



Common Nighthawk Photo: Mark Peck

Dear Atlasser,

This edition of the Atlas-3 newsletter will cover:

- Introduction
- Coverage to date: hours, point counts, gaps
- Northern trips: Plans for 2023
- Reports from 2022 Northern Trips
- Report from 2022 Paid Crew
- Atlas Swag
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- Update on Zoom recordings
- Birding for Atlas-3 in Candidate Protected Areas Webinar

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.

Introduction

Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much. – Helen Keller

Helen Keller clearly understood the essence of community projects like Atlas-3. After two strong years of the Atlas, it's evident that much of Ontario's birding community is on-side and contributing significantly to the Atlas. Thank you very much for getting the project off to such a good start. We are pulling together and already making significant contributions to bird conservation via the Atlas project.

Now that the pattern of coverage and gaps is starting to emerge (see the article on Coverage to date, below), we each need to be thinking about the gaps and how we might contribute to filling them. Targeted and coordinated effort becomes more important each year until data collection ends in 2025. We can see what's needed; now we just have to make it happen.

The first step is to identify a gap. Some are fairly evident, such as squares with little or no coverage or few or no point counts or special surveys to date, and these are our highest priority for the rest of the project. From the

maps, it is clear that we need to be devoting special attention to the northern part of “Southern Ontario”, generally from cottage country north to Temagami and Sault Ste Marie. In future newsletters, we will be outlining our strategy for getting this area covered. That will include providing information on Square-bashes in that area, and on provincial parks where you can camp free of charge and use as a base for collecting Atlas data. But you don’t have to wait for us. Please start thinking about how you could help get that area done.

Other gaps are more local and easier to deal with, but still require some focused effort. If you are a Principal Atlasser (PA) for a square (i.e., you have agreed to ensure that the square is adequately covered) this winter would be a good time to determine what gaps remain in your square. Are all the point counts and special surveys done? Do you have at least 20 hours of effort during the peak season? If gaps like these remain, and you don’t think you’ll be able to get them all filled before the end of the project, please let your Regional Coordinator (RC) know and they will look for help.

If you are not a PA for a square, you still have a huge role to play in the project. Please contact your RC to find out how you can best help in your local region. Look at the coverage maps below and on the web site and think about how you can be of most help. Feel free to be atlassing whenever and wherever you want (it all contributes importantly), but focusing your efforts on gaps, and coordinating your efforts through your RC helps ensure maximum efficiency and effectiveness of your effort.

All Atlassers can help flesh out the species list for any given square. You can search for those pesky species that haven’t been found yet but you are sure are in there somewhere. You can help confirm breeding for species, or cover sites or habitat types that haven’t been visited yet. It all helps make the Atlas better and a more valuable tool for helping our birds.

Talk to your friends about atlassing

A key part of filling gaps is ensuring that everyone who should be participating in the project is taking part. Please take some time to talk to your non-atlasser {birding} friends about the Atlas (there should be a word for them - something equivalent to “muggles”), how it is a project of our birding community and why they should be involved, applying their skills and energy and helping to carry the load. They also don’t want to miss out on the warm feelings of satisfaction of contributing to a group effort and important conservation and monitoring project like the Atlas.

Get your data in

Probably more than 90% of the 2022 data have already been submitted, but some continues to trickle in. So, please, if you haven’t already done so, make it a priority to get the data in asap. It really helps us to understand how we are faring in relation to our coverage goals, and to plan for next year.

Welcome new Atlas staff

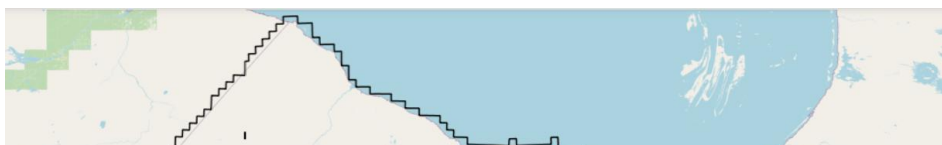
We welcome Karl Heide and Scott Da Rocha to the Atlas staff for the fall and winter period. Karl served as crew lead for the northern paid field crew in 2022. He completed his MSc at the University of Guelph in January of this year, has been involved with a number of long-term avian research projects across the world since 2013, and has been a serious birder since age 11. Scott found an interest in birding back in 2016, when he began working for the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. Since then he has been involved in multiple wildlife monitoring programs, including his work with the Atlas’ 2022 southern paid field crew.

The North beckons!

The Big News around virtual Atlas-HQ is that funding for atlassing the mostly unroaded North is now available and we are gearing up to make substantial headway in 2023. See the article below for more details.

Coverage to date

Although 2022 data are not yet all in, results so far indicate another strong year for the Atlas. Thanks for all your great work!! As you can see from Figure 1, which shows the total coverage by atlas volunteers and some of the paid crews to date, atlassers have submitted data for almost all squares in southern Ontario, and a goodly portion of the squares in the road-accessible north. Although some work is needed in almost every square, the white, green and light orange squares in southern Ontario will require special attention in years 3 to 5 of the Atlas. The first brown squares have appeared in far northern Ontario - with lots more to come!



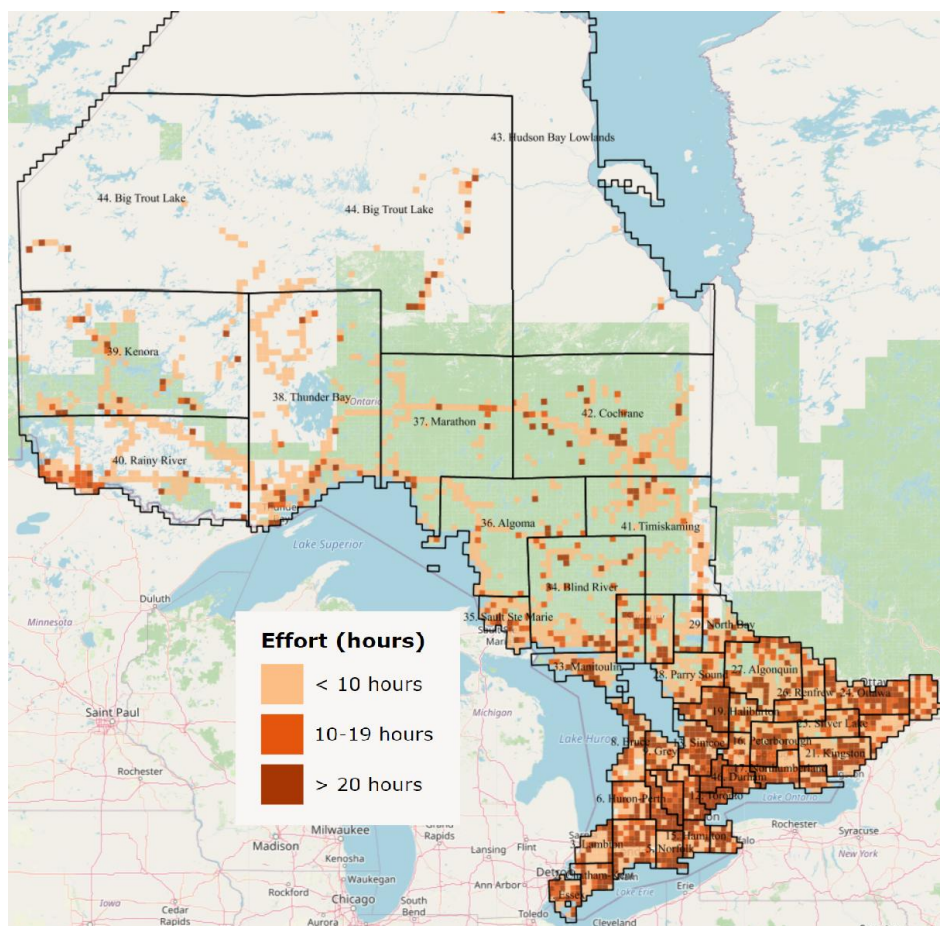


Figure 1: Hours of coverage reported so far in Atlas-3. Maps like these showing coverage to date are available on the [NatureCounts website](https://www.naturecounts.org/)

Looking more closely at the details of coverage to date, the level of participation is a little below the first year, except in point counts, including digital point counts, which both showed nice increases in 2022. The number of records submitted seems likely to surpass 1 million in 2023!

Year	Atlassers	Species	Squares	Records	Point Counts	Digital PCs	Peak Hours
2021	1,139	261	2,371	448,164	10,082	847	23,267
2022 (so far)	924	251	2,312	371,565	10,378	2,102	18,014
Total Effort (2021-2022)	1,344	269	2,824	819,729	20,460	2,949	41,381

Atlassers: This is the number of people who have submitted data which will probably increase as everyone gets their data in. You can help us to increase participation in 2023 by getting your birding friends to jump on-board!

Species: it's not surprising that the species count is lower so far in Atlas-3. So far, we haven't had as much coverage in the Hudson Bay Lowlands. We are looking forward to filling out that list as we expand our coverage throughout the Lowlands in 2023 and beyond.

Squares: Data has been submitted in a staggering number of squares! Next steps for 2023 will be to focus efforts outside of city centers where full coverage has been reached.

Records: The checklist approach provides considerably more data, which will be very useful for understanding our breeding bird populations – at this rate, we'll surpass 1,000,000 species records in 2023! Who will submit the millionth record?!

Point Counts & Digital Point Counts: 2022 was the year of the Point Count! We've surpassed 2021 for both traditional and digital point count numbers! It's quite possible that there are a lot more point count data yet to be submitted – so if you don't have yours in yet, please get them in ASAP.

Hours: 41,000 hours of Atlassing is an impressive number! Lets keep this momentum going for 2023!

Thanks to everyone who submitted data so far to the atlas. If you still have data from the season, please try to enter it as soon as possible!

Remote Northern Atlassing in 2023

The big push to “atlas” the unroaded areas of Northern Ontario got started in 2022, but is shifting into high gear in 2023. We're hoping you'll join us for a unique adventure bound to provide some life-long memories and make a huge contribution to the Atlas.

Ontario's unroaded North is an amazing, and challenging, place to survey. Much of it is truly remote, with scattered communities here and there. The northern part of Ontario's North comprises the Hudson Bay Lowlands, the second largest wetland in the world, with virtually no roads outside of a few Indigenous Communities along the coast. Much of the planned work in 2023 centres on the Lowlands.

Most atlassing in the North happens via canoe trips, with teams of 4 atlassers travelling downstream on a river. Some trips will start and end in communities while others will involve access via floatplanes to lakes and along rivers.

The primary goal for Atlas-3 in the remote north is to return to the same squares and exact point count locations where surveys were run in Atlas-2. Those data will give us the best possible comparison to the bird populations of 20 years ago, including an unprecedented and invaluable opportunity to see how our changing climate may be affecting bird communities in such a remote location.

To collect Atlas data, a team of 4 will usually split into two teams of two each day, for safety reasons. Each 2-person team will head out on foot each morning, trying to find as many species as possible, recording data by checklists. Each team will also cover as many as possible of the Point Counts covered in Atlas-2. Mornings start early in the north, with the sun rising around 5:00 am, and Civil Twilight (the period with enough natural light that artificial light is not needed) starting around 4:00 am. Atlassing by canoe along the riverbanks between campsites is often really productive, and when other wildlife is most likely to be seen. The riverbanks in the Hudson Bay Lowlands are often slightly elevated above the surrounding bogs and fens, so have taller trees, and tend to have the richest bird communities.

As well as regular atlassing and point counts, participants will be recording point counts using [Zoom units](#), to provide a permanent record of their point counts. Each team will also be deploying Autonomous Recording Units (ARUs) set to record at standard time intervals, including at night, along the way to complement their atlassing activities. The recordings from the ARUs and Zooms will be interpreted over the winter to add to the database for each trip.

The Atlas will pay the cost of flights into remote areas, either commercial airline or floatplane, for each trip. Fundraising is underway to provide some assistance with other costs such as canoe rentals and travel to the North.

Near the northern coast, polar bears are not expected to occur inland in June and early July when most atlassing takes place. Nevertheless, the plan is that trips near coastal areas will be accompanied by guides from local Indigenous communities as an additional safety measure.

How to participate

If you haven't already done so, please complete the questionnaire on the Atlas web site: <https://www.birdsontario.org/northern-trips/>. The form provides important information about your qualifications, interests, availability, and who, if anyone, you would like to team up with. If you don't have partners in mind, we will help establish teams of qualified people by connecting people with suitable skill sets. At least two people on each trip should be skilled birders able to identify northern birds by sight and sound. Everyone must be experienced in wilderness travel, camping and canoeing, with good navigation skills, up to date first aid training and tolerance of biting insects.

We are currently looking for up to 40 volunteers to take part in 10 trips in 2023. Nine are canoe trips and one is an adventure out to the James Bay Coast from Moosonee, though the latter could be combined with a Moose River Canoe trip. It takes about a week to adequately cover the two priority 10-km squares in each 100-km block. Figure 2 shows the proposed 2023 trips and the 100-km blocks involved, and a name for each trip. We are currently working on the logistics for each trip.

Karl Heide is helping to coordinate Northern Atlas trips for 2023. For more information email kheide@birdscanada.org.

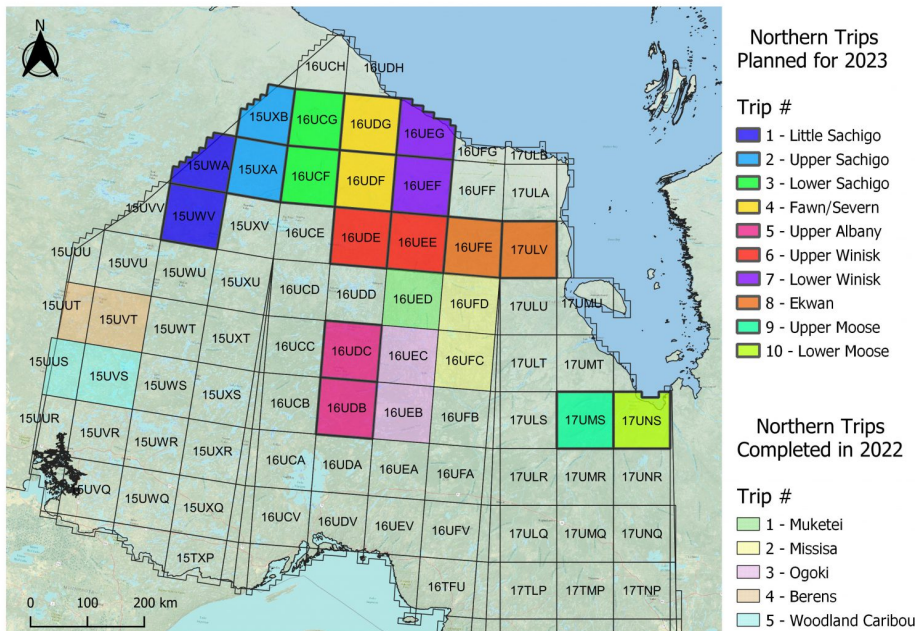


Figure 2. Planned trips for 2023 and completed trips from 2022 in the far north.

Excerpts from 2022 Trip reports

Here are some brief excerpts from two of the remote trips that were run in 2022. First, the trip through Woodland Caribou Provincial Park, 18 June – 30 June, 2022, by Sarah Gates, Matt Kennel, William Konze, Pat Kramer, Mark Peck.

26 June – Wet and windy. We gave up on moving to the next site or getting any point counts completed. Stayed in camp until 10:00 and then headed in behind camp to look at a shrubland habitat we saw on the Atlas map. On the way, we passed through some recent forest fire burn and found 2 Common Nighthawk nests. Traveled through a healthy older poplar stand and then into a wet meadow (shrubland). Spent some time watching a pair of agitated Greater Yellowlegs and several sparrow species carrying food. Also had a couple of dummy nests of Sedge Wren. Went back to camp for lunch and then crossed the river to walk around another burn area where we had seen American Kestrel, Northern Flicker and a Great Gray Owl night before. Pat set up the 2nd ARU. Zero point counts today.



From top left, clockwise: Matt (Campmaster) Kenel, Patrick (ARU King) Kramer, William (leaky tent) Konze, Mark (leaky boot) Peck, and Sarah (Zoomer) Gates.

27 June – Cloudy but clearing. Up at 4:30, broke down camp and finished off the rest of the point counts in 15UUS68 adding a few more along the way. Moved into 15UUS58 and camped near the final portage at the top of the square. William spotted a Long-eared Owl nest in a burned jack pine along the shoreline on one of the islands. Adult was on nest. Set up camp around noon and then stayed nearby due to thunderstorms again. Matt and Pat did a little fishing, another walleye for dinner and brownies in the oven for dessert. The weather is making it difficult to do general atlassing in the afternoons.



From left to right: Huey, Dewey and Louis, etc.: Common Goldeneye - FY. Photo Mark (leaky boot) Peck

The following excerpt is from the report of the Missisa river trip, June 26-July 10, 2022, by Craig Evans, Christopher Evans, Michael Ferguson and Ian Cook. [Click here](#) to read the whole article and see more photos.

Missisa River was a very easy river to paddle. It averaged perhaps 15 meters across and had quite a good flow, despite meandering at times quite extensively. The only serious obstacles were a handful of log jams. Two of these were particularly tricky to carry over, requiring balancing on slippery logs, sawing some limbs and logs and dragging the canoes over the obstructions. The good current and lack of portages allowed us to cover some good distances between priority squares when necessary. On two days we covered 34 and 38 kms respectively.

The riverbank was fairly consistent: the edge was lined by thick tangled alder, followed by a steep sandy or muddy bank. Above this was a line of quite tall, mature black and white spruce, on average perhaps a border 30 meters deep, lining the river. Beyond that the landscape opened up into classic James and Hudson Bay lowland muskeg as the black spruce and tamarack got thinner and spindlier and the ground got saturated with water. Sphagnum moss and reindeer moss was underfoot as well as thick expanses of Labrador Tea. Pitcher plants and sundews grew in bog-like conditions. It was a beautiful rugged landscape in its own way, and the presence of a variety of beautiful wildflowers added to the effect. Dragonflies and butterflies were fairly plentiful in this habitat as well.



From Left to right: Chris Cook, Craig Evans and Chris Evans atlassing along the Missisa River. Photo Michael Ferguson.

The birding was good, particularly along the river. The muskeg had fewer birds but had some interesting species occupying that habitat. Most of our general atlassing was done from the canoes as we travelled the river, and in and immediately around our campsites. The current and the thickness of the bush made it difficult to explore too far from our campsites but of course the river provided a great space from which to observe birds on the water, in the air and in the thick bush lining the river. Birdsong followed us constantly. It was much quieter in the muskeg but the songs travelled well.

On the riverbank Spotted Sandpipers, Swainson's Thrushes, Northern Waterthrushes, Tennessee Warblers, Blue-headed Vireos and Magnolia Warblers were our constant companions. White-throated Sparrows, Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets, Winter Wren, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Canada Jays and Boreal Chickadees kept us company in the spruce forests and in our campsites. On the muskeg we were likely to hear Dark-eyes Juncos, Hermit Thrushes, Palm Warblers and, interestingly, Savannah Sparrows. In the air we watched for Bald Eagles, Osprey, Common Terns, Bonaparte's Gulls and Sharp-shinned Hawks. We were happy to have Common Nighthawks booming on most evenings. We saw fewer waterfowl than expected, but American Black Duck, Green-winged Teal, Common Goldeneye, and Common Merganser were encountered the most.

There were quite a few highlights! Nice to see Sandhill Cranes on the muskeg. One wetland held some Soras. We encountered a very vocal Red-tailed Hawk on the river. At one of our campsites we were treated to an Olive-sided Flycatcher repeatedly and we had several others. The Fox Sparrow has a wonderful song, and we were treated to a few sizeable flocks of White-winged Crossbills, one exceeding 150 individuals.



Muskeg habitat away from the river. Photo Michael Ferguson.

Owls provided our biggest highlights however. A Great Horned was heard one morning, but we had Long-eared calling near our campsites in priority squares on three different occasions, all around 1 am. Recordings were made. On July 6 we had the rare pleasure of watching a pair of Northern Hawk-owls vocalize and interact in a dead snag right beside the river for 10 minutes or so. Many photos were taken! And finally, Craig and Ian had a small flock of Arctic Terns approach from a pond and harass us mildly in the muskeg adjacent to the Attawapiskat River in our final priority square. They had been recorded in the same square 20 years ago and a recording was made.

There were a number of challenges on this trip. Of the five trips that Mike and Ian have done it was likely the most difficult and challenging. The weather started off very poor (cold, wet and windy). We have been fortunate on previous trips but on this one there were mornings where we were unable to conduct point counts because of the weather. Due to this and a bear encounter we had to leave the first priority square before completing all the required point counts. The flies were fierce. Enough said about that!

All in all a memorable trip. We observed 90 species and completed 85 point counts both digitally and traditionally. We also were able to deploy an ARU almost every evening and retrieve it in the morning.

Report on the 2022 Paid Atlas Crews - by Karl Heide

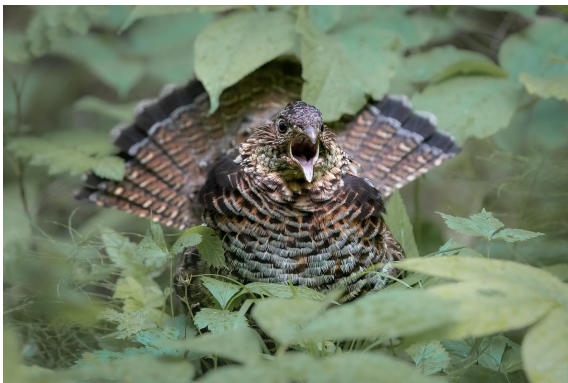
This year, Birds Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service and Ontario Nature pooled their resources, and, with help from Canada Summer Jobs, hired two crews of 4 technicians to atlas Central Ontario and the road-accessible

North. Their goal was to fill in coverage gaps identified in that area, specifically in Regions 27-37 as well as Region 42. The Central Ontario crew worked on completing the point counts and hours of many adjacent squares with limited coverage, especially north of Algonquin Park and in the Sudbury area, in order to meet the area's goal of 100% square coverage by 2025. The Northern crew focused on revisiting priority squares that had been surveyed in Atlas-2 in a wide swath of boreal forest spanning Sudbury to Cochrane, helping to ensure 5% coverage in that area. The majority of the time, crews stayed at campsites in Provincial Parks which were often provided on a complimentary basis by Ontario Parks.

One of the key tools that made this year's atlas field crews successful were Zoom recording units. With 8 of these being deployed for 6 hours every morning, the two crews combined were able to complete an estimated 1,424 point counts and around 200 marsh counts. The recording units allowed the less-experienced field technicians to complete just as many point counts as those with auditory ID experience. At the same time, all technicians, regardless of experience, were able to contribute valuable breeding records and general atlassing hours towards the square they were in while setting up the Zoom units. In all, the two crews completed 1,356 hours of coverage across 77 remote squares that would otherwise have remained mostly or completely unsurveyed.

Bird Highlights

Some notable finds of this year's fieldwork included extreme northern records for Grasshopper Sparrow, Scarlet Tanager and Sedge Wren. An abundance of Black-billed cuckoos in Region 42 was interesting, though perhaps not surprising given the eruption of Spongy (or LDD) moth in that area. In one square (17UMR60), a fledgling cuckoo was even seen on a point count, being fed by its parent. Black-throated Blue Warblers were surprisingly common at the Northern limit of their expected range in certain squares, particularly in 16UFV78, where recent logging had created large expanses of secondary deciduous forest (Birch-Aspen-Mountain Maple). This was the same square that had the northern record of Scarlet Tanager. Marsh birds were few and far between in the nutrient-deficient peatlands of the shield, but a few more productive wetlands were found to contain northern populations of Sora and Virginia Rail.



Agitated Ruffed Grouse mother (Photo by Mark Duchene)

As hoped for, many of the expected "northern specialty" breeding birds were observed by the field crews at various points during the summer. These included Canada Jay, Palm Warbler, Boreal Chickadee, Wilson's Warbler, Black-backed Woodpecker, Rusty Blackbird, Olive-sided Flycatcher, and a single auditory record of a Connecticut Warbler. Confirmed breeding was easy to obtain in many squares for Solitary Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs and Bonaparte's Gull, all of which frequently dive-bombed observers as they strayed within their nesting territories. Grouse families (both Ruffed and Spruce) were often startled up while bushwhacking to a point count or driving a remote backroad. On one occasion, a pair of Sandhill Cranes defending their young followed one of the vehicles for over half an hour as it drove back and forth down a backroad picking up technicians at the end of the day. A single chick was seen and filmed walking across the road with the pair.

Active nests were found for many species, including; Common Raven, Spotted Sandpiper, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hairy Woodpecker, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Ruffed Grouse, Tree Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Cedar Waxwing, Hermit Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, American Robin, Eastern Bluebird, White-throated Sparrow, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Alder Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Yellow Warbler, Ovenbird, Black-and-white Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, American Redstart, Nashville Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler and Red-winged Blackbird. Many additional species were confirmed as breeding with CF, NB, V and FY codes.





Nashville Warbler nest, square 17ULQ18 near Hearst (Photo by Karl Heide)



Campsite on Peach Lake near Watershed 144, north of Sudbury (Photo by Karl Heide).

Other Highlights and Misfortunes

In addition to the myriad of interesting birds seen, the two field crews cumulatively encountered over two dozen black bears and almost as many moose. Fortunately none of these caused a significant disturbance either at camp, on the road or while atlassing. Some crew members were even lucky enough to observe coyotes, wolves, foxes and other secretive mammals in the field. A wide variety of beautiful early-summer wildflowers, including several kinds of orchids, made trekking through the wilderness rewarding, as did the abundance of Tiger Swallowtails, dragonflies and numerous other insects.

The northern crew experienced the wrath of the boreal forest when one of their vehicles got stuck 5km down a backroad, resulting in an all-day ordeal and thankfully, an eventual recovery just before nightfall, courtesy of Pine Ridge Towing in Thessalon. Coincidentally, this mishap occurred on what was agreed to be the worst day of the entire season for both blackflies and mosquitoes.



Using bicycles allowed the field crews to efficiently complete many backroad Zoom point counts (Photo by Abbey Lewis).

The Atlas will be hiring field crews again in 2023. More details will be provided in future newsletters, but if you are an experienced birder and outdoors person, please email a resume to atlas@birdsonario.org and we will get in touch once details are available.



Atlas Swag

You can now purchase almost anything (T-shirts, caps, mugs, tote bags, stickers, etc.) with the Atlas logo on it. To view the merchandise and make your purchases, [click here](#). Looking forward to seeing you stylishly sporting your Atlas gear!



Monthly Challenge

This year we have seen some amazing effort by dedicated volunteers, and we're looking forward to continuing that in future years to increase our coverage. This month, we want to hear from you - our valuable atlasers! Where do you spend most of your time atlasing? Would you consider traveling over an hour away to increase coverage for the Atlas? How would you like to atlas in the northern part of Southern Ontario, or even further north (why or why not)? Send your answers to atlas@birdsonario.org by Nov 30th, with the subject line: "Gap-filling answers", for a chance to win an Ontario Parks toque and toiletry bag. We're looking forward to hearing about your experience and interest in atlasing to decrease coverage gaps, so we can gather the best data available to help conserve Ontario's breeding birds!



Atlasser Profile

Don Sutherland, Peterborough

I live and bird (is there a difference?) in Peterborough Co. where I've resided for the past 30 years. I've been an avid birder since my first trip to Point Pelee National Park at the age of nine. What started as a hobby quickly became an all-consuming passion leading to a career conducting not only bird surveys but later general life science inventories of both established and proposed protected areas. Until retiring in 2020 I worked as a zoologist for the Natural Heritage Information Centre with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Retirement now allows me to do at least some birding every day of the year.

My participation in the third atlas was a given, as I had been heavily involved in both the preceding two atlases and honestly, could hardly wait for the start of the third.

During the first atlas, I was the RC for the Thousand Islands Region (22), as well as serving on several atlas committees, and authoring or co-authoring three species accounts in the resulting publication. During the second atlas, I again served on several committees, as a co-editor of the book, and an author or co-author of 35 species accounts. It was my intention to take a bit of a back seat during the current atlas and focus my energies on general atlasing and point-counting; however, in the end I agreed to again sit on the Significant Species committee and to serve as an assistant RC for the Peterborough atlas region (16) reviewing records for rare or unusual species and to help coordinate point-counting in the region. The Peterborough Region is well-endowed with capable and enthusiastic atlasers, so happily the workload has thus far been relatively light.

I love the pre-dawn departures in order to arrive at some distant square no later than 5 A.M. Although certainly not everyone's cup of tea, in my opinion this is the very best part of the day, when birds are most vocal and extraneous noise from vehicle traffic and other human activities is at a minimum. Atlas protocols also force you to visit sites you mightn't otherwise visit and not infrequently these turn out to be hidden gems.

Although I have visited many memorable places during all three atlases, I would have to say that atlasing in the Hudson Bay Lowlands is my favourite and the atlas trip to the Pen Islands area during the second atlas has been the highlight thus far. This is an extremely remote part of the province seldom visited by anyone. Located along the coast of Hudson Bay at the Ontario-Manitoba boundary (1,600 km NW of my home in Peterborough!) it is

accessible in summer only by aircraft. I had only made a few brief visits to the site during previous survey work with the OMNR, so camping at the site for two weeks in late June and early July 2004 was a dream come true. Spring came late to the lowlands in 2004 and when we arrived at our base camp on June 24th it looked like March! Hudson Bay was still choked with ice, many of the small lakes were just breaking up and there still were substantial snow drifts here and there. The upside was that the shorebirds were still in aerial display mode and we were serenaded day and night by the Wilson Snipe, Least Sandpiper, Dunlin and the bizarre song of the Stilt Sandpiper.



Photo: Pen Islands crew: L2R (top) Colin Jones, Peter Burke, Jon McCracken, Ron Ridout; (bottom) Don Sutherland and Martyn Obbard. Photo by R. Ridout

Update on Zoom recordings

Thanks to everyone who has been “Zooming”, recording point counts using Zoom H2N units available from Regional Coordinators. As noted above, more than twice as many points were recorded in 2022 than in 2021 and we hope that number will continue to climb.

However, although “Zoom” implies great speed, it’s taking us a long time to get the data from the recordings up into NatureCounts. This is to reassure you that work is proceeding on this and we are very close to transferring the 2021 data into NatureCounts. It has turned out to be challenging to integrate WildTrax (where the recordings are stored and interpreted) and NatureCounts (where the interpreted Zoom data will be stored for Atlas purposes). But it is coming along and we are assured that the first transfer will occur very soon.

Meanwhile, work is advancing for the interpretation of the 2022 recordings, with the hope that interpretations will be completed and the data transferred to NatureCounts before next spring.

As well as the Zoom recordings completed by atlasers, a large volume of data is being interpreted from Autonomous Recording Units (ARUs) placed in northern Ontario. These data are helping fill gaps in northern Ontario, especially in the remote north. But more on that in future newsletters.

Meanwhile, talk to your RC about getting a Zoom unit to record some point counts in 2023. It’s a great way for less experienced birders to contribute to the project.

Birding for Atlas-3 in Candidate Protected Areas Webinar

Join Kristen Setala, Ontario Nature’s Community Science Intern, as she shares stories about conducting Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas-3 surveys. As part of Ontario Nature’s Protected Places Campaign, Kristen partnered with several groups across the province to survey areas of conservation interest. From the Farabout Peninsula in northwestern Ontario to Wolf Lake in Greater Sudbury, you will hear about the significance of these areas, the groups working to protect them, and the birds who breed there. Sign up for the webinar [here](#).

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

TD Friends of the Environment
Foundation

Vortex

Natural Resource Solutions Inc.,

Hodgson Family Foundation

Baillie Fund

Wildlife Habitat Canada

RBC Foundation

Employment and Social Development
Canada (Canada Summer Jobs)

Newmont

Parks Canada Agency

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

Boreal Avian Modelling Project

Natural Resources Canada

Ontario Parks

Royal Ontario Museum

Sustainable Forestry Initiative

University of Alberta

Wild Birds Unlimited

WildTrax

Ministry of Northern
Development, Mines, Natural Resources
and Forestry



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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