

Fast Facts from the first Wisconsin Atlas (1995-2000)



Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II

The first Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas was the largest coordinated field effort in the history of Wisconsin ornithology. More than 1,600 people contributed field observations between breeding seasons from 1995 through 2000.

To collect the information, observers spent nearly 70,000 hours in the field and submitted more than 170,000 records. Their work was incorporated into the 600-page [Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Wisconsin](#). The core of this comprehensive guide consists of two-page accounts with information and maps for each species documented.

Evidence of breeding was found for 237 species with breeding confirmed for 226 species. Find species maps and more information from the first survey at <http://www.uwgb.edu/birds/wbba>.

Most widespread bird and other findings

Wisconsin's state bird, the **American Robin**, was reported in the most places — 96 percent of the 1,130 units surveyed from 1995–2000.

The **Piping Plover**, along with the Snowy Egret, Great Gray Owl and Western Kingbird, was among the least frequently reported species confirmed as breeding in Wisconsin.

More species were reported in Door County than any other (184). The **Baltimore Oriole** was among the Door County birds reported most often.

Rare bird findings

With the exception of the Kirtland's Warbler, all of the 80 bird species listed as officially endangered, threatened or of special concern in Wisconsin were recorded as probable or confirmed breeders during the first Atlas survey.

Oneida County boasted the highest number of listed species documented, 27, followed by Oshkosh in Winnebago County and several other units encompassing major lakes, rivers or wetlands.

Twenty-one bird species that had been reported in ornithological literature covering Wisconsin were not found to have been breeding during the six years of field work for the first Atlas.

Great Gray Owls were proved to be regular but very rare nesters in Wisconsin, and Western Kingbirds were confirmed breeding at a single location. The Boreal Chickadee was confirmed as a well-established breeder, albeit very locally, in northern Wisconsin.

Seven species were confirmed as breeding that were not included in Sam Robbins's 1991 report: The **Western Grebe**, **American White Pelican**, **Trumpeter Swan**, **Black-necked Stilt**, **Great Black-backed Gull**, **Philadelphia Vireo**, **Rusty Blackbird**.

House Finch populations were found to have exploded across most of the state during the 1995–2000 survey. As recently as 1991, the species was considered an uncommon resident south and east.

The breeding range of **Osprey** expanded significantly into central Wisconsin and Door County peninsula.

Breeding by **Golden-crowned Kinglet** was documented in Wisconsin for the first time during the atlas project. The first atlas found that **Pileated Woodpeckers** had become re-established in much of their former range following severe declines in the early 1900s.