



Bird Species at Risk Data Collection Guidelines

Introduction

Thank you for helping us collect data on bird species at risk! You are one of many volunteers across the province that are putting citizen science into action. Whether you are a trained ornithologist, birding enthusiast, or casual observer, recording and submitting your bird sightings while enjoying the Bruce Trail will help track diversity, population sizes, and ultimately help protect Ontario's natural heritage.

Rationale

There are currently 36 at risk bird species in Ontario (OMNR 2015). This ranges from species listed as special concern (lowest risk of extinction or extirpation) to endangered (highest risk of extinction or extirpation). Monitoring species at risk, by providing data on where a species was sighted, its abundance, and if any breeding behaviour was observed, is an important component in their recovery. However full scale monitoring is costly, in terms of monetary and human resources, and requires a dedicated lead organization to oversee the work. Citizen science is a powerful way to collect much needed data while participating in an activity you already love, hiking! Thousands of people hike the Bruce Trail each year, and many go out specifically to bird and enjoy the amazing species that nest on the Escarpment. Instead of just sharing that spectacular bird sighting with your friends and colleagues, document it and share that knowledge with the Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC) to help us better understand the species that may be found on BTC-managed land and the Niagara Escarpment.

Species to look for

Acadian Flycatcher	Hooded Warbler
American White Pelican	Horned Grebe
Bald Eagle	King Rail
Bank Swallow	Kirtland's Warbler
Barn Owl	Least Bittern
Barn Swallow	Loggerhead Shrike
Black Tern	Louisiana Waterthrush
Bobolink	Northern Bobwhite
Canada Warbler	Olive-sided Flycatcher
Cerulean Warbler	Peregrine Falcon
Chimney Swift	Piping Plover
Common Nighthawk	Prothonotary Warbler
Eastern Meadowlark	Red Knot
Eastern Wood Pewee	Red-headed Woodpecker
Eastern Whip-poor-will	Short-eared Owl
Golden Eagle	Wood Thrush
Golden-winged Warbler	Yellow Rail
Henslow's Sparrow	Yellow-breasted Chat

How to collect data

The type of data we are looking for is called non-standardized - no need to wake up at 4am and follow a strict protocol. Just get outside and bird! However there is certain information you will need to collect to make your sighting useful:

1. Your contact information
2. Date of observation
3. Accurately identify the species
4. Location **see note below**
5. Time (optional)
6. Duration of observation (optional)
7. Number of individuals observed (optional)
8. Any other interesting information (optional)

Location - where on the trail were you when you made the observation? Please include the overall section of trail (i.e. Sydenham), km marking, trail name (if a side trail), or GPS coordinate. The more specific you can be the better we can track the species and determine if it is on BTC-managed land.

A survey form that can be taken out into the field has been included at the end of this guide.

Where to send your data

Please send your sighting and/or your completed survey form to the BTC at sightings@bruce trail.org. You can also mail your survey form to:

The Bruce Trail Conservancy
Species at Risk Project
PO Box 857
Hamilton, ON
L8N 3N9

Notes on being a respectful citizen scientist

Minimizing disturbance to the bird we are observing is the main concern for every citizen scientist and field biologist. This means staying on the trail, keeping your distance from the observed bird, and paying attention to cues like alarm calls. The reproductive success of our species at risk is of great concern during the breeding season - we want our birds to have many young that successfully leave the nest! Disturbance to adults, young, and the nest can reduce that success. During the winter, reducing disturbance allows birds to conserve energy (by not having to fly away), continue to forage for much needed food, and reduces the chances predators will spot them (by not alarm calling). While it is very exciting to document the occurrence of a Species at Risk (SAR), please keep in mind that locations where SAR are detected are considered to be extremely sensitive. These locations should not be shared on public forums or disseminated outside of recognized conservation programs. Please be a respectful citizen scientist!

Resources

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology - All About Birds <http://www.allaboutbirds.org>

A great tool to help identify birds, their calls, and learn about their biology and natural history.

Audubon Society <http://birds.audubon.org/birdid>

WhatBird <http://www.whatbird.com/>

The Warbler Guide <http://www.thewarblerguide.com/>

For those hard to identify fall warblers!

eBird Canada <http://ebird.org/content/canada/>

An international online checklist program that allows the birding community to report on and access information about birds. It was launched by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society to provide information on the abundance and distribution of bird species globally. Create an account for free and use their simple step-by-step system for submitting your sighting. Check out regional and local maps and engage with other birders. Track your sightings and create a life list.

BirdLog App <http://ebird.org/content/ebird/news/birdlog/>

The BirdsEye BirdLog app for the iPhone and Android smartphones and iPad allows for quick-and-easy data entry into eBird directly from the field.

Natural Heritage Information Centre (NHIC)

<https://www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/rare-species-reporting-form>

The NHIC is an arm of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources that collects, reviews, manages, and distributes information for species of conservation concern. Observations sent to the NHIC are reviewed and entered into the provincial record to help study and protect the province's natural heritage. No account needed. Enter only the basics - species name, date, location, and contact information. Or go all out and record and enter detailed behavioural observations, nesting information, habitat description, land use and disturbances, etc. All information you submit will be kept confidential.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry - Species at Risk List

<http://www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/species-risk-ontario-list>



Bruce Trail CONSERVANCY

Bird Species at Risk Survey Form

Name:	Email:	Phone:
-------	--------	--------

Date (Day/Month/Year): _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

Location: _____

UTM Coordinates

Easting	Zone
Northing	Datum

Species Detected During Survey

Notes (number of individuals, evidence of nest, interesting behaviour, type of habitat/vegetation)

Bird Species at Risk

Acadian Flycatcher
 American White Pelican
 Bald Eagle
 Bank Swallow
 Barn Owl
 Barn Swallow
 Black Tern
 Bobolink
 Canada Warbler
 Cerulean Warbler
 Chimney Swift
 Common Nighthawk
 Eastern Meadowlark
 Eastern Wood Pewee
 Eastern Whip-Poor-Will
 Golden Eagle
 Golden-winged Warbler
 Henslow's Sparrow

Hooded Warbler
 Horned Grebe
 King Rail
 Kirtland's Warbler
 Least Bittern
 Loggerhead Shrike
 Louisiana Waterthrush
 Northern Bobwhite
 Olive-sided Flycatcher
 Peregrine Falcon
 Piping Plover
 Prothonotary Warbler
 Red Knot
 Red-headed Woodpecker
 Short-eared Owl
 Wood Thrush
 Yellow Rail
 Yellow-breasted Chat