



American Woodcock Photo: Jamie Muise

Dear Atlasser,

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Birds displaying breeding evidence should be becoming harder to ignore as we enter spring of the final year of data collection!

Coverage to date – focusing your effort

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.

Want more information about coverage to-date? Re-watch our [March 11 Sappy Hour about Atlas Gaps](#).

Some of our primary atlasers may still be planning to finish their squares, or life may have gotten in the way – and that's absolutely understandable! However, in the spirit of being proactive, we want to ensure that all squares are completed so don't be surprised if you notice a square you had previously signed up for now shows as "unassigned". After all, it's always better to have more coverage than to risk leaving a square unfinished if unforeseen circumstances arise later in the season.

We have a video up on our YouTube channel where Scott Da Rocha, Atlas-3 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!](#)

Backcountry trips

We have identified fourteen backcountry trips in central Ontario that are required to complete some remote squares in this part of the province. If you're an avid hiker or canoeist, most of the trips can be completed in two or three nights and will take you to some amazing places. Trips range from day trips up to 10 days and include back-packing and canoe-based trips.



The Atlas is excited to be able to offer some financial assistance for these trips to help offset the cost of gas and entrance fees where required.

If you're interested, head to <https://www.birdsontario.org/canoetrips> to see the list of trips, their details, and how to sign up. But hurry, these are all first-come, first-served!

Year five Kick-off events

This year, Atlas-HQ will be leading three kick-off events on the weekend of April 26 and 27. This year our events will be in Kingston (April 26), Kitchener (April 26) and Sarnia (April 27). We're excited to see some Atlasers in person – hope to see you there! Atlasers of all experience levels are invited to come.

Not in the Kitchener, Kingston, or Sarnia 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 Atlasing 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.

2025 Square Bashes – registration is now live

Registration is now open for our 2025 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 at their parks. 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:

[Cedar Rail Family Campground](#): Friday, May 23 – Monday, May 26. We chose this location because it is strategically located between southern Bruce and Grey Atlas Regions where some coverage gaps exist. The local area offers some of

the richest grassland bird habitat in southwestern Ontario and has an amazing diversity of forest birds as well. If species like Golden-winged Warbler and Upland Sandpiper are high on your list, then this one is for you. This event is a convenient trip for London, Guelph, Kitchener, Hamilton, and GTA atlasers. [Register for the Grey-Bruce Square Bash here.](#)

[Silent Lake Provincial Park](#): Friday, May 30 – Wednesday, June 4. This area features beautiful lakes with extensive forests of the southern Canadian Shield and is home to a rich diversity of breeding songbirds, with more species of warbler than you can shake a stick at. This event is a convenient trip for Peterborough, Barrie, Kingston, and GTA atlasers. [Register for the Silent Lake Square Bash here.](#)

[Bonnechere Provincial Park](#): Friday, June 6 – Wednesday, June 11. This area is home to beautiful hardwood and pine forests and wetlands and in close proximity to the rich grassland habitat of the Ottawa Valley. There's a possibility for a truly great diversity of birds in this area from Black-backed Woodpeckers to Baltimore Orioles. Located not far from Pembroke, this event is convenient for Ottawa, Kingston, and Peterborough area atlasers. [Register for the Bonnechere Square Bash here.](#)

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

Upcoming Sappy Hours

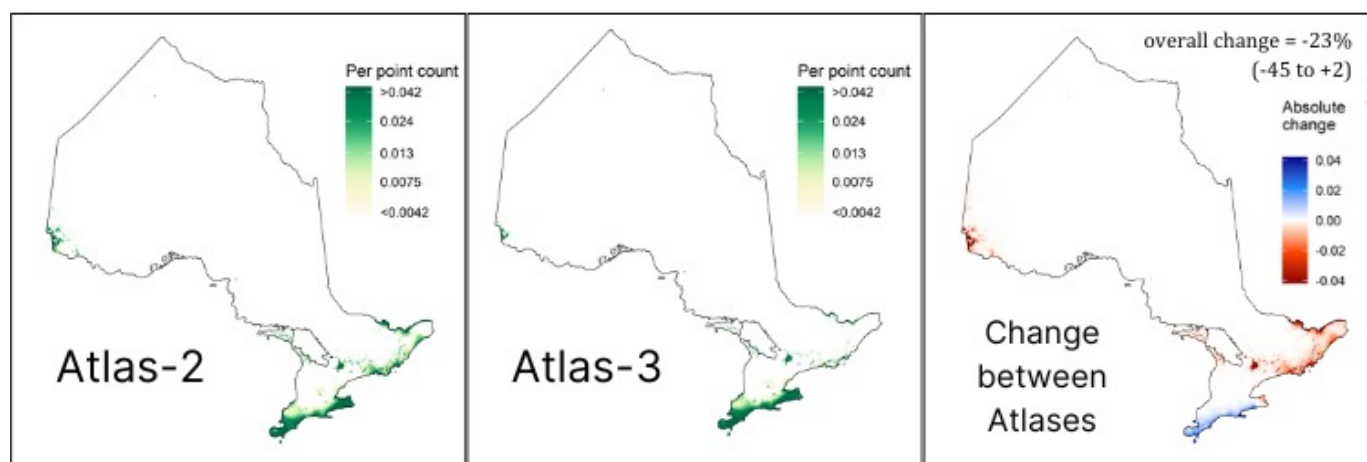
We've had a full slate of our Sappy Hour sessions back underway since February. Our 2025 schedule is:

- February 11 – [Summarizing and Celebrating Year 4](#)
- February 25 – [Early Results and How to Help](#)
- March 11 – [Filling Atlas Data and Photo Gaps](#)
- April 8 – Atlas-3 Trivia ([register here](#))
- May 21 – Point Counts ([register here](#))

All Sappy Hours begin at 7pm Eastern Time. The sessions are also streamed on Facebook Live. You can also see a [full playlist of all past Sappy Hours.](#)

Analysis sneak peek

A dedicated team of data analysts has been working to build the models that will eventually turn all of your wonderful data into meaningful maps, graphs, and other tools that will support bird conservation and land-use planning for years to come. In the next few editions of the newsletter and on social media, we wanted to give you a sneak peek!



The above maps show a preliminary* version of the predicted relative abundance of Purple Martin across the province. The first map shows the modeled abundance for Atlas-2 (based on data collected between 2001 and 2005) using the same methodology of analysis as the second map that shows results from Atlas-3 (based on data collected between 2021 and 2024). The third map shows the relative change between those two maps. As you can see, it looks like Purple Martin has declined steeply in central, southeastern, and northwestern Ontario while increasing along Lake Erie.

How do these maps work? We take all the bird data that were collected on Atlas checklists (including point counts) and then use information we know about the habitat and climate suitability of an area to fill in the missing pieces. So, if a location didn't get surveyed by Atlasers but is very similar to an area that did, the model would predict a similar number of individuals of that species are likely in the unsurveyed location.

***Please note: this map is an early draft; the dataset is not yet finalized and Atlas analysis is still a work in**

progress.

Monthly challenges

Speaking of our challenges, we'd like to congratulate three recent winners of Vortex binoculars:

Chad Cornish won the January challenge. He was randomly selected from the 50 Atlassers who submitted over 2200 checklists. Chad had this to say about his contributions to the Atlas, "I've always been fascinated with the natural world, and do whatever I can to help save what remains. Atlassing provides another outlet for me to help with the monitoring and protection of wildlife, and the wild places they need to thrive."



Chad Cornish, January Challenge winner.
Photo submitted by Chad Cornish

Pete Chapman won the February challenge. He was randomly selected from the 58 newly registered Atlassers. Pete submitted thirteen checklists in February. Welcome aboard, Pete!

Tanya Berkers was the second winner of the February challenge. Tanya convinced Pete to join the Atlas and is our Regional Coordinator for Region 3 (Lambton).

Congrats to all three of our most recent winners and thanks to Vortex Canada for providing discounted binoculars for the Atlas.

We already told you about the March – April Owl Survey Challenge and we'll have another monthly challenge in April, focusing on submitting photos for species that we are most in need of photos for the Atlas publication. Check out <https://www.birdsontario.org/challenge> and watch our social media for all the details.

March and April Atlassing targets

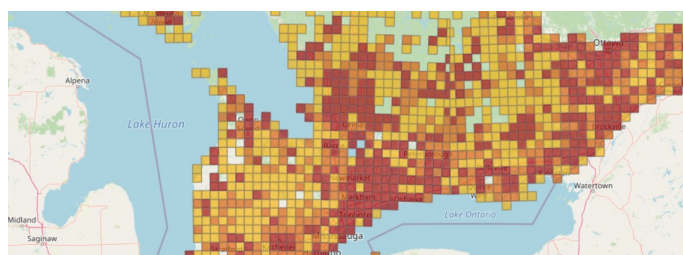
Now is a great time to get out and do some Atlassing. In fact, this is the best time of year for some species! Driving backroads and watching for stick nests can be productive from now until leaf-out: Common Raven, Red-tailed Hawk, Great Horned Owl, and Bald Eagle should all be starting to sit on nests.

Most year-round resident species (e.g., Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Cardinal) are now on territory singing away every morning. Ruffed Grouse and American Woodcocks will also be starting to display soon (if they haven't already in your area!), but remember that their "displays" count as singing (S code) unless you observe interactions between individual birds.

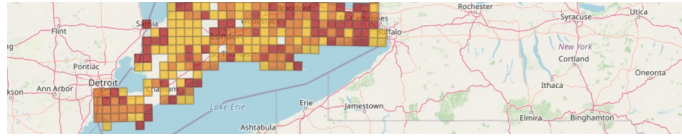
And of course, now is prime time for lots of our owl species; even if you don't want to commit the effort to conducting the owl survey protocols, you can go out searching for these species at this time of year.

You might be surprised how many squares are missing some common species or could be upgraded from possible to probable, so be sure to check out the Atlas species maps to look for nearby gaps of some of these early-season species. We covered how to do this in the [March 11 Sappy Hour](#).

White-breasted Nuthatch square map for southern Ontario. Lots of squares with no records and even more that could easily be upgraded from possible (yellow) to



probable (orange) using the T
– Territory code!



The latest episode of The Warblers Podcast features Atlas-3

If you're a fan of [The Warblers Podcast](#) then this will be old news, but the most recent episode featured Atlas Project Manager, Kaelyn Bumelis joining Atlas coordinators from the Saskatchewan and Newfoundland projects talking all things atlassing - find it wherever you download podcasts and be sure to share with your friends who might want to learn more about the fun and importance of Atlassing.

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 continued need for photos for social media posts and other promotional material, so there are a lot of opportunities to share 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. courtship displays, nests, young, birds carrying food, etc.).

Please submit the highest resolution versions of your images possible using the [media submission form](#), which includes instructions for sending batches of images.

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 Quick-Start page: 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.

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!

Until next time!

- 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
Clean Foundation	Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry	US Fish & Wildlife Service
	Project Learning Tree	

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 Natural Resources, and Ontario Nature).

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