



Black-capped Chronicle



Issue 11

Newsletter of the Maine Bird Atlas

Winter 2022-23

Nearing the Finish Line... with Pride

By Adrienne J. Leppold, PhD, Project Director

Endings are often bittersweet. As for learning as much as we can about Maine's birds in a five-year time frame, however, we have a little bit more to do. With one more winter atlas season to go, we hope you'll continue to report your observations. Any bird observed in Maine between 14 December and 15 March counts, but more about that on page 3.

Maine birding in the winter presents its own set of challenges. Add to that the need for data in over 300 more blocks this winter to complete the project, and we're faced with a lofty goal. But, let's think back to April of this year. Facing the final breeding season, we had 310 blocks left with much more intensive completion requirements. Upon completion of the breeding season, many shared with us collective doubts at the outset that we would accomplish our priority block goals. Not only did we meet our goal of completely surveying all 974 priority blocks, we exceeded it! When I say we, I mean ALL 3,463 of us! We completed a total of 1,357 blocks and even managed to revisit already "completed" blocks for repeat surveying of target species possibly missed in earlier visits. Even the level of outreach achieved with this project has exceeded my wildest dreams. I hoped at the start of this project to engage a couple thousand birders. Sincere thanks to each and every one of you!



Carolina Wren has expanded its range since the first bird atlas, not only where it breeds but also as a wintering species!

It's been quite a ride. Though it's not over yet, with the winter season and years of data proofing, analysis, and write-up still ahead, I could not be prouder of what we all have accomplished thus far! We completed the breeding season with 124,288 checklists, documented 249 breeding species, confirmed 217 species, amassed 1.9 million individual observations, and secured the "Big Atlas Weekend Champion" title in back-to-back years. We have collected the most comprehensive data set for Maine breeding birds ever compiled, and based on feedback from other regional atlas organizers, have helped set a new standard for atlasing.

In addition, you've helped us embark on the first-ever state-wide survey of wintering birds and one of only a handful of winter atlases ever undertaken in the country. We hope you'll continue on this journey with us for one more field season and help us finish strong!

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Celebrating Our Volunteers

by Doug Hitchcox, Outreach Coordinator

One of the biggest things we've missed these last couple years of the atlas is getting to spend time with volunteers in-person. The pandemic greatly reduced the amount of face-to-face events that we were able to have, but we adapted and thanks to technologies like Zoom we were able to reach more volunteers more frequently and still make the atlas a huge success. That said, we couldn't let the breeding season wrap up without a toast to our volunteers!

In early October, we hosted our Volunteer Appreciation Event at Cushnoc Brewing in Augusta and had a blast celebrating with everyone who was able to attend. We would have loved to have more of the 3,000+ volunteers who have contributed to the atlas be there, but it was a fun evening with many stories told and even more laughs shared, plus almost everyone went home with either a door prize or an award from trivia.

Who knew hosting Maine Bird Atlas Trivia could be so much fun? Perhaps I'll have to pursue a career in emceeing trivia once the atlas is wrapped, but for those who couldn't make it, here is some fun at-home trivia questions:

1. Name three (of the six) species that were confirmed in over 1,000 blocks
2. York County tied with one other county for having the most confirmed species, with 154. Name the other county?
3. What was the sticker price of the Atlas of Breeding Birds in Maine (1978-1983)?
4. What behavior is the breeding code 'N' used for?
5. When is (our invented atlas holiday) All Species Safe Day?

(answers below)



A special kudos is also due to our technicians, most of the 2022 season techs and some from earlier years here, who spent MANY hours in remote areas volunteers wouldn't dare go (or couldn't!)

It was wonderful to get to meet many of you for the first time, and some in 3-D for the first time. There is a silver-lining to the challenges covid has brought us, and it is that we've found ways to become more accessible to people all over the state.

I hope you continue to join us, or come for the first time, to one of our weekly [Zoom Q&As](#), which are beginning with a season kickoff on December 8th. These are weekly opportunities to chat with atlas staff but also meet other volunteers and hear what they are seeing. It is also a great place to find people to go block-busting with in northern Maine this winter!

We say it often, but we can't say it enough: THANK YOU ALL for your contributions and making the Maine Bird Atlas a success!



Trivia Answers: 1. Am Robin, Blk-capped Chickadee, Song Sparrow, Common Yellowthroat, Eastern Phoebe, Common Grackle. 2. Somerset. 3. \$94. 4. Visiting Probable Nest Site. 5. June 10th.

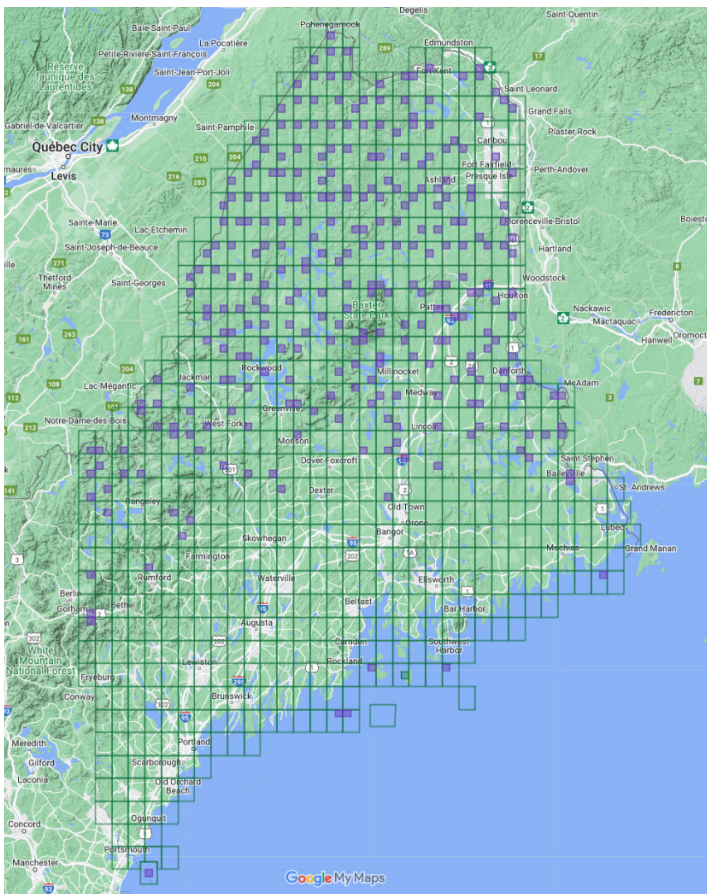
Priorities for the Final Winter Season

By Glen Mittelhauser, Project Coordinator

As we head into the last winter of field work for the Maine Bird Atlas, we definitely need your help. We need volunteers like you to go out and build species lists in specific areas, and that in turn will put dots on the distribution map for those species. It's that simple.

To recap, Maine's winter field work is split into an early period that runs from December 14th until the end of January, and a late period that runs from February 1st until March 15th. Within each period, our goal to complete a block is to obtain a minimum of 3 survey hours, with these efforts spread across all accessible habitats in the block.

Many blocks (1,032) have already achieved this minimum effort goal, many others are well on their way to being complete, and others are marked as being complete but could use some additional winter birding to build out the species list. Over the past 4 winter seasons, folks like you have birded over 74,000 hours documenting 229 wintering species from 2,332 winter atlas blocks. But, there are still a lot of blocks far from complete, and that's where you come in. Read on for the best ways to help.



Map of Priority Blocks for the early period of our final Winter Atlas season. Green outlines delineate topo quads. There are six atlas blocks in each quad.

2022-23 Wintering Atlas Goals

December 14th marks the start of our final atlas field season, and we are looking to get all 307 winter atlas blocks in under-surveyed areas completed by March 15th, 2023. What we mean by an under-surveyed area is a topographic quad (each green outlined rectangle shown on the block maps throughout the newsletter) that does not have at least 1 of the 6 atlas blocks completed in it. Visiting blocks in under-surveyed areas that can be safely accessed is our absolute highest priority for this coming winter, so we've mapped them to make it easy to see where your effort will do most good ([click here for the map](#)).

But let me be clear. Despite our focus on under-surveyed areas this winter, every single atlas and bird record makes a huge difference! Observers of all skill levels can make valuable contributions to the winter atlas. We want to involve as many people as possible, including younger generations, in the Maine Bird Atlas. As with other parts of the atlas, anyone can submit data for any block – no need to check with us first, just document birds in an area and submit your records to the Maine eBird portal. Contributing your bird records to Maine's wintering bird atlas is a chance to get to know the birds of an area much better, and maybe find some unexpected species, but you'll also be contributing to a major project that will see your work published and put to good use for conservation. It will take a team effort to finish everything this coming winter season.

There are NUMEROUS ways you can help us reach our goals this winter, but below are the ones that will have the biggest impact:

Know where to atlas: Similar to this past summer, we have different survey priorities and atlas tools depending on where you are in the state and if you are willing to travel for winter birding.

Priorities if you are willing to travel to under-surveyed areas: Sign up to help complete blocks in under-surveyed areas (our highest priority): Check out the [Atlas Block Buster's website](#) for the latest information on which blocks need help (this map will be updated daily starting in early December). You can either sign up to cover a block on the map, or sign up to be the backup surveyor on a block that is being covered by someone else. This helps us to coordinate our efforts and avoid duplicate efforts being planned for the same block. (Note: you can still help out on a block even if you haven't signed up to cover it or be the backup.) Communication is key here! If you are falling behind on a block that you signed up for and need help, let us know ASAP. If you have extra time to help out with other blocks, please reach out and let us know. The best lines of communication with us this winter is to join our [weekly question and answer sessions](#), or email us directly (mainebirdatlas@gmail.com).

Final Winter Priorities continued

Priorities if you cannot travel to under-surveyed areas: Don't be discouraged if you live in an area surrounded by "completed" blocks or prefer not to travel but enjoy winter from the comfort of your own home. Given that local weather conditions and changes in food availability among years and even throughout the season affects bird distribution and abundance, every observation is value added! Visit the winter atlas results map through the "Where to Atlas (local)" button on the [Maine Bird Atlas homepage](#). Help us finish up any blocks that are not marked as complete or even add additional records for blocks that have met the minimum effort requirement.

Set a Personal Atlasing Goal: Setting a personal atlasing goal for this coming winter is one of the best ways to improve your birding skills and to stay engaged with the Atlas and birding. Atlasing doesn't have to be day-long adventures into the far reaches of Maine (although this is encouraged!). Submitting checklists of birds observed in your yard, over lunchtime walks, or when running errands is extremely helpful. In fact, urban and suburban habitats tend to be underrepresented in winter bird records, so these checklists can be particularly valuable.

Recruit a New Atlaser: Recruit a new volunteer to contribute records to the winter atlas and assist in engaging new generations of birders in Maine. Winter is a great time to learn birding as the birds are often not hidden in the leaves at the tops of the trees, and there are fewer species present in winter than in summer. The more folks that we can get out atlasing, the better. Birding in a group can also be a lot of fun.

Find a new atlas block: Tired of submitting checklists from your home atlas block? Use our [online maps](#) to select a handful of new atlas blocks to go and explore over the coming winter! Find one that is either next to your home, along a local river or hiking trail, or even at a site you know you're going to be visiting this coming winter. We're always encouraging Atlasers to find new blocks to explore and submit checklists in, especially those that are under-surveyed or have few species recorded compared to other blocks in the area.

Raising the scientific value of your observations: Your daily efforts may not always tally a lot of birds, but remember that as long as you are searching multiple habitat types in a block and submitting completed checklists with accurate abundances for all species, all your observations contribute valuable insights. To raise the scientific value of your observations, whether from busy streets, in areas with few birds, or at winter hotspots, ensure your checklists: 1) last for no less than 5 minutes and no more than an hour or two; 2) are no more than 1 mile long, and you start a new checklist if you cross into a new atlas block; and 3) contain count estimates the numbers of individuals present for each species - even giving your best estimate to the closest 100 of a flock of flying birds overhead is far more valuable than not giving any number at all.

Sign up to be part of the winter block-busting team: Stay in close communication with your fellow winter atlasers by joining the [block-busting discussion group](#). Keep tabs on where other atlasers are traveling and then organize and recruit for your own atlasing adventure. Communication is very helpful so that we don't end up duplicating effort in challenging to access areas.

Happy birding from the Atlas Team: I believe we owe it to the next generation of biologists to do everything we can to get to these under-surveyed areas this winter to build a distribution map for each species that gives a complete picture of bird populations in this ecologically connected area. Atlas staff each have our own atlasing goals for the coming winter, including venturing into more of the under-surveyed areas both offshore and in northern Maine. In addition to these goals, however, we continue to remain committed to supporting all of you, to help engage and inspire more Atlasers, and try to highlight the best and most fun aspects of Atlasing through winter challenges and [weekly online discussions](#). We want you to feel supported throughout.

The Atlas project would not work without your time and dedication, so we wish to say a huge thank you for all that you do – it doesn't go unnoticed!



Winter Atlasing Primer



2022/2023

Maine Winter Bird Atlas

December 14 - March 15

Overview The Basics of Winter Atlasing



Find Birds

- At your feeder
- While skiing, hiking, ice fishing...
- While exploring an Atlas block



Collect info

- **What** species?
- **Where** were they?
- **When** did you see them?
- **How many** of each species were there?



Report

Submit sightings to ebird.org/me or **Mail** or **email** your observations*



Repeat!

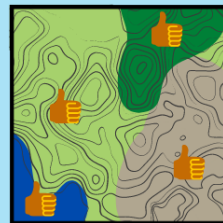
We need all the observations we can get to create a legacy of data on wintering birds in Maine!

4 Ways to be a Winter Atlas Blockbuster



Finish 1 Block in a Topo Quad

The goal this year is to complete 1 block in every accessible Topo Quad (outlined in green at tinyurl.com/MEWinterBirdMap).



Understand the Winter Block Completion System

- Visit all accessible habitats in the block in early winter (Dec 14 - Jan 31) and again in late winter (Feb 1 - Mar 15).
- Spend a minimum of 3 hours in the block in early winter and another 3 or more hours in late winter.

Travel...but Be Safe!



- Travel to blocks that are further afield, but know your limits!
- Always check the weather forecast, bring enough warm clothes, and plan ahead.



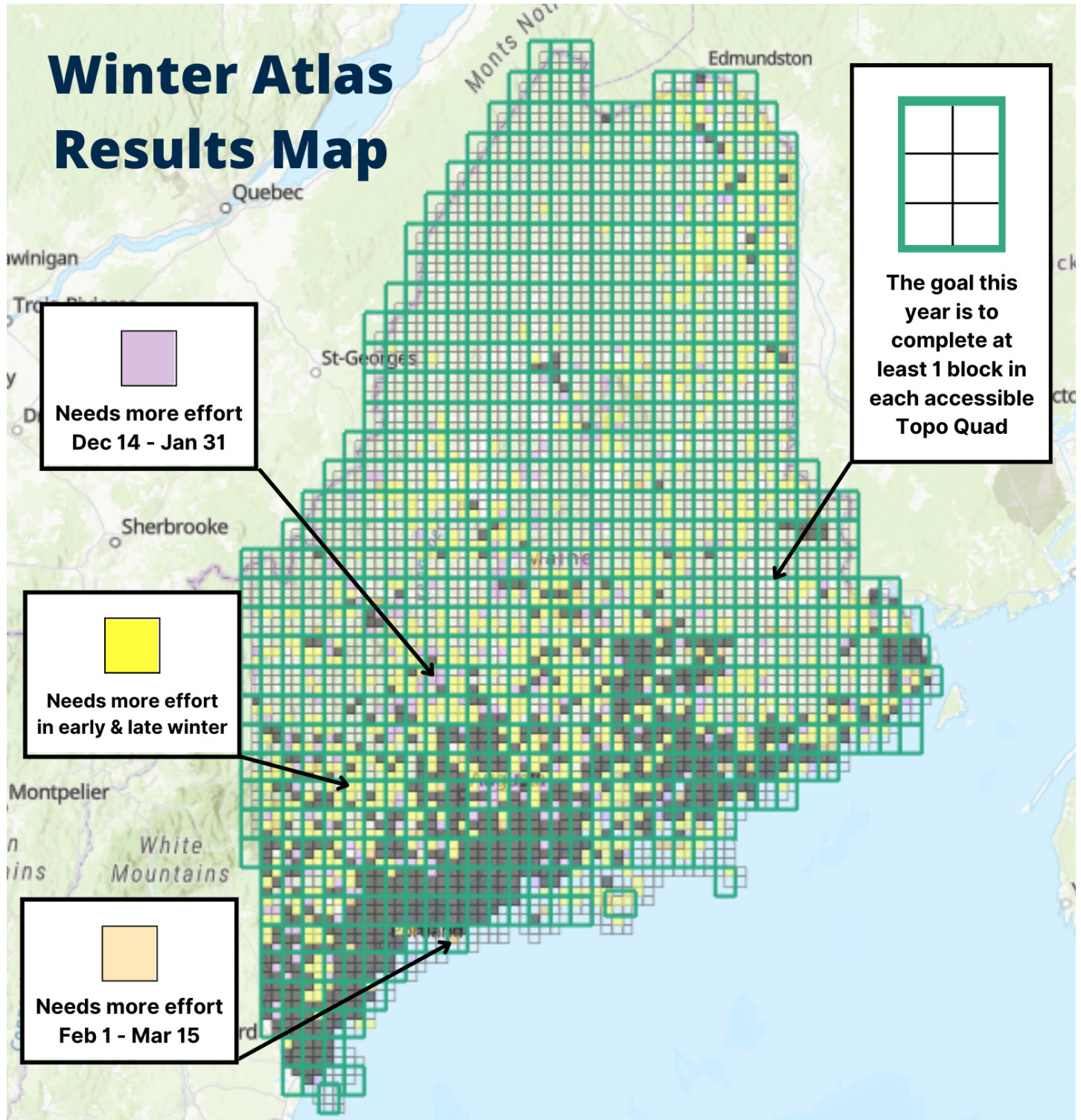
Be a Species Detective

Explore block species lists at tinyurl.com/MEWinterBirdMap

Is a common species for that habitat absent from the list? Go check it out!

How to Read the Winter Atlas Results Website


Winter Atlas Results Map




Needs more effort
Dec 14 - Jan 31


The goal this year is to complete at least 1 block in each accessible Topo Quad


Needs more effort in early & late winter


Needs more effort Feb 1 - Mar 15



Has some bird records



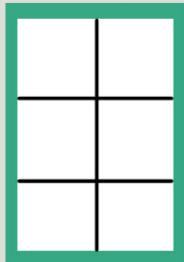
Completed Winter Block



Late-winter Only Completed



Early-winter Only Completed



Topo Quad

Species-specific Winter Challenges

by Doug Hitchcox, Outreach Coordinator

This winter we are bringing back challenges (and prizes) by giving you specific species to be on the look out for. You can tune in to our [Weekly Q&As](#) or check the [Maine Bird Atlas Facebook Page](#) for each week's target species, then anyone who submits a checklist with that species will be entered in a random drawing for a chance to win [Maine Bird Atlas swag!](#)

Last winter we incentivized atlasing in any topographic quad that didn't have at least one block already completed in it. This was very helpful in getting us towards our goal (of completing at least one block in every quad) but it was difficult for the majority of our volunteers to be able to participate (and also a confusing mouthful to explain). That said, we had some absolutely amazing volunteers that ventured to new topos and either completed blocks or set them up to be easily completed this year. A major thanks is due to Dan Gibbons for putting in over 100 hours of survey effort in new topos! Right behind him were Kelly Krechmer, Glenn Hodgkins, and Sam Stoddard who each contributed over 50 hours in new topos last season. A tip-of-the-cap is also due to some of our most active Regional Coordinators, Bob and Sandy Duchesne, who are covering a huge swath of northern Maine and breaking clocks with the amount of time they're putting in. In total, we had 134 volunteers participate in the "atlas in topos without any completed blocks" challenge, adding up to 948 hours of effort. Thank you all!

The switch back to species targets this year is so we can engage more volunteers and fill gaps on species maps. Unlike in the breeding season, when we can evaluate if a block is complete through a combination of effort, number of coded species, and the level of those codes, winter atlasing is more challenging to know when a block is truly complete. We are

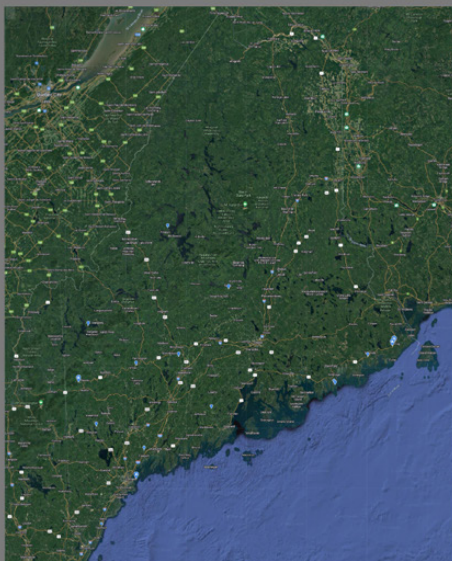
assuming that effort in every accessible habitat type in a block and a minimum of three survey hours (in both early and late winter) is enough to detect most of the species in that block, but sometimes even common species are missed. There are many factors that go into species detectability in the winter. Everything from there being bird feeders in a block, to the day you are surveying being snowy or too windy to detect some species. This winter's challenges will feature species that appear to be underreported, or may need extra effort within a block to be found. The ultra-camouflaged and quiet in winter Brown Creeper comes to mind.

Irruptive species are another interesting group to consider. While many of our wintering birds are consistent with the areas they use each year, irruptive birds, especially finches, can be remarkably variable with when and where they show up. Below are maps of Common Redpoll records (blue dots indicating a location with a sighting) from the last three winters in Maine. While we generalize this irruptive finch as "being abundant some winters, and scarce in others" it is amazing to see the variation they can have even in abundant years. For example, during the 2019-2020 winter there were barely any redpolls reported in Maine (birch crops were very good to our north, so they didn't come south), but look at how that were spotted all along southern and coastal Maine during the 2020-2021 winter. Compare that to this past winter, 2021-2022, when they also were abundant but rarely stayed in northern Maine.

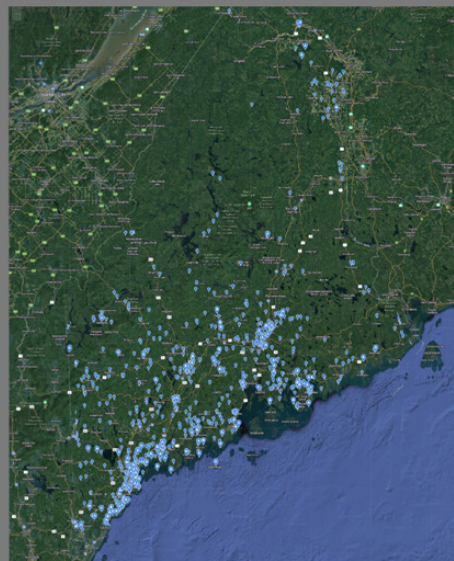
Thanks to our thousands of volunteers contributing sightings, we are detecting most species within each season. The hope of having dedicated effort, through species-specific challenges this winter, is to fill in any gaps. And remember, documenting where birds *aren't* is just as important!

Common Redpoll Winter Atlas Records

December 2019 - March 2020



December 2020 - March 2021



December 2021 - March 2022

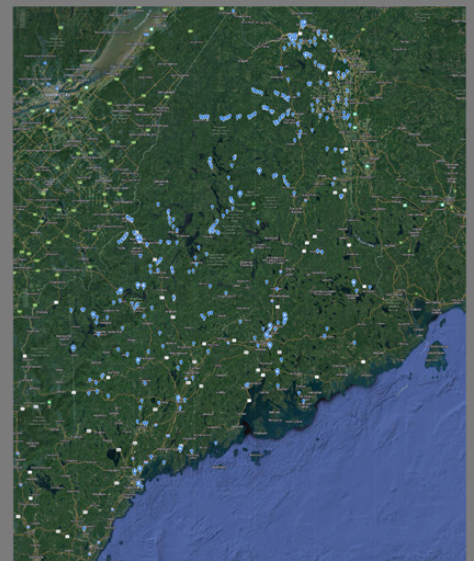


Photo Highlights from the Field

Many of our volunteers add photos to their eBird checklists and they often capture some great breeding behaviors. Here are a selection from the last breeding season that show interesting behaviors or plumages:



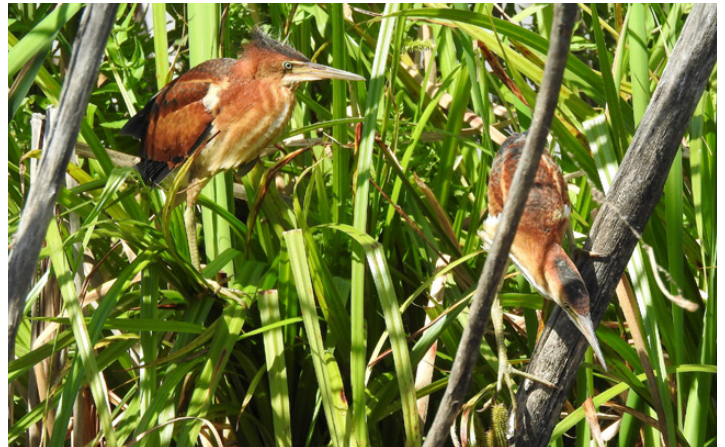
Wood Thrush proved to be a difficult species to confirm, based on how widespread reports were. Only 34 blocks had confirmed records, of course including Dover East CW where Debra Powers photographed this adult and fledgling.



A highlight of atlasing can be finding species that are hard to detect during migration, but easy to locate on their breeding ground, like Mourning Warblers in northern Maine. Photo by Doug Hitchcox.



Perhaps the most notable vagrant that at least tried breeding in Maine last year will be two Henslow's Sparrows, found in Brunswick, that spent weeks singing but were never confirmed breeding. Photo by Weston Barker.



Least Bitterns were only confirmed in three blocks, but a very visible pair at Essex Woods in Bangor entertained atlasers all summer. Rob Speirs captured this shot of two youngsters emerging from the cattails.



John Shamgochian captured this beautiful photo of a Yellow Warbler carrying nesting material in Waterville.



Red-breasted Mergansers caused some confusion for atlasers across Maine, with almost all reports turning out to actually be Common Mergansers. This is until Logan Parker came in with the buzzer-beater find, on the late date of July 29th, with a family of Red-breasted Mergansers at the north end of Moosehead Lake! Notice the choppy water here? Ask Logan about this experience when you run into him out atlasing this winter!

Building Blocks: Using Atlas Data Outside of the Atlas

by *Evan Adams, Ecological Modeler*

North America has lost almost 3 billion birds since the 1970s. Rates of decline are increasing for many species groups, with aerial insectivores, grassland birds, and wetland birds leading the way. The reasons for these declines are many and not always clear to scientists, but what is clear is that we must take action to restore bird populations. Conservation biologists are used to making these decisions in the face of uncertainty, but with the completion of the atlas, we will know more about Maine birds than ever before and where the boundaries of that knowledge lie.

Maine Bird Atlas data and data products will be available to the public, and any partner can use them to make more informed conservation decisions. Here, I'll describe how the atlas breeding density maps, breeding code maps, and other atlas data can be used beyond the immediate published atlas book. I'll focus on research projects, conservation decisions, and education and outreach activities. My hope is this will give the atlas community a sense of how valuable these data are and all the incredible different applications for it.



Eastern Whip-poor-will
Photo by Logan Parker

Research Projects

Researchers can use atlas data to select future study sites, design natural experiments to determine the effects of habitat or land use on animals, and even incorporate them into long-term study designs. One pressing example of this application is with the Eastern Whip-poor-will, a member of the nightjar family. This nocturnal insectivore has declined considerably in the state, but we do not know the root cause of this trend. Recent work has suggested that declines in insects are driving the trend, but evidence specific to Maine for the nightjar family is lacking. Using atlas data, we are starting to identify strongholds for this species in the state. With knowledge of these locations, we can design studies to help determine causes of decline, which is critical information for ensuring long-term success of the species.

Ecological research is critical to better understand the natural world. The importance of basic research can be challenging to quantify in applied contexts, but it provides the foundation for effective conservation decision making. In contrast, applied research provides direct information on the effectiveness of management actions or the causes of significant declines and the environmental factors driving them.



Adrienne Leppold, Project Director, getting the atlas done!

Conservation Decision Making

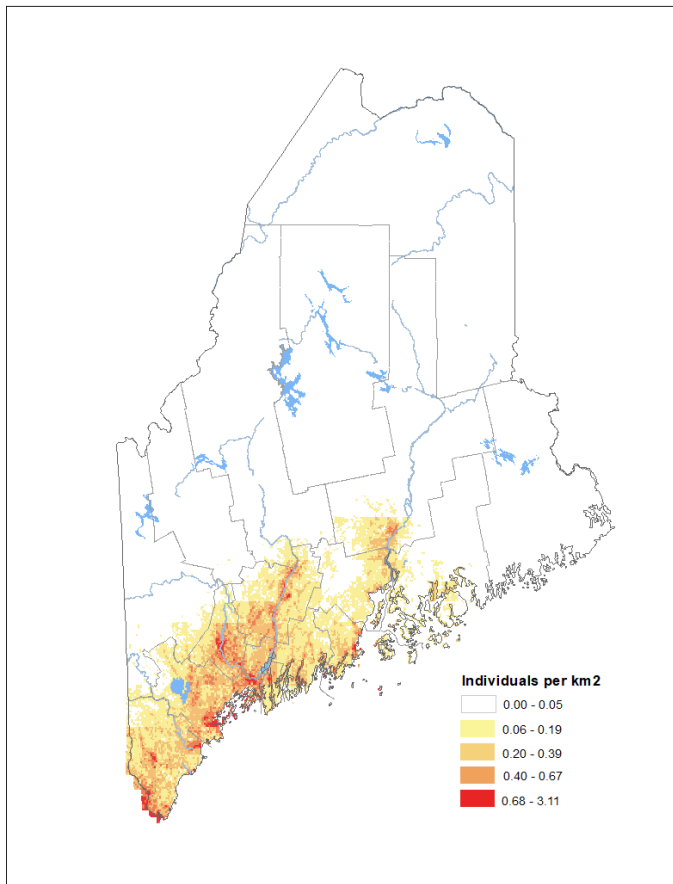
The next Maine State Wildlife Action Plan is scheduled to be completed in 2025 and the Maine Bird Atlas breeding and density maps will be directly informing conservation priorities and potential management actions. A look at the current plan, completed in 2015, gives us a sense of what sort of decision are made here. First, the state decides which species are of the greatest conservation need, then they determine what habitats species use and the problems affecting those habitats. With problems identified, you can then direct conservation efforts to mitigate those issues and monitoring efforts to determine if your actions are having the desired impact. Put simply, this document is the roadmap for statewide bird conservation and atlas data are going to be on center stage.

Atlas data can provide population size estimates, key habitat associations, or important locations within the state for species. Adrienne Leppold, Maine Bird Atlas Director and state

Building Blocks continued

songbird specialist with the Department of Inland Fishies and Wildlife, said, ‘This will be the most well-informed statewide conservation plan for birds that Maine has ever had.’ This plan will be used to define Maine’s conservation actions for the next decade and our atlas data will be used throughout and to guide the process.

Bird atlas data won’t just support statewide conservation plans, but can help inform local priorities as well. Land trusts, towns, and non-profit organizations are often thinking about prioritizing land purchases in Maine with the goal of environmental stewardship. For example, the Presumpscot Regional Land Trust has 2,170 acres of preserved land in southern Maine. They are currently working in the town of Windham to purchase 661 acres around Little Duck Pond and are often assessing the relative value of a property to wildlife.



Density estimates for breeding Northern Cardinal during the breeding season based on statewide road-side point counts. Learn more about these models in Evan’s “Translating Atlas Data into Information” article from the [Spring 2021 Black-capped Chronicle](#).

Bird density or occurrence can provide essential information on what a land trust is currently protecting with their portfolio and what a new addition would bring to the table. Once the atlas is complete, you’ll be able to access density maps for over a hundred species and quantify the number of individuals present on that property and how important that property is within the state. These data will help

determine the conservation value of properties and perhaps make comparisons with potential purchase lands or current holdings. These data will redefine the capabilities of Maine bird conservation efforts and allow us to plan in ways that we never have before.

Outreach and Education

Managers of public-access properties where nature-interested folks hike or hunt in the area will now be able to provide detailed information on likely wintering or breeding birds in the area without having to data mine online sources or be a bird expert themselves. Moreover, birders traveling within Maine can use these data to target hotspots and find specialties. City parks can have easy species lists to help educate visitors. And one can only imagine the lesson plans you could make for a Maine natural history course or educational segment by having all this information at the fingertips of the general public and bird educators.



Stakeholders gather at Deering Oaks in Portland to discuss wildlife impacts.

While the atlas book itself will help meet these goals, we also know that the data and data products need to be made available in a flexible and transparent way. Thus, we plan to make all atlas data and atlas data products like density and breeding maps, breeding phenology figures, and critical habitat associations available for free on the Maine Bird Atlas website after publication.

Data collection is *almost* over for the atlas (don’t forget that we have one more winter!), and it’s hard not to reflect on all the work that we’ve done. But in many ways, our work is just beginning. Our job is to maximize the benefit of the atlas to the birds, and we’re going to go way beyond publishing a book.

You can find Evan at evan.adams@briwildlife.org or [@eco_evan](#) on Twitter if you have any questions or want to talk about cool bird science.

Featured Articles to Revisit

This is our 11th issue of the Black-capped Chronicle, and we've made an effort to include any and all relevant information for this final winter atlasing season ahead of us, but we thought it'd be helpful to include a list here of past articles you may find worthy of revisiting:

[Issue 2 - Summer 2018](#)

Page 4 - **Birding on Borders**: always be aware of block boundaries while atlasing. Apps like Google Earth or Explorer help, but review this article if you need a reminder.

[Issue 3 - Winter 2018-2019](#)

Page 4 - **Merganser ID tips**: Fyn Kynd wrote a helpful article in telling Red-breasted and Common Mergansers apart. This was a common misidentification during the breeding season, but also good to brush up on for winter. Page 6 - **Irruptive Winter Finches**: we mentioned challenges with winter irruptives on page 7, this article is a helpful primer if these are new species to you.

[Issue 5 - Winter 2019-2020](#)

Page 3 - **Counting Birds**: Estimates are better than nothing, and this article links to many helpful tools for counting large winter flocks.

Page 5 - **Atlasing Your Christmas Bird Counts**: the CBC season overlaps with much of our early-winter atlasing period but uses very different protocols than we need for the atlas. This article gives you helpful tips on how to contribute good data to the atlas while you are doing a CBC.

Page 7 - **Get Owls on the Map**: an informative article from Bill Sheehan on Maine's owls and tips on where to find them. Boreal, Great Gray, and Northern Hawk owls were each reported in Maine in October, it could be a big year!

[Issue 7 - Winter 2020-2021](#)

Page 3 - **Winter Results so Far**: if you need a little motivation, go see the map of what we had accomplished as of the start of the 2020-2021 winter, we've completed so much since then!

Page 4 - **Adventures in Winter Atlas**: speaking of motivation, Glenn Hodgkin shared some amazing tales of winter atlasing in this article.

Page 6 - **Seeking Photos**: We still need bird photos (preferably showing breeding behaviors) submitted to be featured on each species page of the published atlas. This article defines what we need and how to submit them.

[Issue 8 - Spring 2021](#)

Page 9 - **Memories of the First Atlas**: this article from Chuck Whitney about participating in the first atlas effort in Maine (1978-1983) is worth revisiting.

Page 11 - **Documenting Birds**: Louis Bevier shares helpful tips on how to document birds, and especially useful skill for any species that are flagged and require notes in your eBird lists.

[Issue 9 - Winter 2021-2022](#)

Page 3 - **Winter Atlas Overview**: keep in mind that respect for the birds, and respect for the habitat you visit is critical.

Page 6 - **Species Spotlight - Red-breasted Nuthatch**: this species moved into Maine in big numbers this summer, becoming deafening in some spruce forests. Weston Barker wrote this great account on the species.

[Issue 10 - Spring 2022](#)

Page 4 - **Tips for Atlasing in the North Maine Woods**: many of our winter priority blocks are in the North Maine Woods and this short article as a few helpful tips and considerations for accessing the area.

Timeline of Next Steps for the Atlas

By Glen Mittelhauser, Project Coordinator

Although we are heading into field work for our final year of the Maine Bird Atlas, we have already transitioned into the data proofing stage of our breeding bird records. We have been fielding a lot of questions from atlas volunteers regarding when we plan to publish the Maine Bird Atlas, so we thought it would be helpful to fill everyone in on the steps of data proofing, and when the published atlas should be expected.

The scale of Maine Bird Atlas is unprecedented, with over 5 million bird records generated throughout Maine since

January of 2018. Each record will put a dot on a map for that species and as we compile all 5 million records, those dots will come together to build a pattern of distribution across the state. Atlas staff plan on spending nearly 2 intensive years checking all the bird records, writing up species accounts, and producing over 1,000 richly detailed maps. These maps and individual species accounts are the backbone of the published atlas, covering over 200 breeding and wintering species.

See the outline on page 11 for our proposed data review and publishing timeline. If you have any questions email us at: mainebirdatlas@gmail.com.



MAINE BIRD ATLAS ROADMAP TO PUBLICATION

November 2022

Start assessing breeding bird records & upload all point count data and other breeding records not yet in the Atlas portal



December 2022

Start data proofing breeding season records - this will be a long process as we will proof the atlas data 6 different ways



START

Data Prep Phase

Data Proofing Phase

February 2023

Start running and proofing breeding season abundance models using all of the Atlas point count data (>10,000 point counts)



January 2023

Assess Macaulay Library photos for uncoded breeding records



May 2023

Final phase of breeding season data proofing (with input from Atlas Steering Committee and others)



July 2023

Prepare the final breeding season files for generating maps



Map Generation Phase

December 2023

Begin generating winter atlas maps for the published atlas



September 2023

Start generating breeding season maps for the published atlas PLUS Assess wintering bird records and proof those records



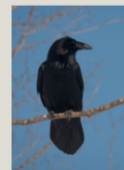
January 2024

Start work on Atlas layout, adding maps, chronology plots, and all of the species accounts



January 2025

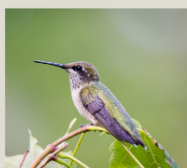
Atlas sent to proof editor in collaboration with publisher



Publication Phase

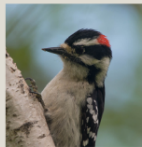
June 2024

Start editing and proofing the Atlas manuscript



April 2025

Final atlas manuscript sent to publisher



Expected publication year of The Maine Bird Atlas!!!

Bird Photos Needed

The Maine Bird Atlas is looking for submissions of exceptional bird photos to feature on each species page of the published atlas. Please consider sending us your best bird photos (featuring only species that breed or winter in Maine) to be considered for inclusion in the published Atlas. Final selections will be made by committee closer to the publish date (2023-2024). If selected, your photos will be credited to you, and you will retain the copyright.

To have your photos considered for inclusion in the Atlas:

- select your best photos taken of birds in Maine
- Rename each photo with the bird's common name followed by your first and last name (e.g. American Robin John Doe.)
- Send unedited photos at the size and quality that your camera produces. This will ensure that the image is high enough quality for consideration.
- Email photos to mebirdatlas.photos@gmail.com
- OR
- mail a disc or USB drive to Tom Aversa, 115 Fisher Rd., Unity, ME 04988
- OR
- share to the email above via DropBox or Google Drive

We will contact you for final permission and additional information if your photos are selected to appear in the published atlas. Photos will not be used for any other purpose.

See also our article in the [Winter 2020-2021 Black-capped Chronicle](#) for more information.

For most of your winter atlasing, use the Maine eBird portal (ebird.org/me) but if you observe any breeding behaviors, submit that whole list to the Maine Bird Atlas portal (ebird.org/atlasme)

Help Complete the Atlas with a Gift

Help complete the atlas with a species sponsorship (and maybe a Tshirt too). With a species sponsorship, **your name will be in print (along with anyone you choose to sponsor in honor of) in the final Maine Bird Atlas publication.** Each of Maine's breeding and wintering bird species have been divided into sponsorship levels ranging from \$30-\$2,000 and are available to sponsor for each year of the project.

All proceeds from product sales and species sponsorships will help fund travel grants to support birders going to remote, isolated regions of the state.



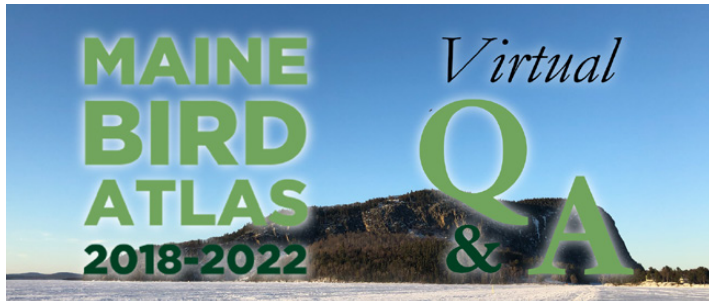
Sample species account for Snowy Owl with Sponsor a Species example circled in yellow.

See what species are still available at: www.maineaturalhistory.org/sponsor-a-species

Or purchase Maine Bird Atlas logo merchandise at: www.teepublic.com/user/mainebirdatlas

Join our Weekly Zoom Q&As

Every Thursday evening you can join Atlas staff on Zoom to get the latest updates and directions on where to focus your effort. This is a great opportunity to answer questions and talk about anything birds and atlas related.



Join us every Thursday night at 6:30PM beginning on **December 8, 2022!**

Q&As: <https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/83599698321>

Check the [Maine Bird Atlas Facebook page](#) or our Event Calendar on maine.gov/birdatlas for updates to this schedule.

Remote Travel Grants

If you are going to put in the effort, we can help with the cost. The Maine Bird Atlas has a travel grant program to help reimburse costs incurred when surveying atlas blocks in remote regions. Submit a grant application here: maine-naturalhistory.org/travelgrant



Register as a Volunteer

Please make sure you sign up as an official project volunteer. This is also where you enter your volunteer time (incl. travel, data entry, etc.) so we can meet match requirements and fund the project. After doing so, you can also choose to benefit from state health insurance coverage while participating in any atlas activities.

Go to ifw.citizenscience.maine.gov/programs/maineBirdAtlas and click 'Register'.

Get Signed up for Weekly Updates and Notifications

To be sure that you don't miss any updates, and get all notifications about weekly events, including Zoom Q&As or other training opportunities, sign up for email notifications from the Maine Bird Atlas staff.

Get on our list here: [Sign Me Up!](#)

Stay Up to Date with the Maine Bird Atlas

Email *

Sign up to receive periodic project updates, announcements of atlas events and challenges with chances to win cool prizes, and helpful tips.

By checking this box, you consent to our [data privacy policy](#).

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