



What's Sap?- April 2023

Sandhill Crane Photo: Abbey Lewis

Dear Atlasser,

This edition of the Atlas newsletter includes:

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COVID-19: The Atlas team reminds all atlassers to be aware of the latest COVID-19 conditions in Ontario. Please follow all public health guidelines and restrictions, and check for updates frequently. Information on the latest conditions and public health guidance can be found on the Government of Ontario [website](#). Follow the links to the most current situation in the province.

Year three kick-off

There are tons of events planned to help celebrate the start of year three of the Atlas. We're very excited to be kicking off the year with two in-person events run by Atlas staff. This year our events will be in London and Hamilton on the weekend of April 22 and 23. We're excited to see some Atlassers in person – hope to see you there! Not in the Hamilton or London areas? No problem! Several Regional Coordinators also have in-person events planned for their regions.

To register, check out the details or see a full list of events, head to <https://www.birdsontario.org/year-3-kickoff-weekend>

Win a pair of Vortex binoculars with the April kick-off challenge

To help celebrate the kick-off of year three we're challenging all Atlassers to share the excitement on social media for your chance to win a pair of Vortex binoculars - many thanks to Vortex for generously supporting Atlas-3! To enter, just post on social media a photo, video, or audio clip of something related to Atlas-3 – could be you or your friends Atlassing, breeding evidence, or an interesting birding encounter! To qualify, add your posts during the month of April and tag @ONBirdAtlas on Instagram or Twitter, or @ONBreedingBirdAtlas on Facebook and be sure to use the hashtag #OnBirdAtlas2023. If you aren't on social media, don't worry! You can submit a photo and description to our [media submission page](#) to enter. We will randomly select a submission at the end of April, so the more posts you submit, the more chances you have to win!

Respecting Indigenous Peoples

Please remember that **permission from the community is required to conduct Atlas surveys within First Nation reserve boundaries**. See the [First Nation Reserve Lands and Atlas map viewer](#) for an interactive tool that shows First Nation Reserve lands along with Atlas blocks, squares, and candidate point count locations.

Atlas-3 is committed to respectful engagement with Indigenous Nations and resources and assistance are available to help build understanding, make connections and foster shared appreciation for birds and the land. For more information, see the Indigenous Engagement section at [Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas \(birdsontario.org\)](https://www.birdsontario.org) or contact your Regional Coordinator.

Two-eyed seeing bird atlas project

Two Indigenous Community Liaisons have been hired by Plenty Canada (Martina Albert for southern Ontario and Sharon Kimberley for northern Ontario) to conduct the [Two-Eyed Seeing Bird Atlas](#) project. This project focuses on a *Community First* approach, where Indigenous communities determine their interest and level of involvement in Atlas-3 and choose whether they will share their data and/or traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) outside of the community. Community outreach and relationship building has begun with several communities already expressing interest in participating in some capacity.

Past, present, and future Sappy Hours

Our next Sappy Hour will be April 18, 7pm Eastern Time, dedicated to covering all of the improvements that have gone into the NatureCounts app. If you haven't used the app for a while or just want a refresher, then come on out. As usual, bring any other Atlas-related questions to get answered too. Click [here to register](#).

Our other future Sappy Hours are planned for the next several months, but if you have a topic you'd like to see covered, please contact us at the [Atlas office](#) (or reach out through social media or the [discussion forum](#)).

Missed a Sappy Hour? Check out the [playlist](#) on our YouTube channel of all the past Sappy Hours.

Atlas Swag

You can now purchase almost anything (T-shirts, caps, mugs, tote bags, stickers, etc.) with the Atlas logo on it. To view the merchandise and make your purchases, click [here](#). Looking forward to seeing you stylishly sporting your Atlas gear!



Atlas-3 celebrates International Women's Day

Atlas-3 was proud to recognize International Women's Day by celebrating all of our amazing volunteers - from Atlas staff, to committee members, regional coordinators and volunteers. Read about some of the amazing women helping make Atlas-3 a success on our [Atlas-3 blog](https://www.birdsontario.org/womens-day-2023): www.birdsontario.org/womens-day-2023.

Early season Atlassing targets

There are lots of good targets for April atlassing. Many species are exhibiting breeding behaviour now and several are into "safe dates" where all breeding behaviour should be recorded. Some of the species best atlassed in April include many stick nesters (whose nests are easier to find before the trees leaf out) such as Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Great Blue Heron, and American Crow. This is also a great time to find Common Raven nests - they will be done nesting in the south by late April. In agricultural landscapes, watch for raven nests on the sides of silos.

It's also a great time of year to watch for Accipiters doing their display flights over their territories, especially early in the morning. Watch for males to flap with slow, steady, and deep wingbeats with undertail coverts flared. This flight is much different than the typical direct flight these birds are known for.

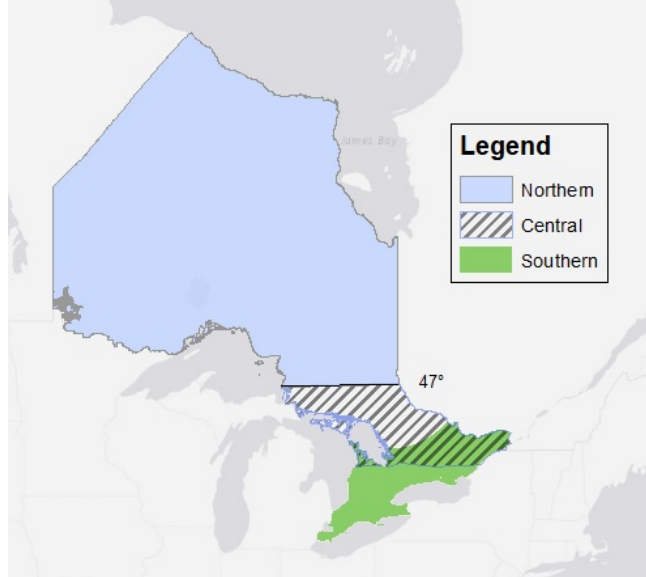
Some species, like Ruffed Grouse and American Woodcock, should be easy to find in April but get quiet later in the spring. (In fact, as I write this I can hear an American Woodcock!) Don't forget that the drumming of woodpeckers and Ruffed Grouse and the display flight of American Woodcock counts as "singing" (S).

Be sure to check out the [safe dates page](#) on the Atlas website. The safe dates ordered chronologically are particularly handy to help quickly find species with early breeding seasons for your area.

Owl surveys

March 1 marked the beginning of standardized owl survey protocols. During April you can conduct four different surveys, depending on your location.

Here is the what, when and where:



| Survey | Date | Location | Playback? |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------|-----------|
| Eastern Screech-Owl | March 1 – April 30 | Southern | Yes |
| Northern Hawk Owl | March 1 – May 31 | Northern | Yes |
| Central owls | April 1-April 30 | Central | Yes |
| Northern owls | April 1 – April 30 | Northern | Yes |
| Long-eared Owl | July 1-August 14 | Everywhere | No |

For more information, see the [Special Surveys](#) section on the Atlas website.

Experienced whitewater canoeist wanted!

The group of volunteers heading to the Upper Winisk River still has one spot available for someone with whitewater canoeing experience (ideally some birding experience too!). The Atlas is able to cover the cost of flight from Nakina to the river and then back to Nakina, with dates of June 10-25.

If you or someone you know is interested, please email Karl Heide as soon as possible kheide@birdscanada.org

Join us on a square bash this summer!

Square-bashes are enjoyable, multi-day events, bringing together atlasers with all levels of experience from across the province to focus their efforts on key coverage gaps around Provincial Parks. Thanks to Ontario Parks for generously providing free camping for square-bash participants. Last year's events were a great success and we're hoping to build on that in 2023.

Please save the dates if you are interested in participating. We will have more news very soon about registering for these events and more. You could come for the entire duration of the event, or just part of that time. Our goal is to provide adequate coverage for as many squares as we can in and around the parks, while having as much fun as possible.

So far, three Square-bashes are in the works with another one under discussion. The three are:

- **MacGregor Point Provincial Park: Monday May 29 – Friday June 2, 2023.** This event ties in with the [Huron Fringe Birding Festival](#) which runs on the adjacent weekends. The Huron Fringe is a beautiful area at the southern end of the Bruce Peninsula with among the highest number of breeding species anywhere in the province, from Golden-winged Warblers to Upland Sandpipers to Broad-winged Hawks. If you're heading to the Festival, why not add a few days onto your trip and help out the Atlas? – or just come for the Square-bash alone. [Register for the MacGregor Point Square Bash here.](#)
- **Sharbot Lake Provincial Park: Friday June 2 – Wednesday June 7.** At last, a square-bash event in southeastern Ontario! This event takes place in the rich amalgam of habitat along the edge of the Canadian Shield, and is particularly convenient for atlasers from the Kingston and Ottawa areas. It's right in the core of the Golden-winged Warbler range with Cerulean Warblers and many others a definite possibility. [Register for the Sharbot Lake Square Bash here.](#)
- **French River Provincial Park: Friday June 9 – Friday June 16.** This will be a canoe-based trip along the historic French River in one of

the province's most gorgeous landscapes at the northeast corner of Georgian Bay. The area is rich in Common Nighthawks and Eastern Whip-poor-wills, Sandhill Cranes, boreal warblers and too many others to list. If you're interested in learning more about this Square Bash, join our online information session on April 25th at 7pm (register [here](#)). If you're interested in registering for the French River square bash, [click here](#).

Please do not contact the parks or the Huron Fringe Festival about these square-bash events as we are making the arrangements through the Atlas-3 office.

Join the Atlas community on Discord

Got a question about a specific Atlas topic or just want to connect and share stories with other Atlassers? Join the Atlas Discord, a communication server with different channels, each specific to an Atlas topic! For detailed instructions on how to join, check out: birdsontario.org/discussion

Invite link: <https://discord.gg/JCfgr3egG>



Common Raven in Eastern Ontario by Langis Sirois

Langis Sirois from Region 24 (Ottawa) embarked on a deliberate and very welcome effort to catalog Common Raven nests in and around the Ottawa area. In the first year of Atlas-3, he confirmed breeding at over 80 Common Raven nesting sites in Regions 24 (Ottawa), 23 (Cornwall-Hawkesbury) and 22 (Leeds and Grenville). In Region 24 alone, Langis found 61 nests in 38 squares. Check out our [blog](#) to read about Langis' experience with Common Raven.

Content wanted!

Do you have a cool Atlassing story, adventure, or observation to share? Please [send them](#) to us for either a blog post or short newsletter item.

Support the Atlas!

The Atlas team is hugely appreciative to everyone for their volunteer efforts in support of the project. If you would like to help even more, please consider making a donation in support of the project, too. You can now donate directly to Atlas-3 by following [this secure link](#). You will receive a charitable receipt for income tax purposes from Birds Canada - and an extra warm feeling inside, knowing you're supporting the project with a donation and your volunteer efforts. Thanks so much for considering this!

Until next time!

- The Atlas-3 Team

The Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas-3 thanks the following for their financial support:

- | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|---|
| Environment and Climate Change Canada | Natural Resource Solutions Inc., | RBC Foundation |
| TD Friends of the Environment Foundation | Hodgson Family Foundation | Employment and Social Development Canada (Canada Summer Jobs) |
| Vortex | Baillie Fund | Newmont |
| | Wildlife Habitat Canada | Parks Canada Agency |

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University of Alberta

Wild Birds Unlimited



This email was sent by [Birds Canada](#) on behalf of the [Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas](#) partners (Birds Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Ontario Field Ornithologists, Ontario Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry, and Ontario Nature).

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