MARITIMES BREEDING BIRD ATLAS NEWSLETTER

No. 7 Editor: Judith Kennedy Fall, 1986

COMING UP NEXT

Many of you were probably disappointed to find this little flyer in your envelope rather than a full-fledged newsletter regaling you with statistics and summaries of our first years fieldwork. I had hoped to provide all this (and more), but the amount of time required for data processing and fundraising didn't leave much left for putting together a newsletter. Don't worry, you'll get it all in the Winter 1987 newsletter, including a few species maps. In the meantime, here are a few preliminary tidbits...

GOOD SHOW!

A thousand thanks to the more than 500 atlassers who actively collected data. You collectively contributed over 7,000 hours to the atlas project. Take the weekend off - you deserve it.

It seems that about two-thirds of the data for this year has arrived at the atlas office and been entered into the computer. Based on this available data, the following figures have been compiled:

TEN MOST COMMON SPECIES
American Robin
Song Sparrow
Barn Swallow
American Crow
Common Grackle
Northern Flicker
Tree Swallow
White-throated Sparrow
Black-capped Chickadee
Red-winged Blackbird

There are also 12 species which were reported only once this year:

Greater Scaup
Red-shouldered Hawk
Common Moorhen
Black Tern
Razorbill
Northern Hawk-Owl
Willow Flycatcher
Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Marsh Wren
Northern Cardinal
Field Sparrow
House Finch

These are all species which have restricted or local breeding occurrences, and (with the exception of Black Tern) automatically require Documentation Forms. See the list in the Atlasser Handbook for other species in this category. While these

species are certainly among the rarities in the Maritimes, they are not the rarest, as there were 19 species on our list that eluded us all. As that's only 10% of the total number of species expected to breed here, I think we can congratulate ourselves on our thoroughness.□

RENDER UNTO CAESAR...

If you haven't sent in your data cards yet PLEASE get them to your RC immediately. We need all the 1986 data to make our species maps complete. If you were unable to visit your square, let your RC know so he/she doesn't wait unnecessarily for a non-existent card.

Another deadline to remember is November 30 for submission of Maritimes Nest Record Scheme (MNRS) cards to the Canadian Wildlife Service office in Sackville, NB. The address appears right on the cards, so there's no doubt about where to send them. If you haven't filled in MNRS cards for your findings, it's not too late. Your RC should have a supply of cards, and it will only take a minute to transcribe your field notes.

So, look under that stack of bills you've been ignoring, pull out your atlas and nest record cards and send them in right away.□

The Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas
c/o Natural History Section
Nova Scotia Museum
1747 Summer Street
Halifax, N.S. B3H 3A6

BREEDING SEASON CHARTS

Atlas Breeding Season Charts have been distributed to all RCs. Some coordinators are waiting to distribute them with other atlas materials, so if you haven't received a copy yet, that could be the reason. Some of the charts are missing the middle page, but unfortunately we didn't notice until after they had been dispersed. If you have one of these incomplete copies (the pages are numbered so it should be obvious if any are missing), please return it to the atlas office with your name and address, and we'll forward an intact copy.

The chart will be very useful in planning your fieldwork, as it identifies the time period during which each species can be confirmed. It will also help you sort migrants from potential breeders, although some individual birds that may be present in your area right through the breeding season will never breed there (eg. sub-adults, or bachelors). Make sure your evidence is convincing; check with your RC if you're uncertain.□

A WORD FROM OUR FORERUNNER

The Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas completed data collection in 1985, and the staff have spent the past year reviewing and compiling the data for publication. This is going to be a very impressive book, written by a team of over 80 experts and including excellent maps and illustrations for the 270 species covered. The book itself will be a 600 page hardcover volume, with a dust jacket illustrated by Robert Bateman.

Atlassers will find it an inspiration to their work in the Maritimes. The actual publication date is uncertain, but advance sales will help cover the costs of publication. If you'd like to order a copy of The Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario send a cheque or money order for $53.50 to:

Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas
c/o University of Waterloo Press
Dana Porter Library
University of Waterloo
Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3G1□

USE OF BREEDING CODES

A quick look through the 1986 data cards gives the impression that a number of us might be over-cautious in recording data. If you recorded mostly O-X for species you observed, you might want to reconsider your evidence. Now would be a good time to review the Breeding Codes in the Handbook, and read up on the habits of some of our bird species, so we can upgrade these records next year. We'll have more information on the use of codes in future newsletters, as well as tips on how to make good estimates of abundance.□