Strategies for Successfully Surveying Your Atlas Block



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Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative

Outline

Know the Block

Know the Birds

Know the Breeding Dates

Know the Breeding Codes

Survey Strategically

Block Completion Criteria

Other Tips for Success...



Know the Block

Habitats
 The power of Bing.com's Budgeye!
 Make your own sketch on maps

Access

Roads, trails, parking, paddling
Plat books – online and print
Consult county coordinators and local biologists
Landowner contacts

Property Ownership
 As it relates to locational precision of checklists



Know the Birds

What birds might be found in my block? Atlas eBird portal First atlas book General eBird and other range maps Identification by sight and sound Field guides page on Atlas website Discussion forum and other online groups Nesting biology and phenology First atlas book BNA Online - Discount rate for Atlasers (Code "WBBA2")

ATLAS of the **Breeding Birds** of Wisconsin



Know Acceptable Breeding Dates

Is that May 9 American Redstart singing on territory or just in migration? Is that July 10 Solitary Sandpiper a local breeder? What about the Northern Cardinal singing in my neighborhood in February?



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Not using specific "safe dates"

Breeding Guideline Bar Chart
 Mainly affects lower-level breeding codes, such as singing males, migrants, and post-breeding dispersers

Confirmations trump the chart!

Local knowledge is important

The four periods within a month represent quarter months (analagous to weeks)

N = Nonbreeding Season, M = Migration, B = Breeding Season, E = Either (a transition period)

Species	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234	1234
Great Crested Flycatcher				M	MMME	BBBB	BBBB	EEEE	мммм			
Eastern Kingbird				M	MMME	BBBB	BBBB	EEEE	MMM			
Loggerhead Shrike*			M	MMEE	EBBB	BBBB	BBBB	MMM				
Bell's Vireo*					MMME	BBBB	BBBB	EEMM	ммм			
Yellow-throated Vireo					MMEE	BBBB	BBBB	EEEM	ммм	M		
Blue-headed Vireo				M	EEEE	BBBB	B B B E	EEEM	ммм	MMM		
Warbling Vireo				м	MMEE	BBBB	BBBB	EEEM	ммм			
Philadelphia Vireo*					ммм	EBBB	BEEE	EEMM	ммм	м		
Red-eyed Vireo					MMME	BBBB	BBBB	EEEE	EEMM	MM		
Gray Jay	NNNN	NNEE	EEBB	BBBB	BBBB	BBBB	EEEE	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN
Blue Jay	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN	NNEE	EEBB	BBBB	BBEE	EEEE	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN
American Crow	NNNN	NNNN	NNEE	EEBB	BBBB	BBBB	BBEE	EENN	NNNN	NNNN	NNN	NNNN
Common Raven	NNNN	NNEE	EEEE	BBBB	BBBB	BBBB	EEEE	EEEN	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN
Horned Lark	NNNN	ммм	MMME	BBBB	BBBB	BBBB	BBBE	ммм	ммм	ммм	ммм	NNNN
Northern Rough-winged Swallow				MME	EEEB	BBBB	BEEE	EMMM	ммм			
Purple Martin*				MME	EEEB	BBBB	BBEE	EMMM	MM			
Tree Swallow			MMM	EEEE	EEBB	BBBB	BEEE	EEEM	ммм	ммм		
Bank Swallow				MM	EEEB	BBBB	BEEE	ммм	MM			
Barn Swallow				ммм	EEEB	BBBB	BBBB	EEEE	EMMM	МММ		
Cliff Swallow				MM	MEEB	BBBB	BEEE	EEEE	EMM			
Black-capped Chickadee	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN	EEBB	BBBB	BBBB	BBBB	EEEE	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN
Boreal Chickadee*	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN	NNEE	EEBB	BBBB	BBBB	ENNN	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN
Great Tit*	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN	EEEE	EEBB	BBBB	BBBB	EEEE	ENNN	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN
Eurasian Blue Tit*	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN	EEEE	EEBB	BBBB	BBBB	EEEE	ENNN	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN
Tufted Titmouse	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN	NEEE	EBBB	BBBB	BBBB	ENNN	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN
Red-breasted Nuthatch	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN	NEBB	BBBB	BBBB	BBBB	EEEE	ENNN	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN
White-breasted Nuthatch	NNNN	NNNN	NNNE	EBBB	BBBB	BBBB	BBBB	EEEN	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN
Brown Creeper	NNNN	NNNN	NNMM	MEEE	EEEE	BBBB	BBBB	BEEE	ммм	ММММ	МММ	NNNN
House Wren				MMM	EEEB	BBBB	BBBB	EEEE	мммм	ммм		
Winter Wren			M	ММММ	MEEE	BBBB	BBBB	BEEE	EMMM	MMMM	MMNN	NNNN
Sedge Wren				M	MMEE	BBBB	BBBB	BEEE	MMMM	MM		
Marsh Wren				M	MEEE	BBBB	BBBB	BEEE	FFMM	MMM		
Carolina Wren*	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN	NEBB	BBBB	BBBB	BBEN	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN	NNNN
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher				MMM	EEEB	BBBB	BBBB	EEEM	MMMM			
Golden-crowned Kinglet	NNNN	NNNN	NNMM	MEEE	FFFB	BBBB	BBBB	FFFF	MMMM	мммм	мммм	NNNN
Ruby-crowned Kinglet*			M	MMMM	MMME	BBBB	BBBB	FFMM	MMMM	MMMM	MMM	
Eastern Bluebird	NNNN	NNNN	MMEE	EEEE	EEBB	BBBB	BBBB	EEEE	MMMM	MMMM	MNNN	NNNN
Veerv					MMME	BBBB	BBEE	EEMM	MMMM			
reery						0000			TAL TAL TAL TAL			

Know Acceptable Breeding Dates

Breeding Guideline Bar Chart – sortable spr

Know the Breeding Codes

OBSERVED

- _ Observed (no code)
- **F** Flyover

POSSIBLE

- **H** In appropriate Habitat
- **S** Singing male (no migrants)

PROBABLE

- **S7** Singing male 7+ days apart
- **M** Multiple (7+) singing males
- **P** Pair in suitable habitat
- **T** Territory defense
- C Courtship display/copulation
- N Visiting probable Nest site
- A Agitated behavior
- **B** Woodpecker/wren nest Building/cavity excavation

CONFIRMED

- **PE** Physiological Evidence/brood patch
- **CN** Carrying Nest material
- **NB** Nest Building (except woodpeckers & wrens)
- **DD** Distraction Display
- **UN** Used Nest (use with caution)
- **ON** Occupied Nest
- FL Recently FLedged young
- **CF** Carrying Food
- **FY** Feeding Young
- FS Carrying Fecal Sac
- **NE** Nest with Eggs
- **NY** Nest with Young



(unless a migrant)

Two weeks later....









Observed - No code



Bird groups to be careful about...

Pelicans, cormorants, herons, egrets, gulls, and terns Colonial nesters that forage far from colony Ducks, swans, and geese P, T, and C codes can be unreliable Raptors Diurnal – big home ranges, carry food when not nesting Owls – large overlap of breeding birds with migrants Wrens and woodpeckers Use dummy nests and non-nesting cavities Species difficult to ID Empidonax flycatchers when not heard Philadelphia and Red-eyed Vireo when not seen Flyovers, late migrants, shorebirds, and wandering males

Survey Strategically

Build species lists early (late May-June)

Most confirmations come later (July-early Aug)
 FY & FL are your friends!

Special effort for some species is critical
 Early nesters, nocturnal & crepuscular birds

Use Block Summary Card to assist field work

Block Summary Card
PLEASE NOTE: this data form is for personal reference only -- not intended to be submitted as official atlas
block data or to be used as a daily checklist data form. Use Atlas eBird portal for all checklist submissions.

Ble	ock Name: M.H. /-	fshua	bay C	E
Survey Date	Nocturnal Survey Hours	Daytime Survey Hours	Travel To/Fi Hours	rom Home Miles
4/20/15		3.5	0.75	35
5/17/15	2	-	0.75	40
6/5/15		5.5	1.0	42
6/30/15	1	4	0.75	35
				_

		Highest Breed. Code				
Species	High Code Date	Ρ	PR	со		
Canada Goose	6/5			ON		
Mute Swan						
Trumpeter Swan			1			
Wood Duck			-			
American Black Duck		-				
Mallard	6/5	H				
Blue-winged Teal						
Green-winged Teal		_				
Ring-necked Duck						
Hooded Merganser		-	-			
Common Merganser						
Red-breasted Merganser			5			
Ruddy Duck				10		
Northern Bobwhite*			- A			
Ring-necked Pheasant		1.1.44	-			
Ruffed Grouse	5/17		C			

			Highest Breed. Codes			
Species	High Code Date	Р	PR	со		
Spruce Grouse						
Sharp-tailed Grouse*			5			
Wild Turkey	6/30	H		1.		
Common Loon						
Pied-billed Grebe	·		- 1.5			
Double-crested Cormorant				-		
American White Pelican						
American Bittern*						
Least Bittern*						
Great Blue Heron 5/17 - F				<		
Great Egret*				-		
Green Heron		-		-		
Black-crowned Night-Heron*			-			
Turkey Vulture		4		1.1		
Osprey						
Northern Harrier						
Sharp-shinned Hawk	-			100		
Cooper's Hawk						
Northern Goshawk*	5/17		T			
Bald Eagle						
Red-shouldered Hawk*						
Broad-winged Hawk						
Red-tailed Hawk						
Yellow Rail*		1.		1.1		
King Rail*						
Virginia Rail		-		-		
Sora						
Common Gallinule				-		
American Coot		-				
Sandhill Crane		1				
Killdeer				-		
Spotted Sandpiper						
Upland Sandpiper*						
Wilson's Snipe		-				
American Woodcock	200	1.1	85	-00		
Ring-billed Gull		-		-		
Herring Gull						
Caspian Tern*						

Block Name: Year:						
	Γ	Highest Breed. Codes				
Species	High Code Date	Ρ	PR	со		
Black Tern*						
Common Tern*						
Forster's Tern*				0.0		
Rock Pigeon						
Eu. Collared-Dove						
Mourning Dove	6/5		57			
Yellow-billed Cuckoo						
Black-billed Cuckoo						
Eastern Screech-Owl						
Great Horned Owl						
Barred Owl						
Long-eared Owl*						
Short-eared Owl*						
Northern Saw-whet Owl	1.11	22				
Common Nighthawk*			-			
Eastern Whip-poor-will						
Chimney Swift						
Ruby-throated Hummingbird						
Belted Kingfisher						
Red-headed Woodpecker	_					
Red-bellied Woodpecker						
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	6/5	-	N			
Downy Woodpecker						
Hairy Woodpecker						
Black-backed Woodpecker						
Northern Flicker	-					
Pileated Woodpecker						
American Kestrel						
Merlin						
Peregrine Falcon*						
Olive-sided Flycatcher*						
Eastern Wood-Pewee	6/5		M			
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher						
Acadian Flycatcher*						
Alder Flycatcher						
Willow Flycatcher						
Least Flycatcher	6/30			ON		
Eastern Phoebe		1.11				

wsobirds.org/atlas

Suggested Survey Schedule

March to check for early nesters and get familiar with the terrain and ownerships

Late April or early May for early nesters

Late May or early June to build a species list and note where males are singing (beware of migrants)

Mid-June to re-check on the singing males and add more species

Early July and early August to get more species into the Confirmed category

Include some crepuscular and nocturnal hours in both spring and summer.

Block Completion Criteria

• 20+ survey hours in a block over multiple visits.

B. At least 80% of the species found in the block during the first Atlas are detected.

At least 50% of the species detected are confirmed as breeding.

D. All habitat types within block have been visited.
E. Surveys were completed at different times of year.
F. At least 2 night visits have occurred.

Other Tips for Success

Complete block within one season?
 <u>Pros</u>: upgrade potential, access, travel logistics
 <u>Cons</u>: irruptives, upgrading elusive species

Blockbusting & other "team" approaches
Enter data in timely fashion (w/in 1-2 days)
Communicate using various networks

Notes on nest finding



QUESTIONS?