

## Appendix L: Sensitive Species, Birding Code of Ethics

### Atlassing Ethics

Be careful when atlassing! Treat all birds and their habitats with respect and caution. Stay alert to avoid trampling nests and be very careful in delicate habitats like sand dunes. Remember that this project is about gathering data to help bird conservation and we should all act accordingly when surveying.

Excessive disturbance may cause adults to abandon the nest at any time, but especially during nest building and early incubation. Lingering around a nest too long or disturbing the area around it may betray it to predators.

While there are certain protections in place for how atlas records are displayed in NatureCounts, be aware that sharing the results of your atlassing to other platforms can have serious consequences to the bird if it attracts disturbance from other birders, wildlife photographers, or other enthusiasts. Keep this in mind particularly when sharing the location of nesting birds, especially those discussed here, to social media and even eBird. If your NatureCounts data are automatically being shared to eBird (see [Appendix I](#)), you should consider deleting a particular species record or even hiding an entire eBird checklist if you think it could result in negative consequences to the bird(s). You can always manually share the list back to eBird or unhide it at a later date. eBird has its own Sensitive Species approach outlined [here](#).

Remember that you should always get landowner permission before surveying any private property. See [Appendix C](#) for tips and key points for surveying private property.

For further guidance, the Ontario Field Ornithologists' [Code of Ethics](#) is a good reference.

### Playback

Playback of recordings can elicit responses and generate critical information quickly, but use the recordings judiciously. Some survey protocols (e.g. Marsh Monitoring and Nocturnal Owl Surveys) incorporate the use of playback to improve detection rates. Extra caution is required for species at risk and other species sensitive to disturbance to avoid negative effects. The following guidance will help minimize the risk of disturbance and harassment:

- Know the local rules; use of playback is not allowed in some National and Provincial Parks and other properties may have their own rules.
- Avoid the use of playback for a species at risk when its presence at a location is already known.
- Avoid the use of playback in heavily birded areas.
- Avoid using playback repeatedly on the same individuals/territories.
- Keep call broadcast events brief (generally under five minutes long, consisting of short broadcast sequences of less than 30 seconds separated by long periods of silence).

- Use a low playback volume that is lower than or equivalent to the bird's normal vocalizations.
- When the target species is detected, cease playback for that species.

## Species at Risk

Exercise caution when near Species at Risk (Table L1), being extremely cautious not to disturb any Species at Risk (not just birds!). If the Atlas is to reach its full potential as a conservation tool, it is extremely important that you report all occurrences of rare species (see [Appendix K](#)). If you come across non-bird Species at Risk, please report them to the [Natural Heritage Information Centre](#); the easiest way is to join their [Rare species of Ontario iNaturalist project](#).

If you are particularly concerned about protecting information for a species you have found, contact your [Regional Coordinator](#), to discuss the situation and determine how to proceed.

Table L1. List of Ontario breeding bird species listed as Species at Risk by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), the federal Species at Risk Act (SARA), or the provincial Endangered Species Act (ESA). EXT = extinct, EXP = extirpated, END = endangered, THR = threatened, SC = special concern.

Common name	Scientific name	COSEWIC	SARA	ESA
Northern Bobwhite	<i>Colinus virginianus</i>	END	END	END
Greater Prairie-Chicken	<i>Tympanuchus cupido</i>	EXP	EXP	EXP
Horned Grebe	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>	SC	SC	SC
Passenger Pigeon	<i>Ectopistes migratorius</i>	EXT		
Common Nighthawk	<i>Chordeiles minor</i>	SC	THR	SC
Eastern Whip-poor-will	<i>Antrostomus vociferus</i>	THR	THR	THR
Chimney Swift	<i>Chaetura pelagica</i>	THR	THR	THR
King Rail	<i>Rallus elegans</i>	END	END	END
Yellow Rail	<i>Coturnicops noveboracensis</i>	SC	SC	SC
Piping Plover	<i>Charadrius melodus</i>	END	END	END
Hudsonian Godwit	<i>Limosa haemastica</i>	THR		
Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>	SC	SC	SC
Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>			SC
American White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>			THR
Least Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus exilis</i>	THR	THR	THR
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>			END
Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>			SC
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	END	END	END
Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>	SC	SC	SC
Red-headed Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes erythrocephalus</i>	END	THR	SC
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>		SC	SC
Olive-sided Flycatcher	<i>Contopus cooperi</i>	SC	THR	SC
Eastern Wood-Pewee	<i>Contopus virens</i>	SC	SC	SC
Acadian Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax virens</i>	END	END	END
Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	END	END	END
Bank Swallow	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	THR	THR	THR
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	THR	THR	THR

Wood Thrush	<i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>	THR	THR	SC
Evening Grosbeak	<i>Coccothraustes vespertinus</i>	SC	SC	SC
Grasshopper Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>	SC	SC	SC
Harris's Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia querula</i>	SC		
Henslow's Sparrow	<i>Centronyx henslowii</i>	END	END	END
Yellow-breasted Chat	<i>Icteria virens</i>	END	END	END
Bobolink	<i>Dolichonyx oryzivorus</i>	THR	THR	THR
Eastern Meadowlark	<i>Sturnella magna</i>	THR	THR	THR
Rusty Blackbird	<i>Euphagus carolinus</i>	SC	SC	SC
Louisiana Waterthrush	<i>Parkesia motacilla</i>	THR	THR	THR
Golden-winged Warbler	<i>Vermivora chrysoptera</i>	THR	THR	SC
Prothonotary Warbler	<i>Protonotaria citrea</i>	END	END	END
Kirtland's Warbler	<i>Setophaga kirtlandii</i>	END	END	END
Cerulean Warbler	<i>Setophaga cerulea</i>	END	END	THR
Canada Warbler	<i>Cardellina canadensis</i>	THR	THR	SC

## Colonial Species

Be especially cautious when near nesting areas for most colonial species as they are very sensitive to disturbance at the colony. For this reason, it is recommended that you estimate the number of nests and site details from a distance without getting too close to the colony. Many colonies will be surveyed by professional biologists as part of the atlas effort, please contact your [Regional Coordinator](#) before planning a trip to a colony to avoid unnecessary disturbance.

## Sensitive Species

A small subset of species, considered extra sensitive to disturbance, are treated as “Sensitive Species” across the province (see Table L2). Additionally, Regional Coordinators have the ability to mark certain records as sensitive. No significant species data will appear at any scale until a Regional Reviewer has first reviewed them. Any records marked sensitive (including all records of sensitive species) will only be visible down to the atlas square (10 km) level and may be delayed being displayed at all. This is an added level of security to help protect our most sensitive species from disturbance and harassment.

Table L2. Province-wide Sensitive Species list. Species on this list automatically receive increased data protection.

Common name	Scientific name
Northern Bobwhite	<i>Colinus virginianus</i>
King Rail	<i>Rallus elegans</i>
Piping Plover	<i>Charadrius melodus</i>
Least Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus exilis</i>
Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>
Northern Hawk Owl	<i>Surnia ulula</i>
Great Gray Owl	<i>Strix nebulosa</i>
Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio otus</i>
Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>

Acadian Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax virescens</i>
Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>
Henslow's Sparrow	<i>Centronyx henslowii</i>
Yellow-breasted Chat	<i>Icteria virens</i>
Louisiana Waterthrush	<i>Parkesia motacilla</i>
Prothonotary Warbler	<i>Protonotaria citrea</i>
Kirtland's Warbler	<i>Setophaga kirtlandii</i>
Cerulean Warbler	<i>Setophaga cerulea</i>