

Appendix 7. Gazetteer of Ontario Place Names	
Used in the Text	661
Appendix 8. Plant and Animal Names	
Used in the Text	666
Appendix 9. Glossary	668
Literature Cited	671
Index of English, French, and Scientific Names	701

Foreword

The *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario, 2001-2005* is the product of the efforts of more than 3,000 volunteer atlasers and project participants and five project partners over a period of more than eight years. These years span the full breadth of the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas project, including planning and preliminary field trials in 1999 and 2000, an impressive five years of fieldwork from 2001 to 2005, years of data and geographic information system analyses, extensive cartographic and photographic efforts, and an extraordinary push over the last two years to complete the writing, reviewing, editing, final mapping, and design that now comprise this atlas publication.

Over the course of this monumental undertaking, several themes have emerged, and these reflect the people involved, the tremendous project partnerships, and, of course, innumerable stories about both Ontario's birds and birders. The stories range from personal observations of avian biology and bird courtship to the more scientific and environmental stories now emerging from the results about breeding bird populations, distributions, and changes since the first atlas was completed some twenty years ago.

In a way, the atlas project is almost as much about the people who have participated as it is about the birds themselves. Any attempt to summarize or tabulate the extensive contributions of volunteers and staff over this period will be incomplete and underestimated, but some examples may provide an inkling of the magnitude and may begin to express our appreciation to all who participated. Collectively, atlasers contributed over 150,000 field hours to the project, plus about as many hours again compiling results, preparing for fieldwork, and traveling to and from field locations. In addition, much of the book itself was written, reviewed, and edited through volunteer efforts by scores of people, and every one of the photographs was donated. By conservative measures, this incredible volunteer effort translates into an "in-kind" contribution of about \$4 million. This, however, does not include the very significant additional in-kind contributions by individuals and organizations toward the cost of travel, equipment, and supplies. The project's field effort was spread across the vast geographic expanse of Ontario's 1.1 million square kilometres, resulting in the successful attainment of one of the project's major objectives – to map the breeding distribution of birds across the entire province. This field effort culminated in the submission of 1.2 million individual bird records, from casual backyard observations to extensive, and often exhaustive, field trips into Ontario's most remote locations. Without the skill and determination of this throng of enthusiastic birders and field biologists, the atlas could neither have been envisioned nor successfully completed. The atlas organizers extend their sincere thanks and appreciation to this dedicated corps of volunteer citizen scientists and project biologists.

The success of the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas is the result also of the hard work and support of numerous other volunteers and staff. Central to it all was the critical assistance of about four dozen volunteer Regional Coordinators (RCs), who

supported, encouraged, organized, and otherwise helped atlasers to complete the planning, fieldwork, and follow-up in regions across the province. RCs were a critical connection between front-line field observers and atlas organizers and helped to ensure complete coverage of atlas squares. These individuals had their fingers on the pulse of the project, and almost invariably put in many extra hours in the field themselves to help complete coverage in various parts of the province. Their names and the regions they coordinated are shown in Table 1.1 and Figure 1.3 in the Methods chapter. Two other volunteers deserve special mention here as they exemplified the spirit of atlasing. Glenn Coady was RC for Toronto and put in innumerable hours both near home and in the far reaches of northern Ontario, literally starting on 1 January 2001 and continuing his fieldwork until 31 December 2005. Reinder Westerhoff volunteered throughout the duration of the project in the atlas office, particularly helping to organize trips to remote northern areas and organizing and leading "square-bashes" in the most difficult-to-cover parts of southern Ontario.

The atlas project benefited from the leadership and support of many staff from several organizations and governmental agencies. These individuals kept us all on track, provided expert (and often around-the-clock) support to atlasers, RCs, and project organizers. Their efforts have gone far beyond the "requirements of the job," and they have been some of the most generous and dedicated volunteers among us. First, special recognition is owed to the project's full-time staff. Mike Cadman was Coordinator for the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas, and was also Coordinator for the first atlas. From start to finish, Mike provided the atlas with strong and positive leadership, detailed ornithological knowledge, and insightful day-to-day project management. We benefited greatly from his expertise and guidance, his unflappable patience and dedication, and his friendly and good-humoured nature. Without doubt, Mike was the ultimate atlas ambassador! Special thanks go to Environment Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service for so generously assigning him to the atlas project for its duration. The atlas also benefited from the major contributions of our three Assistant Coordinators. Nicole Kopysh worked on the project for five years through virtually the entire fieldwork period, helping with atlasing logistics, volunteer recruitment and training, and data entry. Nicole was the main contact between the project's volunteers and the office, and her charm, energy, and organizational skills contributed greatly to the overall success of the project. Angela Darwin followed capably in her footsteps, helping with the final year of fieldwork and data management and starting the publication process. Rebecca Harrold joined the team for the final year and a half of the project and worked diligently and professionally in dealing with a myriad of details relating to project completion and book preparation.

Special acknowledgment and thanks go to others who contributed enormously through either their work or as volun-

teers, or frequently both. Andrew Couturier was the atlas's mapping and GIS expert and spatial analyst throughout, producing the majority of maps for the book; Denis Lepage designed and managed the enormous database and the on-line systems for data entry, rare species review, and manuscript management; Donald Sutherland was on several committees, helped coordinate coverage in the far north (and did a lot of the fieldwork himself!), was the primary reviewer of rare species records, edited and wrote numerous species accounts, and was a co-editor of this book; Bill Crins was on almost every atlas committee, including the Management Board, chaired the Volunteer Committee, was a Regional Coordinator and species account editor, wrote many species accounts, and was lead author on the biogeography chapter of this book; Ken Abraham sat on several committees, contributed greatly to the coverage of far northern Ontario, was a species account editor, and wrote several species accounts; Jon McCracken was on the Management Board, acted briefly as a Regional Coordinator, was heavily involved in special fieldwork projects, and wrote and reviewed numerous species accounts; Chris Davies served on the Management Board and provided extensive assistance and insightful advice in numerous areas; Bruce Pond produced the endpaper maps and many of the maps in the introductory chapters of this book, and provided valuable leadership on point count mapping and designing the system used to sample squares in the north; Kevin Middel and Bruce developed and produced the field maps and contributed greatly to the analysis for production of relative abundance maps; Charles Francis chaired the Bird Change Committee, was the person who originally encouraged us to collect abundance data, and played a leading role on the Point Count Committee; Peter Blancher designed and undertook much of the change analyses, calculated population estimates, and co-wrote the change chapter; Erica Dunn played a key role on the Point Count and Bird Change Committees, led the production of the appendix on Point Count data collection, and provided considerable editorial input to technical materials in the book; Ryan Zimmerling led the special boreal bird research project that significantly enhanced the level of field coverage in Ontario's north country; and Pete Read, with Julee Boan's logistical help, led special Northern Boreal projects in collaboration with First Nation communities.

The completion of this book was made possible by the very generous and skilled contributions of scores of individuals who wrote, reviewed, and edited the various chapters and species accounts (see the Acknowledgements and Species Accounts sections). The amount of time spent researching, writing, reviewing, editing, and proofing a book of this scale is great, and we thank all of these individuals very much for contributing their time and knowledge. Special thanks is due to the following species account editors who worked with the authors to review, edit, and revise the species accounts section: Ken Abraham, Ted Armstrong, Mike Cadman, Bill Crins, Seabrooke Leckie, Margaret McLaren, Erica Nol, Ron Pittaway, Ken Ross, Al Sandilands, Don Sutherland, Ron Tozer, and Chip Weseloh. I would also like to extend special thanks to my co-

editors of the full book manuscript, Mike Cadman and Donald Sutherland.

The atlas extends its thanks to everyone who donated, or submitted for consideration, photographs to the atlas, helping to make the book more informative and considerably more attractive. More than 6,000 images were submitted for consideration by professional and amateur bird photographers alike, from which more than 400 were selected to illustrate the species, and in some cases breeding habitat and nests.

The atlas team expresses its sincere thanks to John Lee, V. John Lee Communication Graphics Inc., who not only did an exemplary job in the design and layout of the book but also provided helpful and much appreciated input to the publication and printing processes. We extend our appreciation also to Maureen Garvie who copy-edited this large manuscript and helped to bring consistency and unity to a complex, multi-authored initiative. We also thank the printing team at Friesens for their assistance with production of the book. The Faculty of Environmental Science at the University of Guelph contributed substantially to the project by providing a home for the atlas office for its duration. Special thanks are due to Michael Moss, Josef Ackerman, Stewart Hilts, and Joy Steele for their support throughout. The University of Guelph also hosted the listserv, which provided an invaluable link between the office and atlasers.

The Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas illustrates one of the most successful and positive project partnerships imaginable. Through the years of planning, fieldwork, and publication preparation, the atlas has benefited from the contributions and tremendous support of the five sponsoring groups: Bird Studies Canada, Environment Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service, Ontario Field Ornithologists, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, and Ontario Nature. Each partner played a vital role and contributed greatly through the provision of expertise, time, and organizational support. Nowhere is this dedication better reflected than in the skilful efforts and collaboration of the atlas's organizing framework of Management Board and committees. Members of these groups have provided direction and leadership for all aspects of the project, including designing field methods, planning, budgeting and fundraising, data analysis and management, reviewing significant species records, publication planning, and general project oversight, to name just a few areas of involvement. Despite the enormity and complexity of this project, the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas has proceeded in an effective and efficient fashion throughout to achieve its critical milestones. That this has been accomplished professionally and with good spirits is a testament to the tremendous commitment and contributions of the project partners, and to the individual members of the Management Board and atlas committees whose names are listed in the Acknowledgements. Sincere thanks to the project partners and the members of these organizing groups.

The atlas organizers are committed to conservation, and the results of the project will benefit birds and bird habitat and inform sustainable resource management for years to come. To help demonstrate this commitment to conserva-

tion, the Atlas Management Board has made two very important publication decisions in this regard. First, the *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario, 2001-2005* is being printed and produced in accordance with standards developed by the Forest Stewardship Council Canada (www.fscscanada.org). The paper stock and printing process selected by the Atlas Management Board and Publication Committee reflect the project's commitment to sustainable forestry and to conservation while at the same time maintaining a commitment to publication excellence. The application of the FSC logo illustrates the commitment of the paper producer, the book's printer, and the atlas project itself to the FSC mission "to promote environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests." Second, the Atlas Management Board has adopted the policy that any net profits from the sale of this book will be used to further bird conservation projects in Ontario.

In the following pages, you will discover some of the stories that the atlas has to share about birds and bird distribution and status in Ontario. The efforts of volunteers and staff have been compiled into this single volume that we hope will be a valuable reference for conservation planning, resource management, species at risk recovery, environmental assessments, and educational and research applications. The combined efforts of atlasers across the province tell both good news and bad: from the encouraging recovery of many birds of prey, such as the Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon, and the expansion of breeding ranges of many northern birds into areas south of the Canadian Shield, to worrying trends for other species such as grassland birds like the Henslow's Sparrow and Loggerhead Shrike and aerial-foraging species including most swallows, the Chimney Swift and the Common Nighthawk.

There are, of course, a lot more stories from the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas than those that appear in this book. These

are the more personal ones – ones that any of the individual atlas contributors could share based on their experiences in the field. Some stories may come from casual observations, perhaps a backyard birding ritual over coffee spent observing a pair of Baltimore Orioles first in courtship, then nest building, and ultimately feeding and fledging young through the course of the breeding season. Or, perhaps, a chance, opportunistic sighting from a car window of a Red-shouldered Hawk carrying food to a nest in the forest. Other atlasers may fondly recall early morning trips to a particular square and the challenge of conducting point counts amidst insects or threatening weather. For many, the stories will be of time spent happily with friends and family on trips far from home – perhaps on canoe or camping trips in Ontario's Boreal Forest, where a glimpse of a pair of Sandhill Cranes or of Olive-sided Flycatchers feeding young provided unforgettable images of life along a meandering boreal stream. . . . All atlasers will have personal recollections and anecdotes, and it is heartening to think that each of these is now part of the larger, collective atlas story. These personal stories complement the stories yet to come from researchers and conservationists who are now beginning to analyze and use the results for the benefit of birds and bird habitats.

On behalf of the project's organizers, I extend the most sincere thanks to everyone involved and trust that the *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario, 2001-2005* will inspire increased interest and respect for birds and heightened effectiveness for bird conservation and research efforts in Ontario and beyond.

Gregor G. Beck
Chair, Atlas Management Board
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