

BIRDS ‘N’ BOGS CITIZEN SCIENCE PROGRAM SURVEY PROTOCOL

The goal of this project is to detect boreal wetland bird species using local “bogs” during the spring settling period or while on incubation breaks. Birds will likely be foraging, resting, or perhaps flying around either singly or in pairs. You may even observe breeding displays or copulation.

Dates: May 15 - June 7

Within these dates please survey chosen wetland only 4x: 1x per period

Survey Period	Dates
Early Period	May 15 - May 20
Middle Period	May 21 - May 26
Late Period	May 27 - June 1
Late late Period	June 2 - June 7

Surveys should total 2 hours between May 15 and June 7, at least 20 minutes per survey period as shown above. Surveys are best done before 8 am or between 6-10 pm but other times are ok too; we understand that you are doing this on a volunteer basis so do whatever works best for you. Also keep an eye out for any banded birds. Most bands are colored plastic circles, but some are a colored flag (sticks off the leg) and some have a geolocator attached. Banded birds are more likely to be seen in the Anchorage area. Below are the target bird species for this study:

Target Species
Common Loon
Pacific Loon
Red-throated Loon
Red-necked Grebe
Horned Grebe
Greater Yellowlegs
Lesser Yellowlegs
Solitary Sandpiper
Tree Swallow
Violet-green Swallow
Rusty Blackbird
Olive-sided Flycatcher

A Birds ‘n’ Bogs survey can entail walking the perimeter of wetland/lake (moving more than ~50 feet during the observation period, or outside of earshot of a moderately loud bird call) OR standing and watching/listening for birds at a single point (moving less than ~50 feet during the observation period or staying within earshot of a moderately loud bird call). **Please follow roughly the same route each time you survey.**

Protocol if using eBird mobile app

Arrive at your wetland select the start button on your eBird mobile app. Take note of all bird species you can identify by sight or sound, taking special attention to our 12 target species. Noting all bird species helps us to find checklists after survey season and assists in other eBird projects. When you have finished birding, click “stop birding.” The mobile app will automatically record your time and distance.

You will need to fill in the number of observers and click on the button for “*incidental/travelling/stationary*” and select “*Birds ‘n’ Bogs Survey*.” Also make sure your location is selected from the map and is labelled as your wetland name or the closest eBird hotspot. Checklists with mislabelled locations are more difficult to find. **Note: If your eBird app is not in the Alaska eBird portal, the tag for “*Birds ‘n’ Bogs*” will not appear as an option. Make sure you are in the Alaska eBird portal by selecting 3 dots at bottom right of screen, then settings, then portal.**

Record weather data for air temperature, cloud cover (0-10%, 11-25%, 25-50%, 50-75%, 76-100%), note of any rain, and wind speed (0 for still, 1 for light wind, 2 for wind on your face, 3 for leaves and twigs moving, 4 for moderate breeze, 5 for small trees swaying, 6 for large trees swaying). Put weather data into your checklists comments. When asked if your checklist is complete, select *Yes* if you’ve been recording all bird species you saw or heard.

Also make note in comments of any banded birds, behavior, etc.

Protocol if using paper data sheets

When using paper data sheets, you only need to record your observations of the 12 target species, though non-target species checklists are available for download in our Resources tab. Make note of your start and end time and track your walking distance with a GPS or the Gaia app on a phone. You can also estimate if you are good at that sort of thing.

There are also prompts on the datasheet for weather data. Please record air temperature, cloud cover (0-10%, 11-25%, 25-50%, 50-75%, 76-100%), note of any rain, and wind speed (0 for still, 1 for light wind, 2 for wind on your face, 3 for leaves and twigs moving, 4 for moderate breeze, 5 for small trees swaying, 6 for large trees swaying). These will help us adjust observations for weather that may make bird behavior or our ability to detect birds different than normal.

You can scan and email or send via snail mail any paper data sheets and time sheets before June 30th.

Feel free to call anytime with questions!

Arin Underwood

Wildlife Biologist I

Threatened, Endangered, and Diversity Program, Alaska Department of Fish and Game

333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK 99518

(907) 267-2111

arin.underwood@alaska.gov