

Priority Species

Help us learn more about rare, secretive, and priority species in PA. If you observe any of these species:

1. Prioritize attempts to confirm breeding.
2. Collect additional information:
 - Specific location of bird and/or nest.
 - Brief description of habitat and nest.
 - Video/audio file, if possible.
 - *Colonial nesters: include count of nests.

Green-winged Teal
Blue-winged Teal
American Black Duck
Pied-billed Grebe
Common Nighthawk
Eastern Whip-poor-will
King Rail
Virginia Rail
Sora
Common Gallinule
American Coot
Sandhill Crane
Piping Plover
Upland Sandpiper
Red Knot
Wilson's Snipe
Spotted Sandpiper
Black Tern*
Common Tern*
American Bittern
Least Bittern
Great Blue Heron*
Great Egret*
Black-cr. Night-heron*
Yellow-cr. Night-heron*
Osprey
Northern Harrier
Sharp-shinned Hawk
American Goshawk
Bald Eagle

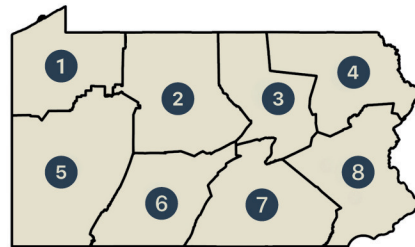
Barn Owl
Long-eared Owl
Short-eared Owl
Red-headed Woodpecker
Merlin
Peregrine Falcon
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
Loggerhead Shrike
Northern Shrike
Nashville Warbler
Purple Martin*
Bank Swallow*
Sedge Wren
Marsh Wren
Bewick's Wren
Swainson's Thrush
Red Crossbill
Pine Siskin
Clay-colored Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
Vesper Sparrow
Henslow's Sparrow
Yellow-breasted Chat
Golden-winged Warbler
Prothonotary Warbler
Blackpoll Warbler
Cerulean Warbler
Summer Tanager
Dickcissel

CONTACT US

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Cover Photo: Indigo Bunting ©Bill Moses

Field Guide to Breeding Atlas



Pennsylvania Bird Atlas



Quick Guide



Pied-billed Grebe
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Follow these guidelines to ensure you are contributing effective data to the Atlas.



Join the project at ebird.org/atlaspa. Submit checklists via website or mobile app. Remember to select PA Bird Atlas project from the app homepage.



Submit data from anywhere in the state at anytime.



Start a new checklist after 1 mile or 1 hour, and when entering a new habitat.



Stay within block boundaries. Assign a precise location to your checklist and avoid using hotspots as they may not represent where you atlased.



Aim for complete checklists (i.e., report all species you were able to identify by sight or sound).



Use Breeding Codes! Slowing down and observing bird behavior is rewarding and provides important data for conservation.



Comments, audio, and photos are helpful, especially for rare and priority species.



Keep disturbance to nesting birds to a minimum and always respect people and property.

Atlas Schedule

Use this guide to help plan your birding trips.

Jan-Feb

Focus on very early breeders, including Great Horned and Barred Owls, Rock Pigeons, and Bald Eagles.

Mar-Apr

Breeding begins for many resident birds and early breeders, including grouse, kingfishers, ravens, chickadees, titmouses, and Horned Larks. This is optimal time for nocturnal surveys for owls and woodcock.

May-Jun

By late May, most species are singing on territories. Use this time to build block species lists. Record precise locations of singing birds and return a week+ later to upgrade their breeding status using S7 code. Look for nest building and recently fledged young. This is optimal time for nocturnal surveys for nightjars and rails.

Jul-Aug

Many species are raising a second brood or re-nesting after a failed attempt. This is optimal time to record birds in Probable and Confirmed categories. By mid-August most species are done breeding, but goldfinches, waxwings, cardinals, turkeys, and doves are still active.

Sep-Oct

Many birds are migrating but late nesting species may still be caring for young.

Nov-Dec

Assess gaps in data. Look for unreported species in blocks and make a plan for next season.

Breeding Codes

TIPS FOR ASSIGNING CODES

- Know the code definitions and when it is appropriate to use them.
- Record codes every time you observe them.
- If unsure about a behavior, code it using your best judgement and describe your observation in the species comment box.
- Codes are ranked from weakest to strongest evidence of breeding. Always use the strongest code observed.

F Flyover	H In Appropriate Habitat	S Singing Bird	S7 Singing Bird 7+ Days Apart	M Multiple (7+) Singing Birds
P Pair in Suitable Habitat	T Territorial Defense	C Courtship Display/Copulation	N Visiting Probable Nest Site	A Agitated Behavior
B Nest Building (Woodpecker/Wren)	PE Physiological Evidence (use with caution)	CN Carrying Nest Material	NB Nest Building	DD Distraction Display
UN Used Nest (use with caution)	ON Occupied Nest	FL Recently Fledged Young	CF Carrying Food	FY Feeding Young
FS Carrying Fecal Sac	NE Nest with Eggs	NY Nest with Young	<div> <div>Possible</div> <div>Probable</div> <div>Confirmed</div> </div>	