



## What's Sap? - December 2024

Snow Bunting Photo: Jim Richards

Dear Atlasser,

This edition of the newsletter includes:

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- Atlas summer job openings
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- Support the Atlas!

The New Year is just around the corner, and with it - the final season of data collection for Atlas-3! Here's your latest Atlas news.

### **Use the coverage map to find where your help is needed**

Over the past few weeks we have been meeting with our extremely hard-working and dedicated team of Regional Coordinators (RCs), and pouring over spreadsheets and maps to determine exactly what coverage is still needed in each region for the final year of Atlas-3 data collection. RCs are now in the process of updating square assignments, so you'll soon be able to search the coverage map to find squares that are not yet "complete" (20 hours of effort and 25 point counts) and need help in this final year.

We have a video up on our YouTube channel where Scott Da Rocha, Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas Project Fieldwork Coordinator at Birds Canada, walks you through how to check coverage on the Atlas [interactive coverage map](#) and how to best plan for the seasons ahead. [Please check it out!](#)

### **Atlas summer job openings**

The job postings are now live for both [Field Technician](#) and [Team Lead](#) positions with our Atlas summer crews! If you or someone you know is interested in joining us for a paid summer position, spending the season camping and collecting Atlas data, click the links above to apply.

### **Last call for Northern Trip applications**

Planning for our final year of northern volunteer trips in Atlas-3 is well underway. We have an exciting line-up of possible trips planned to fill in gaps in remote parts of northern Ontario in 2025. If you're interested in participating in one of these trips, please visit our [Northern Trips page](#) and submit your details using the form.

Want to learn more about Northern Trips before signing up? Our Sappy Hour last month featured three trippers from past years presenting on their amazing trips. Watch the recording [here](#). Missed a Sappy Hour? Check out the [playlist](#) on our YouTube channel of all the past Sappy Hours.

### **Marshbird survey success!**

*Submitted by Doug Tozer, Director, Waterbirds and Wetlands for Birds Canada*

We're thrilled to report that the Atlas-3 marshbird survey has been doing extremely well. As you can see in the accompanying map, the 393 (!) squares where the marshbird survey has been completed to date are distributed throughout much of the province (shown on the map in orange), with growing coverage across the road-accessible north where information on these birds is needed the most.

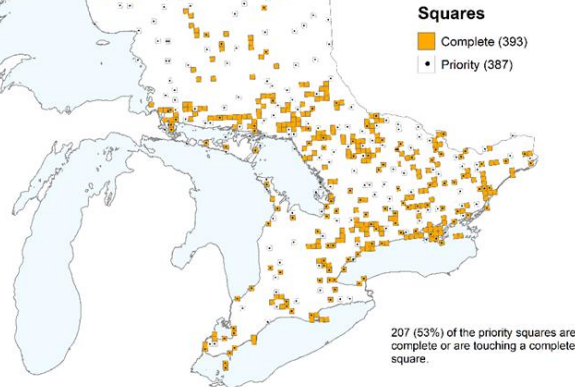
Sampling is opportunistic  
in the far north

## Atlas-3 Marshbird Survey

Progress as of September 2024



Sora. Photo: Tim Arthur



This is because the Great Lakes Marsh Monitoring Program has traditionally provided sparse coverage in the north due to low availability of volunteers. Your hard work is quickly filling this void in our knowledge. In the final year of the Atlas (2025), let's all push to complete the marshbird survey in as many pre-selected priority squares as possible throughout the road-accessible north (shown on the map with black dots), or in squares touching these squares, which are just as good.

Many, many thanks to all of you who have completed atlas marshbird surveys. We look forward to reporting new discoveries about secretive marshbirds to you based on your hard-earned data. We would like to highlight the financial support of the Atlas marshbird survey by the US Fish and Wildlife Service Webless Migratory Game Bird Program and Wildlife Habitat Canada with funds generated primarily by the purchase of Canadian Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamps by waterfowl hunters.

**Make Atlassing part of your New Year's Resolutions with the January challenge**

Our January challenge focuses on getting outstanding data submitted. We're also hoping to attract some new Atlassers with this challenge - maybe that's you! Or maybe you know someone who has been collecting data in eBird for the past four summers who needs extra incentive to import those data into the Atlas. Whatever the situation, for every checklist (old or new data!) entered during the month of January that has at least one species with breeding evidence, you'll get an entry for the grand prize: a pair of Vortex binoculars!



We're probably starting to sound like a broken record, but we really can't overstate how badly we need all that data ahead of next year's field season to ensure we are able to plan all of our remaining coverage efficiently in the last year. This is your last chance to participate before the final field season of Atlas-3 and your data are absolutely crucial! We can't wait to see everything you've observed.

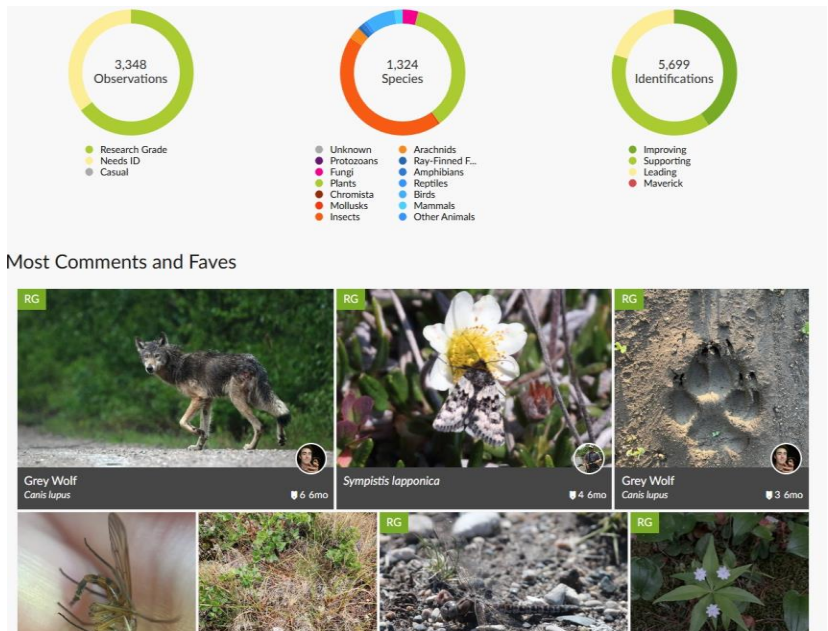
The full challenge details are available at <https://www.birdsontario.org/challenge>

### **It's CBC season – why not do some Atlassing?**

The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) season began December 14th. While you might not think about the Atlas during the winter months, it's actually the perfect time of year to Atlas for a couple of owl species in southern Ontario: Eastern Screech-Owl and Great Horned Owl. If you find yourself owling this CBC season, don't forget – you can Atlas that! If you needed an extra reason to get up early or stay out late on your CBC, maybe this is it! To find a CBC near you, visit the Birds Canada [Christmas Bird Count page](#).

### **Atlas staff go iNaturalisting**

This summer we challenged Atlas staff to document some of the non-bird wildlife they encounter during their Atlassing adventures, and the results were impressive! In total, Atlas staff recorded 3,348 observations in iNaturalist, representing at least 1,324 species, including 576 species of insects and 473 species of plants. These observations help fill in distribution gaps for many species across the province. Of particular note, 1,205 of the observations were made within Ontario Parks properties and include 34 different species that are listed as provincially-tracked by the Ontario Natural Heritage Information Centre. A special report is being prepared to highlight these accomplishments.



If you want to check out the observations, they can be found in the “[Ontario Atlas-3 staff 2024](#)” project (iNaturalist webpage). We encourage all Atlassers to make note of any other wildlife they encounter as they’re out and about, and submit those observations to online repositories like [iNaturalist](#) to help inform conservation efforts.

### The Atlas needs your photos

We know there are many talented bird photographers out there. What better way to support the Atlas than to contribute and potentially see your images featured in the final published materials?

This off-season we’ll be reviewing all the submitted photos to start choosing which ones may be used in the final publications. We also have a continual need for photos for social media posts and other promotional material, so there are a lot of opportunities for sharing your beautiful images.

The Atlas is looking for good-quality photos of all Ontario breeding birds, preferably taken in Ontario during the breeding season (and in breeding habitat wherever possible). We’re especially interested in photos that depict elevated breeding evidence (e.g. displays, nests, young, carrying food, etc.).

Please submit the highest resolution versions of your images possible using the [media submission form](#). Instructions for sending batches of images are included on that page.

Thanks to everyone who has submitted images already!

### Atlas-3 quick start

New to the Atlas or just looking for a refresher? Check out the Atlas Quick-Start page: [www.birdsontario.org/quick-start](http://www.birdsontario.org/quick-start) or head over to our “[Getting Started with Atlas-3](#)” video playlist that covers all of the basics in six short videos. Maybe you haven’t taken the plunge yet or maybe you know a birder who just needs a nudge to see how easy it is to participate. Whatever the reason, we want to show everyone just how easy and fun it is to get Atlassing.

### Get your Atlas-3 swag

Looking for some Atlas-3 gear? Check out our project merch at the store [here](#).

### Join the Atlas community on Discord

Got a question about a specific Atlas topic or just want to connect and share stories with other Atlassers? Join the Atlas Discord, a communication server with different channels, each specific to an Atlas topic! For detailed instructions on how to join, check out: [birdsontario.org/discussion](https://birdsontario.org/discussion).

Invite link: <https://discord.gg/JCfgr3egG>.

### **Content wanted**

Do you have a cool Atlassing story, adventure, or observation to share? Please [send them](#) to us for either a blog post or short newsletter item.

### **Support the Atlas!**

The Atlas team sincerely appreciates the volunteer support for the project. If you would like to consider helping even more, please make a donation or recruit others to make a donation in support of the project. You can now donate directly to Atlas-3 by following [this secure link](#) – or click on the donate button at the bottom of this e-newsletter. You will receive a charitable receipt for income tax purposes from Birds Canada, along with an extra warm feeling inside, knowing you’re supporting the project even more. For those that are able to, we thank you for considering this!

Happy Holidays!

- The Atlas-3 Team

### **The Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas-3 thanks the following for their financial support:**

Environment and Climate Change Canada	Natural Resource Solutions Inc.,	RBC Foundation
TD Friends of the Environment Foundation	Hodgson Family Foundation	Employment and Social Development Canada (Canada Summer Jobs)
	Baillie Fund	Newmont
	Wildlife Habitat Canada	
The McLean Foundation	Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry	Parks Canada Agency
Foundation	Project Learning Tree	US Fish & Wildlife Service

### **The Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas-3 thanks the following for their in-kind support:**

Boreal Avian Modelling Project	Royal Ontario Museum	WildTrax
Natural Resources Canada	University of Alberta	Sustainable Forestry Initiative

Ontario Parks

Wild Birds Unlimited

Plenty Canada

**COVID-19:** *The Atlas team reminds all atlassers to be aware of the latest COVID-19 conditions in Ontario. Please follow all public health guidelines and restrictions, and check for updates frequently. Information on the latest conditions and public health guidance can be found on the Government of Ontario [website](#). Follow the links to the most current situation in the province.*