

## Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II Takes Flight — and Needs Your Help!

Its early summer in Price County, the birds are starting their breeding efforts and a citizen science project is underway to document how well the birds are doing. Your help is needed, even if you can only document young you observe on your lake or at your bird feeders.

This effort is part of the second Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas project (2015-2019). The first atlas was conducted from 1995–2000 by over 1,600 mostly volunteer observers, and the information they collected proved to be a landmark tool guiding species management and conservation activities by federal, state, and private natural resource groups. But much has changed in the last two decades. Species have moved, habitats have come and gone, and an updated picture of the state of our breeding birds is needed.

With that in mind, a new team of volunteers led by the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology (WSO), the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory, and the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative, has come together to launch a five-year, statewide survey of Wisconsin's 225+ species of breeding birds — Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II.

According to Nick Anich, project coordinator from WDNR, “this project will likely become one of the largest citizen science projects ever in Wisconsin. Since last fall we’ve been recruiting hundreds of volunteers, and by the time the project is over we’ll have recruited thousands more to survey every part of Wisconsin and document what birds are breeding where, and how populations have changed in recent decades.”

Kim Kreitinger, WSO President, said, “The second Atlas project will provide a new snapshot of Wisconsin’s bird community, which will help us address important bird conservation issues in the state. Because the Atlas requires such a massive volunteer effort, it will also help us to elevate public awareness of nature and directly connect Wisconsin’s citizens to conservation.”

Though off to a fast start, more volunteers are needed to contribute observations. “Not all of our blocks are covered yet,” said Anich, “and the more eyes we can get out there, the better our Atlas results are going to be.”

Those wanting to learn more or sign up should visit the project’s website, [www.wsobirds.org/atlas](http://www.wsobirds.org/atlas), or contact **Jim Krakowski** the **Price County** atlas county coordinator. Jim is especially interested in observations of Purple Martin, Black Tern, and boreal bird species that have been documented in the past in the county, but haven’t been observed lately. However, any and all bird breeding observations are important for the project.

“You don’t have to be an expert birder to be part of the atlas! All you need is to be a careful observer, learn the data collection and reporting procedures, and then go out and watch birds.”

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