



Spruce Grouse Photo: Doug Tate

Dear Atlasser,

This edition of the newsletter includes:

- Calling all Canoe Trippers! 2024 pre-planned canoe trips now posted
- Promo for 2024 Square Bashes
- Two-eyed Seeing project
- Kick-off events
- Sappy Hour “Using Atlas data” recap and schedule
- NatureCounts App – don’t forget to update!
- Photos needed
- Join the Atlas community on Discord
- Content wanted
- Support the Atlas!

Calling all Canoe Trippers! 2024 pre-planned canoe trips now posted

As we enter year four, it becomes increasingly important to prioritize some of the harder-to-reach parts of Central Ontario in order to meet our goal of 100% coverage in the “Southern” zone by the end of Atlas-3.

Atlas staff have identified a number of critical gap areas remaining in the southern Shield (regions 16-32) that need your help. We have compiled a list of efficient, fun, and affordable canoe and backpacking trips that make access to these gaps possible. We have designed itineraries for each trip that prioritize completing the requirements of



uncovered squares while ensuring participants have a great time.



Trips range from three to 11 days and have each been assigned an estimated difficulty rating based on a variety of factors such as physical demands, canoeing skill level, birding skill level, and atlassing workload.

Volunteers will need to cover the cost of these trips, with the exception of trips involving camping in provincial parks, in which case participants can work with the appropriate Regional Coordinator to apply for camping fee waivers. Any other camping will occur on public land in areas free of charge. Therefore, the costs absorbed by volunteers will consist primarily of gas, food, and canoe rentals (if required).

Think you'd be up for one of these fun and rewarding eco-vacations? Click [here](#) for the list of trips and for more information on how to sign up!

2024 Square Bashes - Registration is now live!

Registration is now open for our 2024 Square Bashes! Square Bashes are multi-day events that bring atlasers together to camp in and atlas near Provincial Parks, with the goal of covering key gaps in coverage. Thank you to Ontario Parks for generously providing free camping to Square Bash participants. We have three great events lined up this year which will be fun for atlasers of all levels of experience!

Registration is required for all Square Bashes. You can register through the Ontario Field Ornithologists (OFO) field trip webforms linked below. Please feel free to register for the entire duration of the event, or for only a part of that time. Our goal is to provide adequate coverage for as many squares as we can in and around the parks, while having as much fun as possible!

We have three Square Bashes planned for this year:

- **[Pinery Provincial Park](#): Friday, May 24 - Wednesday, May 29.** Pinery Provincial Park is situated on the shore of beautiful Lake Huron, and contains regionally-rare ecosystems such as Great Lakes coastal sand dunes and an oak savanna. The park and surrounding area are host to over 300 bird species, with possibilities including Tufted Titmouse, Red-headed Woodpeckers and maybe even a Dickcissel! This event is especially convenient for London atlasers. [Register for the Pinery Square Bash [here](#)]
- **[Bon Echo Provincial Park](#): Friday, May 31 - Wednesday, June 5.** This area features beautiful lakes with stunning cliffs, often used as nesting sites by Peregrine Falcons and other birds of prey. The surrounding forests are home to a rich diversity of breeding songbirds, including the provincially threatened Cerulean Warbler. This event is a convenient trip for Ottawa, Peterborough and Kingston atlasers. [Register for the Bon Echo Square Bash [here](#)]
- **[Mikisew Provincial Park](#): Friday, June 7 - Wednesday, June 12.** This area is home to beautiful hardwood forests and wetlands, and Bald Eagles and Ospreys can often be seen on Eagle Lake. A rich diversity of warblers and other forest songbirds also nest in the area. Located just off Highway 11, this event is convenient for local atlasers as well as those who want to take a trip further north. [Register for the Mikisew Square Bash [here](#)]

Please do not contact the parks about these events as we are making the arrangements through the Atlas-3 office.

Two-eyed Seeing to Share Knowledge of Ontario's Breeding Birds Project

Plenty Canada Indigenous Liaison staff (Sharon Kimberley- Northern Ontario and Emily Morris (interim) – Southern Ontario) have been hard at work over the past year engaging with individuals and communities to conduct the [Two-eyed Seeing to Share Knowledge of Ontario's Breeding Birds](#) project. The project operates on a Community First approach that supports Indigenous communities to lead initiatives that align with their bird-related priorities, including increased protection and recovery of birds at risk and land-based programming. Community outreach and relationship building has been ongoing with conversations with 50 First Nation communities or organizations in the past year, including attending community events and distributing Atlas-2 books and Autonomous Recording Units (ARUs) to support education and data collection needs.

Kick-off Events

There are tons of events planned to help celebrate the start of year four of the Atlas. We're very excited to be kicking

off the year with two in-person events run by Atlas staff. This year our events will be in Barrie (April 20) and Kemptville (April 21). We're excited to see some Atlassers in person – hope to see you there! Atlassers of all experience levels are invited to come.

Not in the Kemptville or Barrie areas? No problem! Several Regional Coordinators also have in-person events planned for their regions both on kick-off weekend or later into the season. Stay tuned for communications on those events or watch the list of events on the Atlas website.

To register, check out the details or see a full list of events, visit [the Atlas website](#).

Are you gearing up for the season and looking for a refresher? Don't forget we have everything you need to get started with Atlassing at our [Atlas-3 Quick Start Guide](#). And we have our "[Getting Started with Atlas-3](#)" video playlist that covers all of the basics in six short videos.

Sappy Hour “Using Atlas data” Recap and Schedule

We had an amazing lineup of presenters at our Sappy Hour series “Using Atlas data” where we heard from people who use Atlas data in their day-to-day jobs working to better understand and ultimately conserve birds. If you missed it, they are all available on our [Sappy Hour Playlist](#) and individually at:

- [Summarizing and Celebrating Year-3](#) (Feb 1)
- [Using Atlas data; species assessments and population modeling](#) (Feb 8)
- [Using Atlas data; habitat change and monitoring](#) (Feb 15)
- [Using Atlas data; land management](#) (Feb 22)

A huge “THANK YOU” goes out to all the guest speakers, hosts, and especially to Natasha Barlow who put the series together. We hope you'll agree that hearing about some of the many uses of Atlas data only makes all of your Atlassing efforts even more meaningful.

Upcoming Sappy Hour Schedule:

We hope to “see” you on a future Sappy Hour. While each one has a theme with a short presentation, we always leave time and invite questions about all things Atlas.

- April 18 - Getting started with Atlas-3 ([Register Here](#))
- May 23 - Point counts and targeting gaps

Missed a Sappy Hour? All of our Sappy Hours are available on our [Sappy Hour Playlist](#).

NatureCounts App – don't forget to update!

If you haven't checked out the NatureCounts App for a while (or ever!) then you'll be delighted – over the past two years it has undergone extensive testing and upgrades and we couldn't be more excited about its utility. The “new and improved” app got rave reviews at our kick-off events last year and we hope you'll all give it a try.

Version 6.0 will be coming to an app store near you in early April so make sure you've updated to the latest version. This new version will require you to follow a few steps to select Atlas-3 as your project again, but you will only have to do this the first time you use the new version - don't be alarmed!

Some of the newest features include:

- Safe dates are now built right into the app
- Warning pops up if you leave a square
- Built-in timer
- Ability to download draft checklists
- Quick entry (type a number then the species name or four-letter code to quickly add that number to the species' total)
- Better syncing with eBird locations

Please leave a rating and/or review wherever you get your apps. And don't forget to leave us feedback if you have ideas for improvements or notice something that seems “off” using the app [feedback form](#).

Photos needed

Even though we still have two field seasons to go, we're already starting to think about the publication of the results and one of the things we will need are high quality photos. So, we're giving you a heads-up that our August challenge will be related to submitting media to us through our [media submission form](#).

So this summer when you're out, please carry a camera and document what you find. We'll be asking for photos showing breeding evidence, birds, habitats and atlasers in action. If you do, you'll be well-positioned to participate in (and maybe win!) the August monthly challenge.

Join the Atlas community on Discord

Got a question about a specific Atlas topic or just want to connect and share stories with other Atlasers? 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

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



Content wanted!

Do you have cool Atlasing stories, adventures, or observations to share? Please [send them](#) to us for either a blog post or short newsletter item.

Support the Atlas!

Volunteer support is critical to the success of the Atlas, and we are deeply grateful for all the contributions that our incredible volunteers make. If you would like to or are able to help even more, please consider making 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 - and an extra warm feeling inside, knowing you're supporting the project with a donation and your volunteer efforts. Thanks so much for considering this!

Happy Atlasing

- 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)
Vortex	Baillie Fund	Newmont
The McLean Foundation	Wildlife Habitat Canada	Parks Canada Agency
	Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry	

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 atlasers 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.



This email was sent by [Birds Canada](#) on behalf of the [Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas](#) partners (Birds Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Ontario Field Ornithologists, Ontario Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry, and Ontario Nature).

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