 1  
Duration: 10 minute(s)  
Observers: Nick Anich  
Comments: N/A

**Species** 11 species total

- 5 Canada Goose
- 4 Ring-billed Gull
- 3 Herring Gull
- 20 Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)  
Breeding Code H Possil
- 2 Mourning Dove
- 1 Peregrine Falcon  
Breeding Code H Possil



## Checklist S28445236

**Location** Long Bridge/Head of the bay, Ashland, Bayfield County, Wisconsin

**Date and Effort** Sun Mar 20, 2016 10:00 AM  
Protocol: Traveling  
Party Size: 2  
Duration: 45 minute(s)  
Distance: 0.5 mile(s)  
Observers: Nick Anich  
Comments: N/A

**Species** 10 species (+2 other taxa) total

- 6 Canada Goose
- 4 Trumpeter Swan
- 10 Mallard
- 25 Common Goldeneye
- 15 Common Merganser
- 20 duck sp.
- 2 Sandhill Crane  
FOY



# Can I fix it if the checklist is in the wrong portal? Yes!

Lower right of checklist

## Change Portal

If you click "Change Portal", this checklist will be assigned to the portal you select below. This will allow you to switch to a portal-specific protocol if desired.

Change portal to: Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas

**Change Portal**

- eBird Chile
- eBird Pacific Northwest
- eBird Peru
- eBird Portugal
- eBird Québec
- Eremaea eBird
- ISS eBird
- Klamath-Siskiyou eBird
- LWBA
- Maine eBird
- Mass Audubon eBird
- New Hampshire eBird
- New Jersey eBird
- New Zealand eBird
- PR eBird
- Texas eBird
- Vermont eBird
- Virginia eBird
- Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas**
- Young Birders Network

submitting a complete check... identify? Edit Answer

Edit Species List Review List

Same location  
Hot Pond (Xcel Energy), Ashland, Ashland County, Wisconsin, US


Same area and date  
Another location near Hot Pond (Xcel Energy), Ashland, Ashland County, Wisconsin, US on Tue Mar 22, 2016

Same area  
Another location near Hot Pond (Xcel Energy), Ashland, Ashland County, Wisconsin, US

Same date  
Tue Mar 22, 2016

Different location and date

Hide from eBird Output ?

 Change Portal

But if you change a checklist over, make sure all those observations were in the correct block!

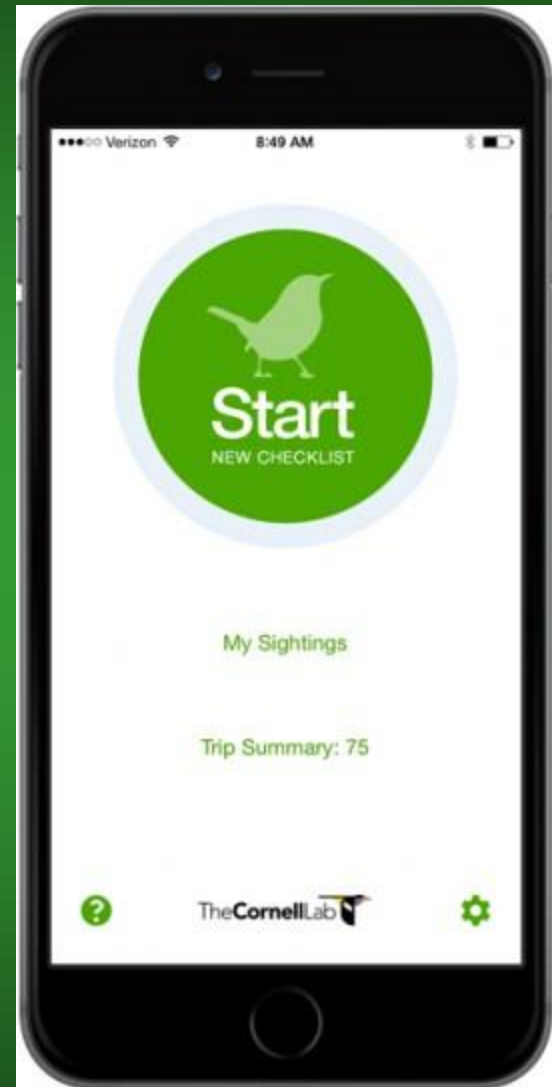


## 2. Can I enter mobile checklists?

Mobile atlasing is coming soon  
(*maybe* yet this year?)

For now, there is a  
workaround.

Enter your checklist through  
eBird Mobile. Use text  
comments box to take notes on  
codes.



# Can I enter mobile checklists?

When you get home

**NO NEED TO RE-ENTER THE CHECKLIST**

Simply get on computer and:

1. Double-check the location with regards to block lines (can use “Submit Observations”, “Find it on a Map” to see where the location falls)
2. Switch the portal
3. Enter codes using drop-down menu

# 3. Entering “complete” checklists

What is a complete checklist?

Are you submitting a **complete checklist** of the birds you were able to identify?

Yes  No  ?

# Entering “complete” checklists

Why do we do this?

- Less “throwing away” data
- Better inference about species that were present and detectable
- More powerful analysis
- You were there anyway!





# Entering “complete” checklists

Complete checklists not available for Incidental observation type.

\* Observation Type:

- Traveling - Property Specific You traveled a specific distance within a block AND within a single property boundary around a state natural area, driving a refuge loop, biking roads entirely through private property.
- Traveling - General You traveled a specific distance within a block but not within a single property boundary walking a trail, driving a road, birding by bike.
- Stationary You stayed at a fixed location — watching from a window, hawkwatching, seawatching.
- Incidental Birding was not your [primary purpose](#) — noting a bird while driving or gardening.
- Other

We recommend :

- Traveling
- Traveling - Property Specific
- Stationary

protocols when you were actually birding.



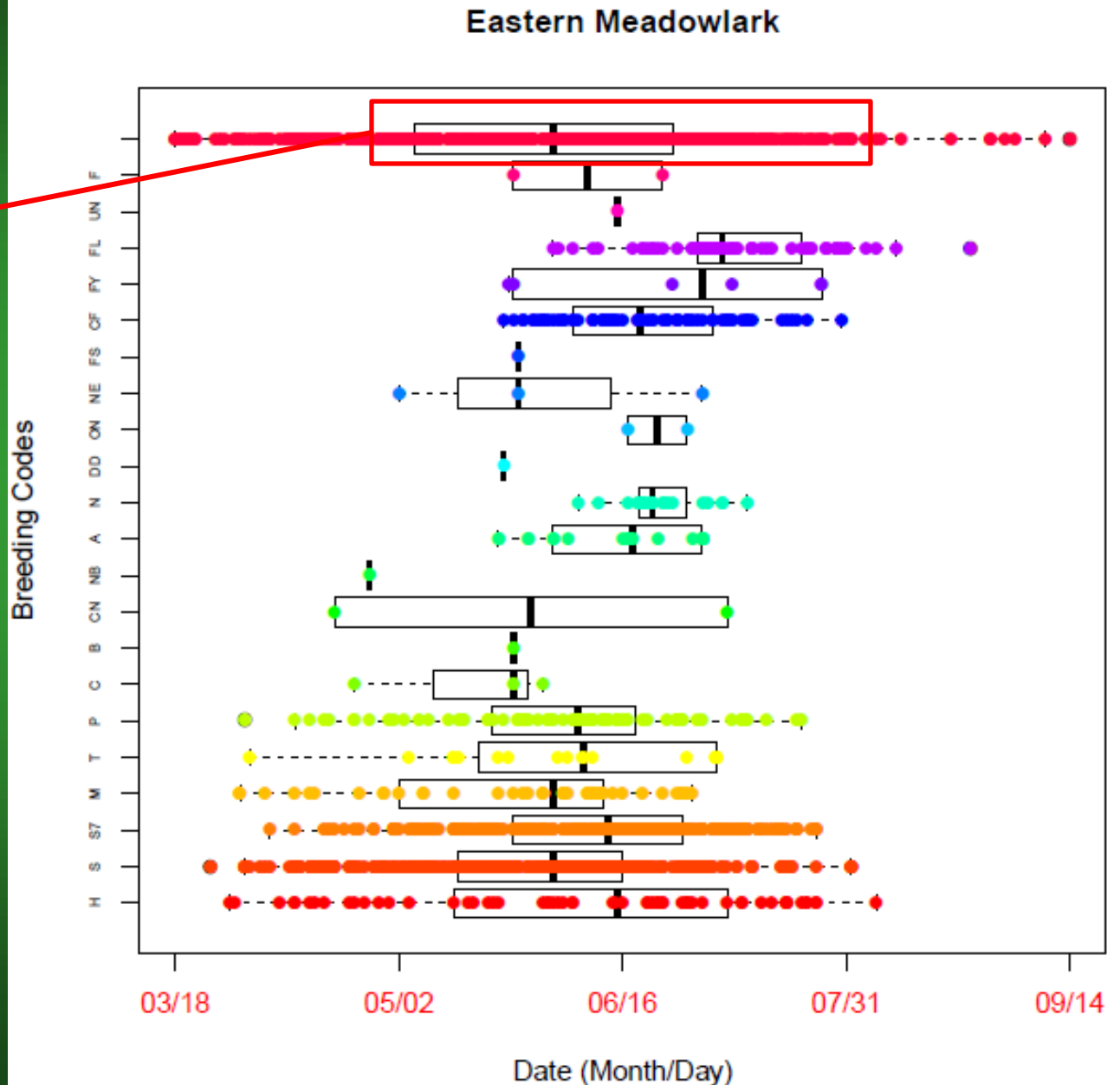
## 4. Should I enter a code for a species already confirmed in a block?

- Enter codes as often as you can
- We recommend entering codes every time you observe them
- Although we realize there is a balance with how much work it is at areas you bird very often.
- Hard for us to determine status of birds with no codes or comments – repeat sighting or forgot code?
- Personally, it's less work for me to enter it than it is to look up the status of that bird in the block!

# How often to enter codes?

What are these records?

Could they have informed the atlas?



# How often to enter codes?

- Will repeat entry of birds result in “double counting” inflating their apparent numbers?
- Are changes in how we report checklists making it difficult to compare to WBBA I?

No, this will be taken into account

No, things will be summarized the same way

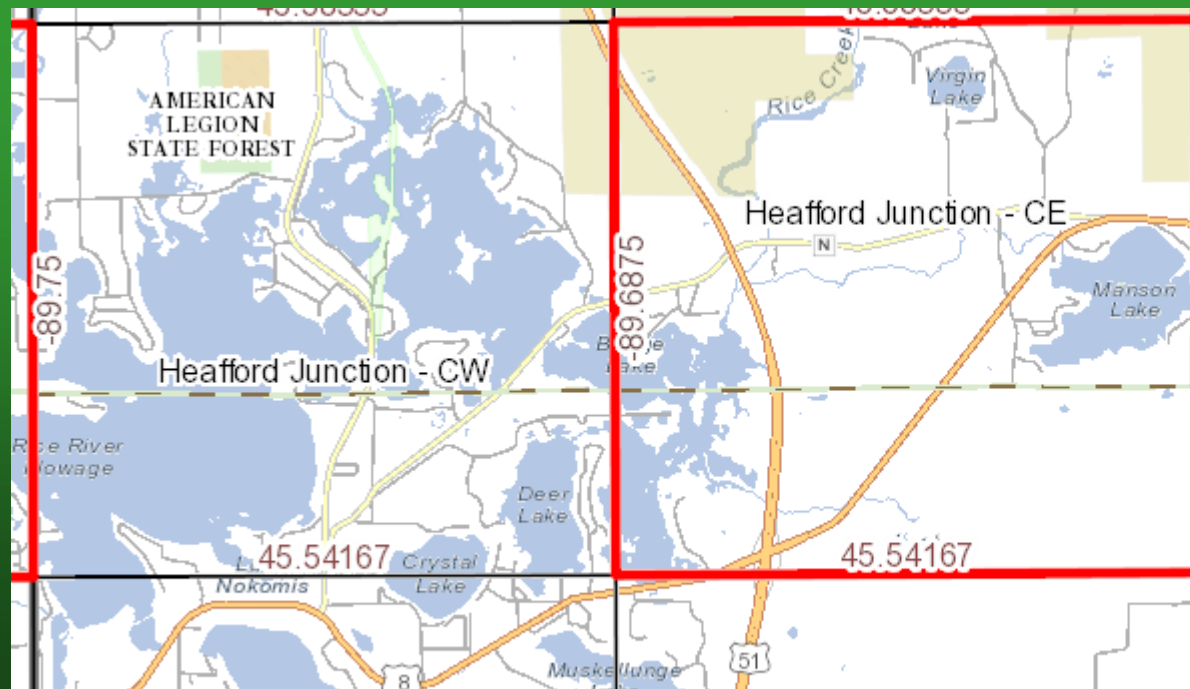


## 5. Block line boundaries and hotspots/existing eBird locations

- A cardinal rule of atlasing is that species should be reported in the block where the breeding behavior was observed
- Beware eBird Hotspots (and your existing personal locations), which often do not jive with Atlas block lines
- It always helps to look at block lines before you go birding!

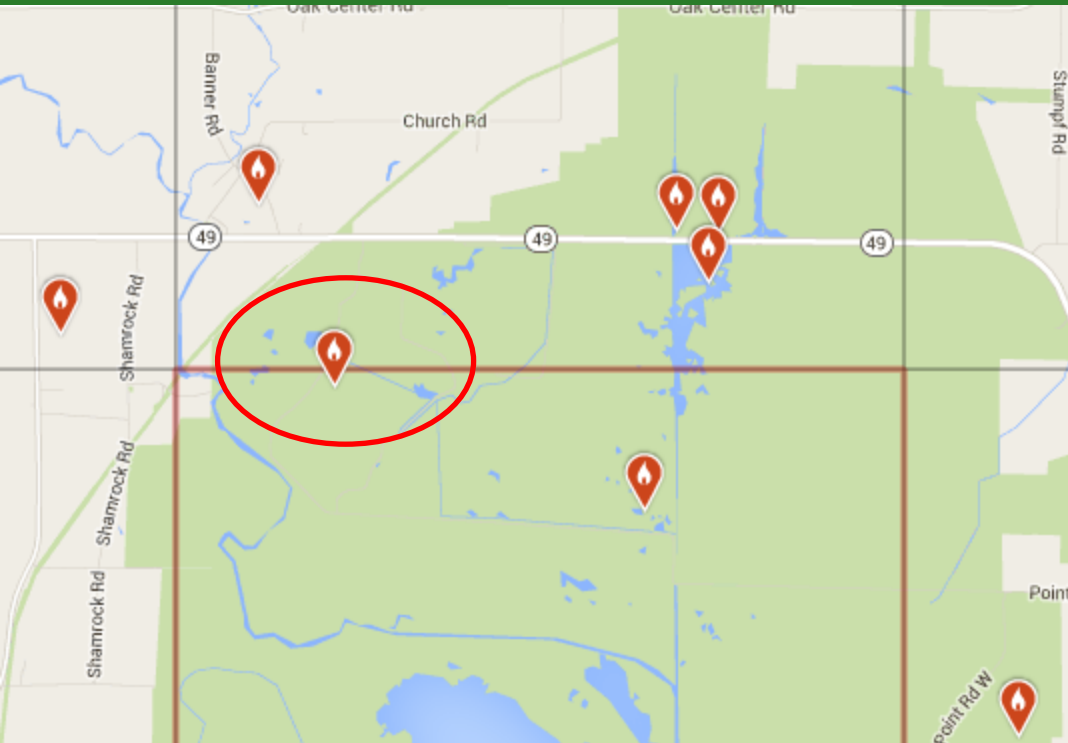
# Multiple ways to find where block lines are

- On Atlas eBird, go to “Submit Observations”, “Find it on a Map”
- Atlas Interactive Map – mobile or printable
- Atlas Static Maps



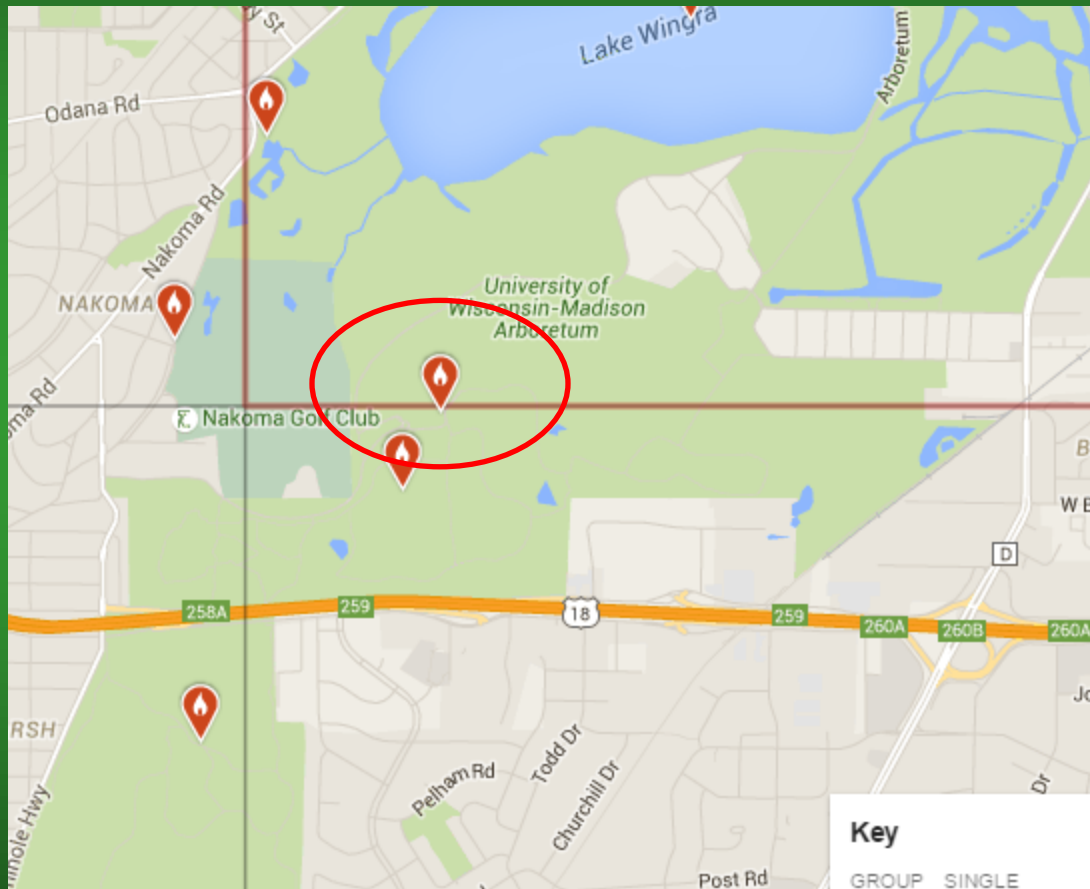
# Block lines

- Horicon Marsh Auto Tour



# Block lines

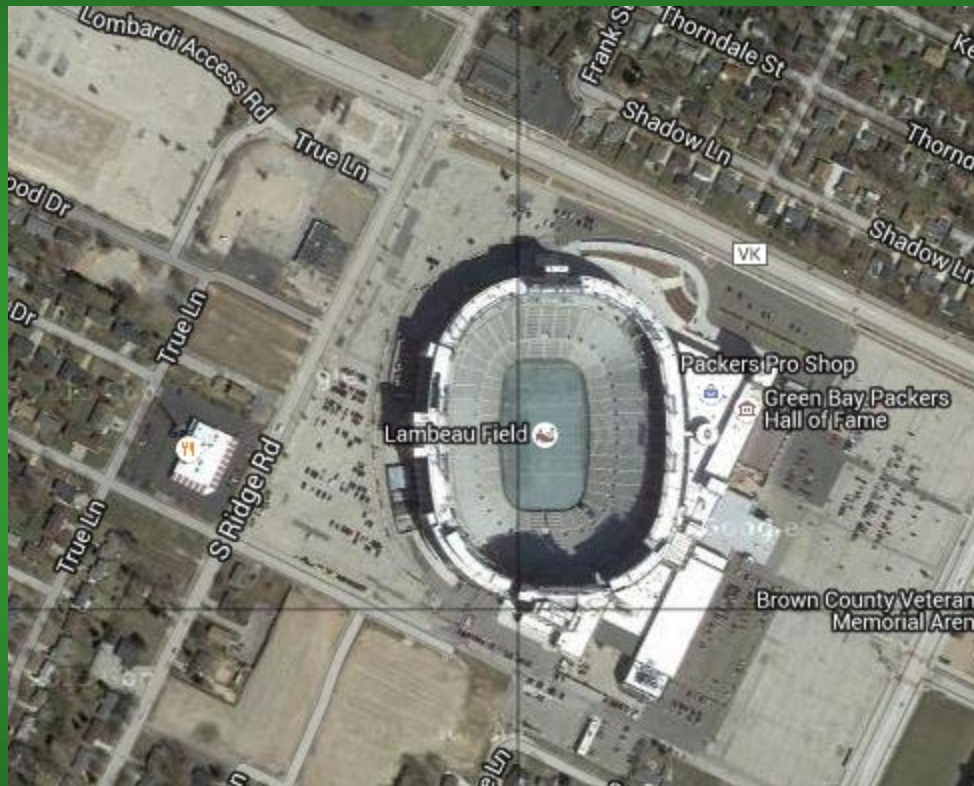
- UW-Madison Arboretum





# Block lines

- Even Lambeau Field!



# Block lines

What to do?

1. Awareness of issue

2. Use this, not this

unless you are  
absolutely sure of block  
line situation

Submit Observations Explore Data My eBird Help

1 2 3 **Where did you bird?**

Identify the location where you made your observation

~~Choose from Your Locations~~

~~\*\*Ellis~~

~~[Edit "My Locations" list](#)~~

**Find it on a Map (recommended method)**

🔍 Enter a block, a county, or 'Wisconsin'

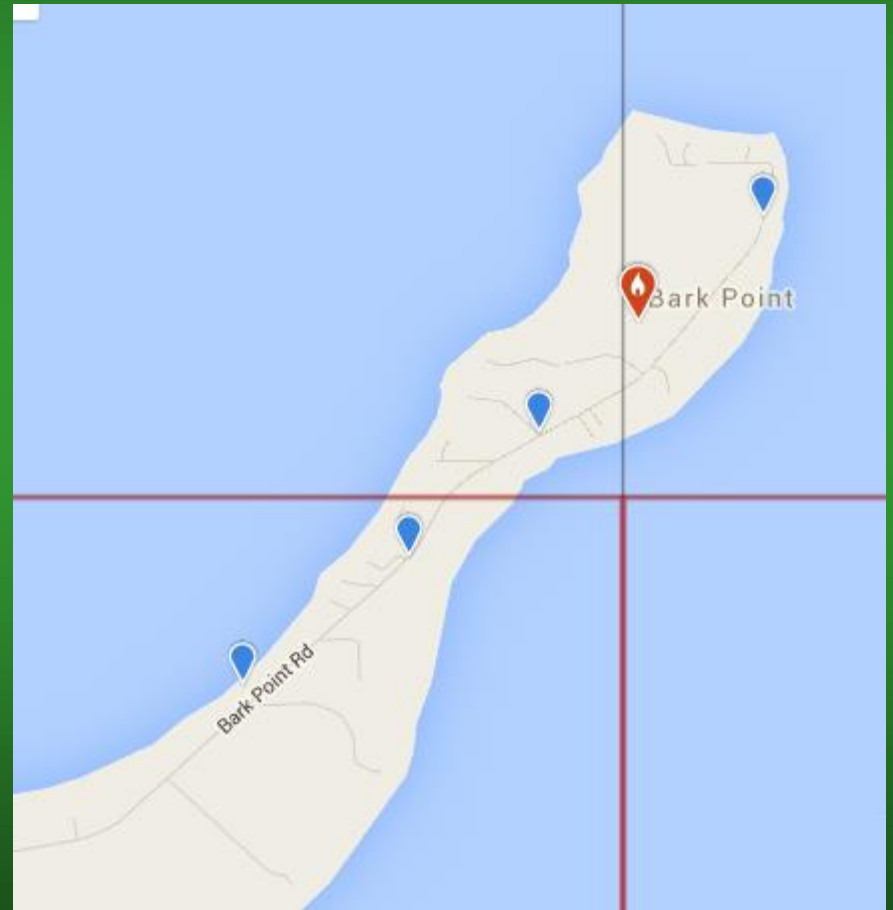
Select an entire block as your location (**strongly discouraged**)

🔍 Enter a block name...

Please consider using more precise locations when reporting to eBird so that

# Block lines

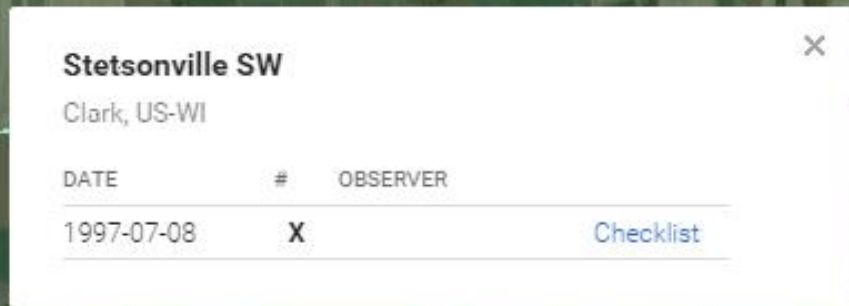
- The “find it on a map” option allows you to look at how hotspots and existing personal locations on your drop-down list relate to block lines.



# 6. What is this whole putting-multiple-locations-in-1-block thing?

- In WBBA I, everything was plotted at block level.

Here's a Yellow-headed Blackbird record from WBBA I.



A satellite map of Stetsonville, Wisconsin, with a blue location pin. A white popup window is overlaid on the map, displaying the following information:

**Stetsonville SW** [Close]

Clark, US-WI

DATE	#	OBSERVER
1997-07-08	X	

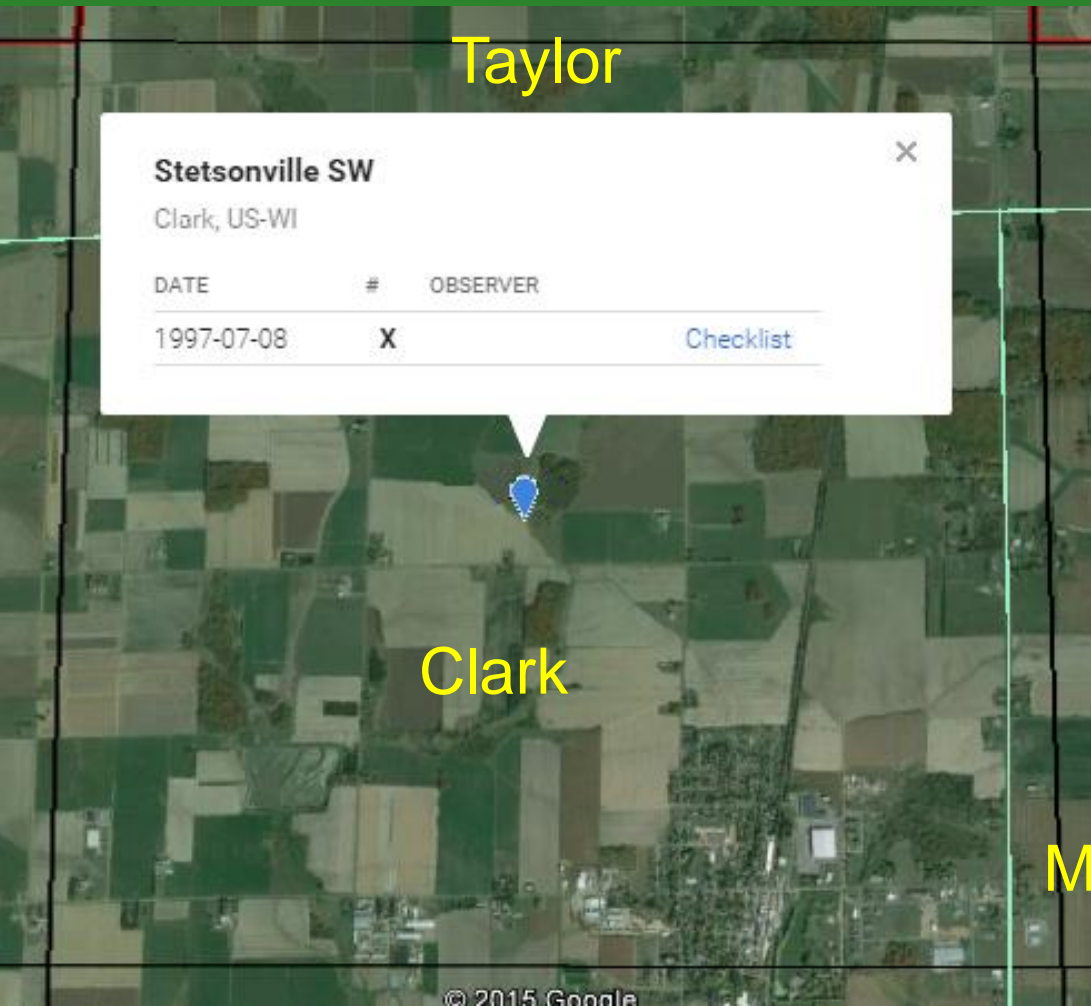
[Checklist](#)





# 6. What is this whole putting-multiple-locations-in-1-block thing?

- In WBBA I, everything was plotted at block level.



Here's a Yellow-headed Blackbird record from WBBA I.

Where was it?

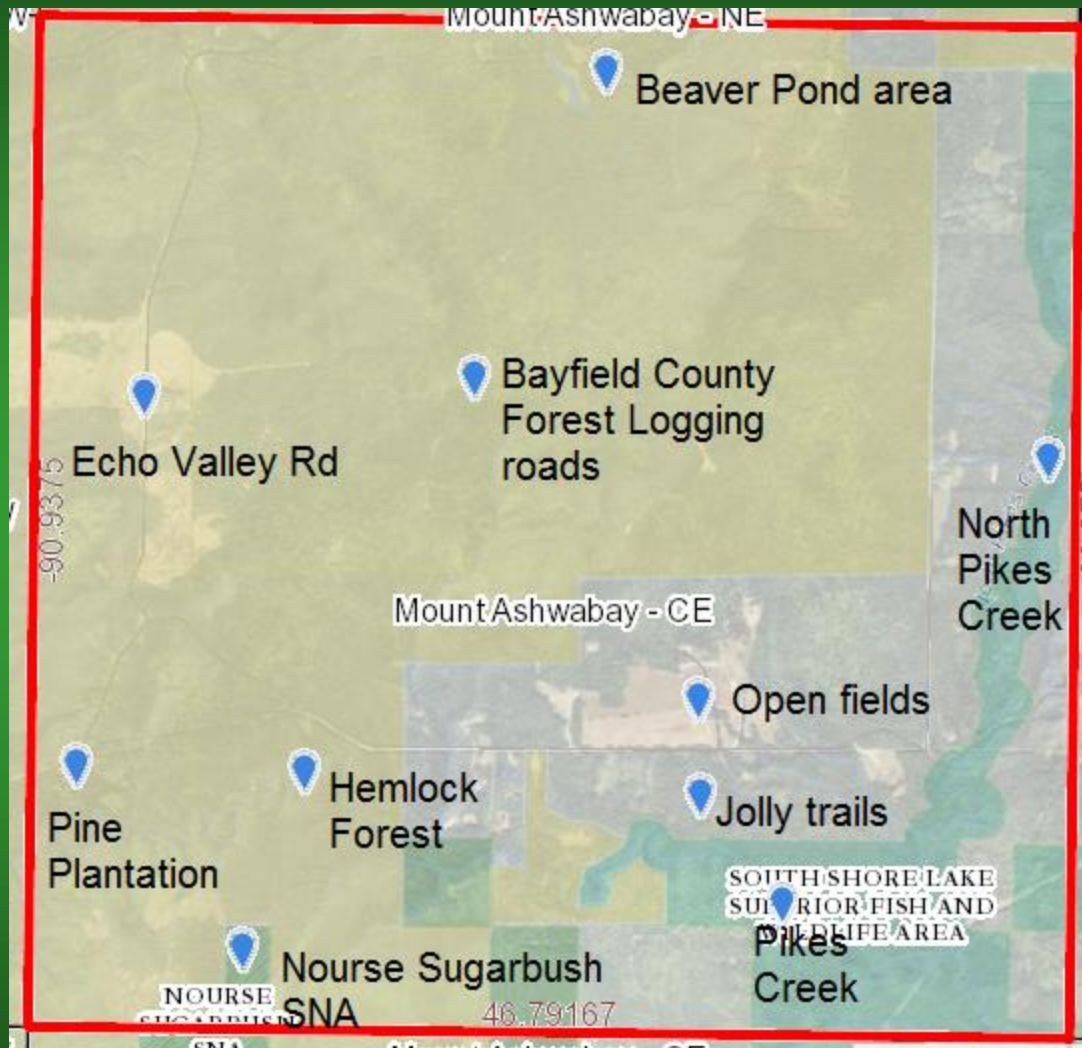
What COUNTY was it even in?

# Location Precision

- It's the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we can do better
- Better information for conservation
- Better information for scientists
- In general, whenever you can make a location that's closer to the bird location, it's more useful
- But there is a tradeoff – plotting every bird to exact location is not feasible
- Find a happy medium, split blocks up in a way that makes sense to you

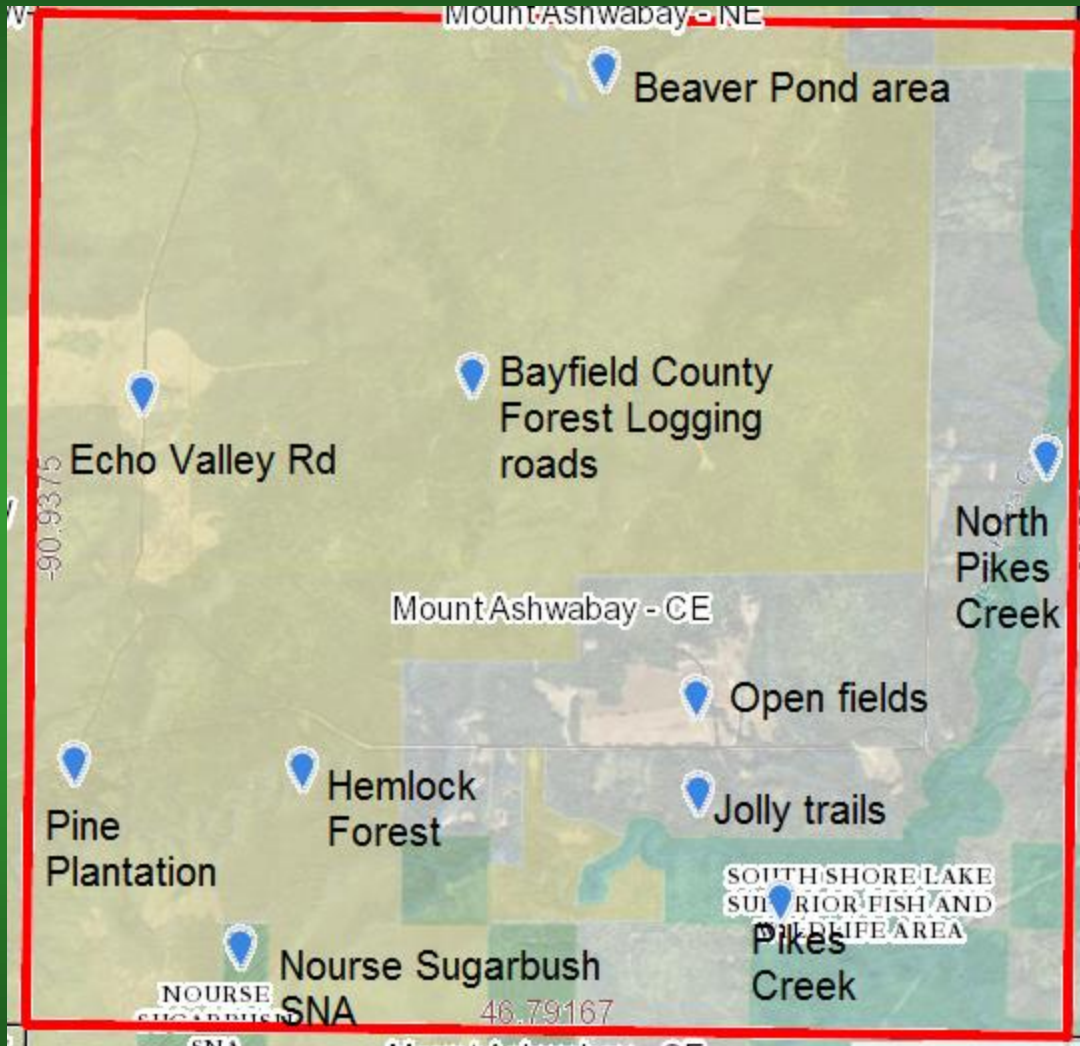


# Location Precision



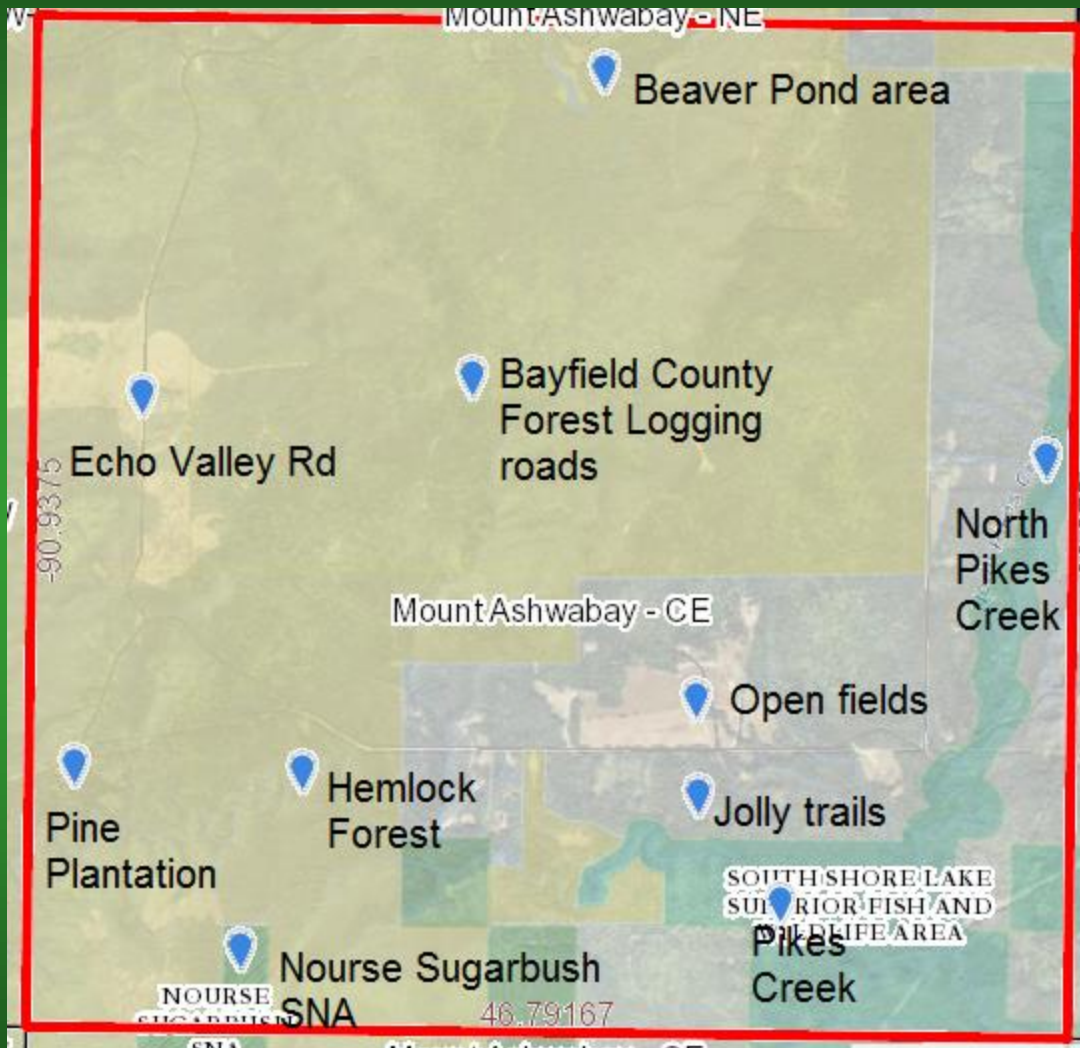
- Specific locations often represent habitats
- Or property boundaries (use Traveling – Property Specific protocol)

# Location Precision



- Pushpins represent a center point of a region that you define
- How exactly you split up checklists is up to you
- Any specific point is more useful than center point

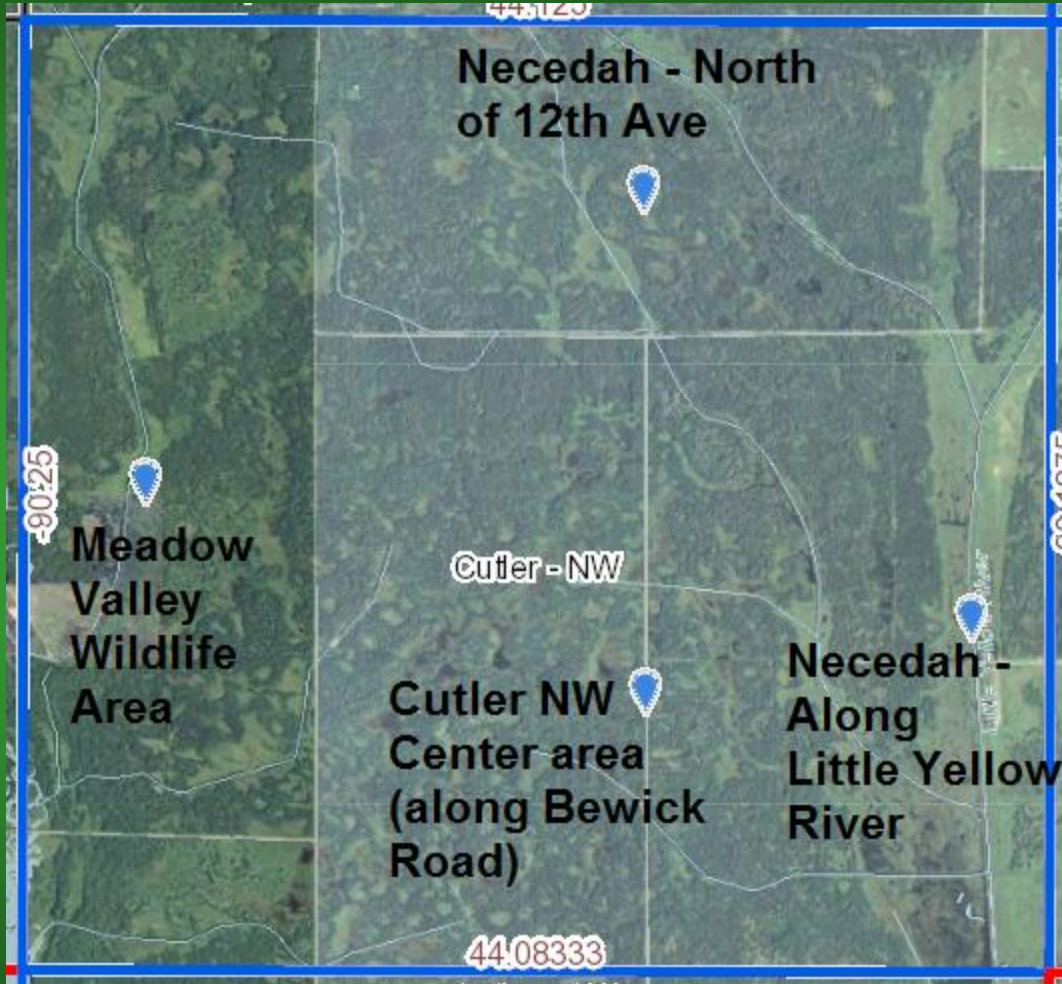
# Location Precision



- Breaking up locations might seem tedious at first
- But becomes helpful during repeat visits to block



# Location Precision



- Some blocks are quite uniform in properties and habitats
- Some blocks may not need as many unique locations
- Keep checklist distances under 5 miles (blocks are 3 x 3 miles)

# 7. Coding night hours

- To be complete, a block must have night survey
- Atlas eBird tracks nocturnal hours
- How does it do this?
  - The cutoff for when a checklist is considered nocturnal is 40 minutes before sunrise and 20 minutes after sunset
  - It uses the start time of the checklist to determine if the checklist is nocturnal or not
  - Watch for the nocturnal icon on night checklists

WBBA II Effort Hours  
(Diurnal/Nocturnal):

**45.15 / 2.00**

Mon Aug 10, 2015 8:52 PM  Nocturnal

# Coding night hours

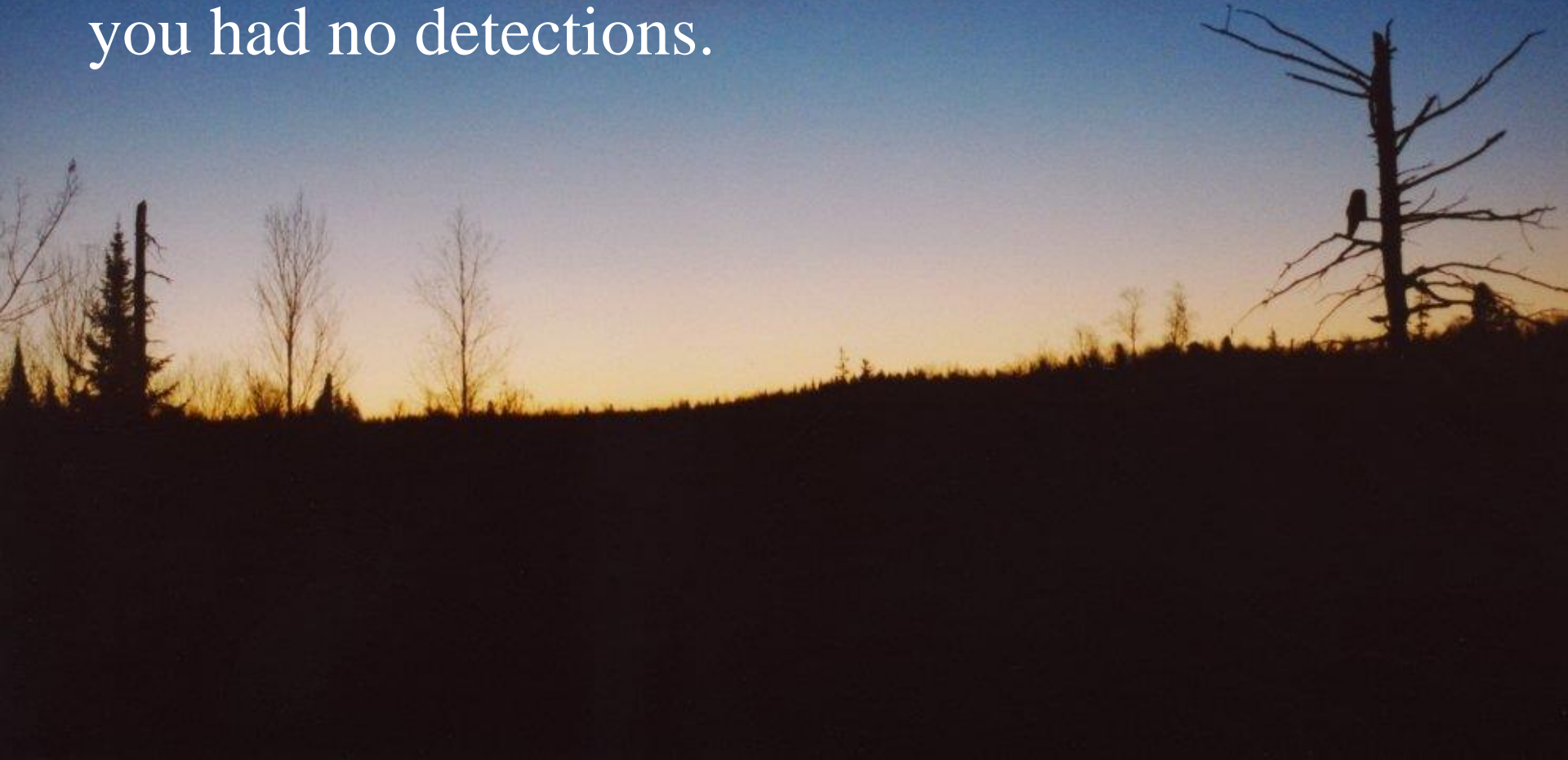
- Submit a separate checklist for night effort, carefully noting the start time

12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
AM	AM	AM	AM	AM	AM	AM	AM	AM	AM	AM	AM	AM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM
<b>WRONG</b>												<b>WRONG</b>											
3 am to 1 pm												6 pm to midnight											
This whole checklist would show up as night hours												This would show up as day hours											
<b>RIGHT</b>												<b>RIGHT</b>											
3 - 4:40			4:41 am to 1 pm									6 pm to 9 pm			9:01pm - 12								
Split into 2 checklists separated at 40 minutes before sunrise												Split into 2 checklists separated at 20 minutes after sunset											

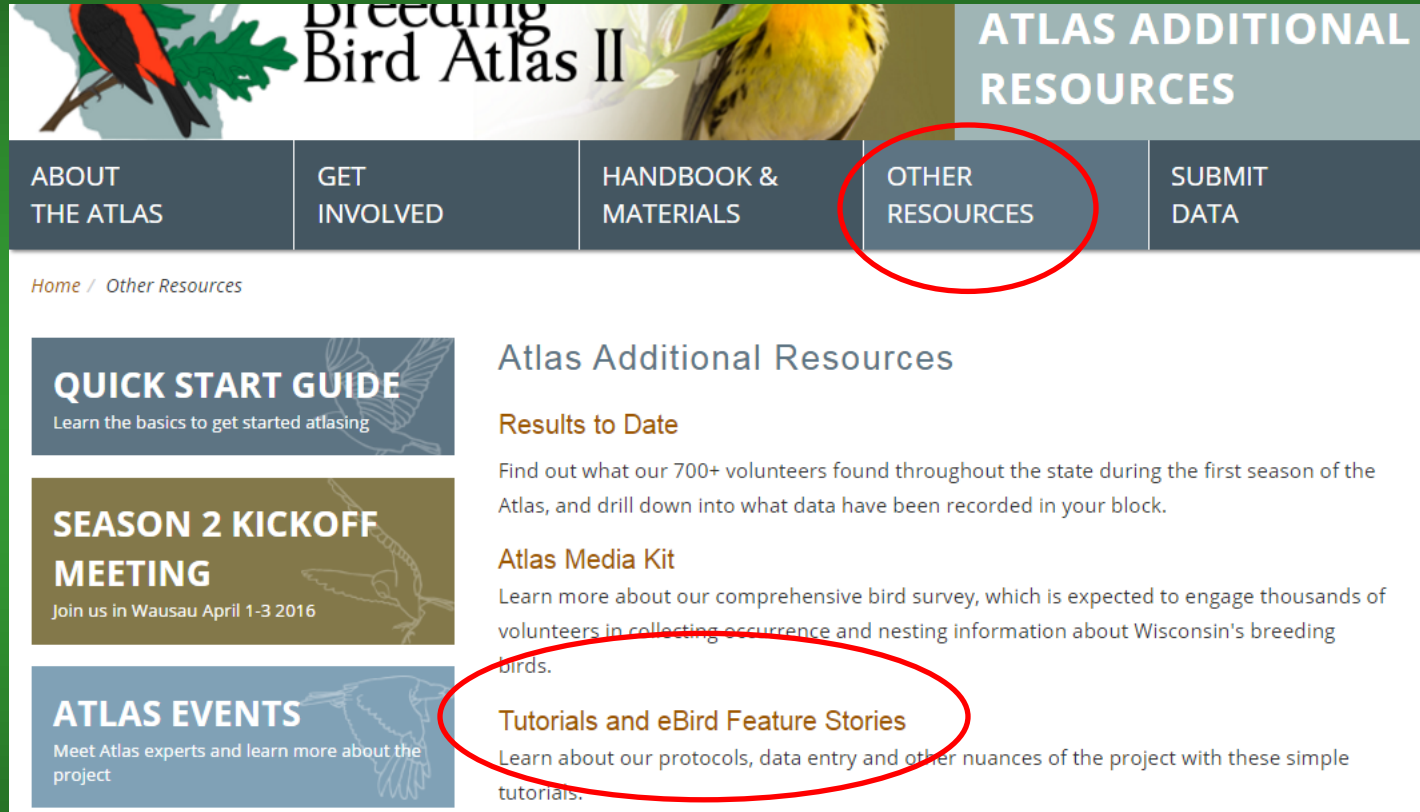


# Coding night hours

- Because it's important to record that night effort happened, you can even enter a blank checklist into Atlas eBird to record night effort for a block, even if you had no detections.



# Detailed Tutorials are Available on These Topics



The screenshot shows the website for the Breeding Bird Atlas II. The header includes the title "Breeding Bird Atlas II" and "ATLAS ADDITIONAL RESOURCES". The navigation menu has five items: "ABOUT THE ATLAS", "GET INVOLVED", "HANDBOOK & MATERIALS", "OTHER RESOURCES" (circled in red), and "SUBMIT DATA". Below the navigation, the breadcrumb "Home / Other Resources" is visible. The main content area features three sidebar boxes: "QUICK START GUIDE" (Learn the basics to get started atlasing), "SEASON 2 KICKOFF MEETING" (Join us in Wausau April 1-3 2016), and "ATLAS EVENTS" (Meet Atlas experts and learn more about the project). The main content area lists "Atlas Additional Resources" with three items: "Results to Date" (Find out what our 700+ volunteers found throughout the state during the first season of the Atlas, and drill down into what data have been recorded in your block.), "Atlas Media Kit" (Learn more about our comprehensive bird survey, which is expected to engage thousands of volunteers in collecting occurrence and nesting information about Wisconsin's breeding birds.), and "Tutorials and eBird Feature Stories" (Learn about our protocols, data entry and other nuances of the project with these simple tutorials.). The "Tutorials and eBird Feature Stories" link is circled in red.

**Breeding Bird Atlas II** ATLAS ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

ABOUT THE ATLAS GET INVOLVED HANDBOOK & MATERIALS **OTHER RESOURCES** SUBMIT DATA

Home / Other Resources

**QUICK START GUIDE**  
Learn the basics to get started atlasing

**SEASON 2 KICKOFF MEETING**  
Join us in Wausau April 1-3 2016

**ATLAS EVENTS**  
Meet Atlas experts and learn more about the project

**Atlas Additional Resources**

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**Atlas Media Kit**  
Learn more about our comprehensive bird survey, which is expected to engage thousands of volunteers in collecting occurrence and nesting information about Wisconsin's breeding birds.

**Tutorials and eBird Feature Stories**  
Learn about our protocols, data entry and other nuances of the project with these simple tutorials.

Or consult the Atlas Handbook!

[www.wsobirds.org/atlas](http://www.wsobirds.org/atlas)