

## **Bird Observation Protocol**

### **When:**

At least **once** between June 1 and July 1

Most observations should be conducted between ½ hour before sunrise and 4 hours after sunrise, except for observations of secretive marshbirds and American Woodcock. Ideally avoid windy and rainy mornings.

More frequent observations are always better!

### **Where:**

Pick at least one point that you can easily get to in the project area, and consistently use that point for observations. Feel free to establish multiple, consistent observation points.

### **How long:**

We suggest conducting observations for at least 10 minutes, but the longer you observe, the more you will see and hear

### **Where should I document my observations?**

We highly recommend an online database called [eBird](#) and are providing resources that will help you get familiar with using the technology. If you are not able to use eBird, feel free to use the optional datasheet we are providing and return to us.

If using eBird, please share your checklists with Michelle VanderHaar and Kelly VanBeek. You will have the option to email your checklist of observations to yourself, and then forward that email to us.

### **Why eBird?**

[Introduction video](#)

[eBird Quick Start Guide](#)

[Free eBird training course](#)

[How to use the eBird app](#)

## **Special Protocols:**

### [Secretive Marshbird Playback Sequence \(download available\)](#)

Observations targeting secretive marshbirds should be attempted between May 15 and June 15. Observations can be attempted in the morning (half hour before sunrise to 3 hours after sunrise) or at night (2 hours before sunset to half hour after sunset). Play the callback sequence at your observation point and listen for bird responses.

### American Woodcock:

Observations should be attempted between 22 and 58 minutes after sunset on clear nights or 15 and 51 minutes after sunset on cloudy nights. Woodcock peenting and displays are particularly tied to light levels.

Observations should be attempted between April 25 and May 15.

## Target Species:

The primary species are ones we would like you to focus on. They are relatively easy to identify and are of conservation interest. The secondary species are also of conservation interest but may not be easy to identify if you are not familiar with bird calls.

We are also providing a WI checklist of birds. Feel free to use this as reference and record any species you see or hear during observations.

## Prairie/Grassland Species:

### Primary:

[Bobolink](#)  
[Eastern Meadowlark](#)  
[Dickcissel](#)

### Secondary:

[Henslow's Sparrow](#)  
[Grasshopper Sparrow](#)  
[Clay-colored Sparrow](#)

## Wetland Species:

### Primary:

[Mallard](#)  
[Wood Duck](#)  
[Blue-winged Teal](#)

[Great Egret](#)  
[Sandhill Crane](#)

### Secondary: Secretive Marshbirds (use audio playback assistance)

[Sora](#)  
[Pied-billed Grebe](#)  
[American Bittern](#)

[Least Bittern](#)  
[Virginia Rail](#)  
[Yellow Rail](#)

## Oak Savanna Species:

### Primary:

[Red-headed Woodpecker](#)  
[Brown Thrasher](#)

### Secondary:

[Field Sparrow](#)  
[Vesper Sparrow](#)

## Pine Barrens Species:

### Primary:

[Eastern Towhee](#)

### Secondary:

[Field Sparrow](#)  
[Vesper Sparrow](#)

## Young Forest:

### Primary:

[American Woodcock](#) (special protocol)

### Secondary:

[Golden-Winged Warbler](#)



## **Helpful Online Bird ID Resources**

[All About Birds, from Cornell](#): Includes photos and audio clips

[Guide to North American Birds, from Audubon](#): Includes photos and audio clips

## **Bird ID Mobile Apps:**

[Audubon Bird Guide](#), from Audubon

[Merlin Bird ID, from Cornell](#) (also built into the eBird app)

[Video on how to use the Merlin app](#)

\*\*These apps may take up a significant amount of space on your mobile device. Initial downloads should be conducted over a wifi connection.

## **Data Privacy:**

[Data privacy settings in eBird](#)

We highly encourage you to keep your checklists public so that they can be used by scientists across the world, however we understand a desire to protect private locations and data. Consider changing the location name to something ambiguous like "PRIVATE LAND – prairie field" so that other people viewing the data know this is not a spot they can access without permission.