



2006-2011

Regional Coordinator Handbook  
May 2010 (revised)

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## **Terrestrial Wildlife Ecology Laboratory**

**The Ohio State University  
School of Environment  
& Natural Resources**



The Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas II is made possible only through the assistance of hundreds of citizen volunteers, and other in-kind contributions from conservation groups, and federal, state, and local agencies in Ohio. Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas II is coordinated by the School of Environment and Natural Resources at Ohio State University and is funded by the ODNR-Division of Wildlife. The Atlas Advisory Board includes Black Swamp Bird Observatory, Ohio Ornithological Society, Powdermill Nature Reserve, the Pennsylvania Game Commission, and the Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife. The Ohio Ornithological Society also supports that Atlas by providing a home for the website. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology designed and maintains the OBBA II data interface that allows volunteers to enter their data and view atlas results.

### **Our Contact Information:**

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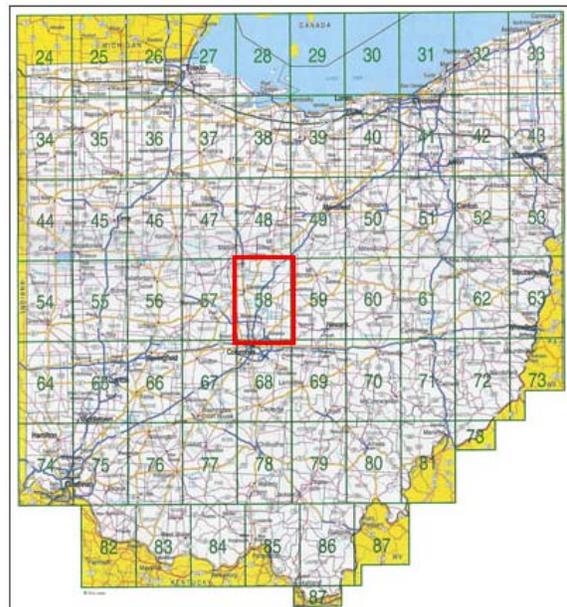
We are excited to have you in our network of Regional Coordinators in the Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas II. Regional Coordinators form a statewide network of experienced individuals whose skills and organization will contribute in significant ways to the completion of the Atlas by 2011. Ultimately, the success of Ohio's second breeding bird atlas will strongly depend on the dedicated efforts of the approximately 40 Regional Coordinators involved in this project.

This document provides information on the general structure of the Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas II and specific roles of Regional Coordinators in the Atlas. This handbook was updated in April 2010. In the current revision, nearly all changes to this document have been minor, but please see page 7 (#3) for important adjustments to the coverage standards for priority and non-priority blocks. Please note that a larger and more comprehensive Atlas Handbook covering general methods for the Atlas is also available on the website (<http://www.ohiobirds.org/obba2/>).

## STUDY AREA AND ATLAS BLOCKS

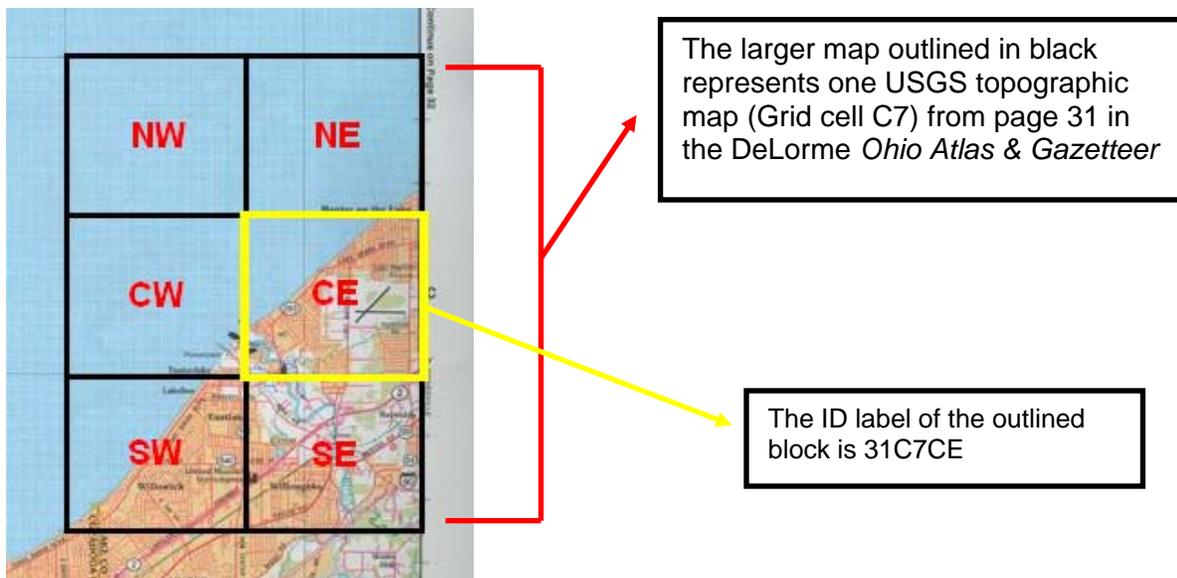
Unlike the 1<sup>st</sup> Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas which was organized by county, Ohio's 2<sup>nd</sup> atlas is organized according to the pages in the DeLorme *Ohio Atlas & Gazetteer* (Figure 1). Each full page of the DeLorme Gazetteer for Ohio\* is composed of 12 complete 7.5-minute USGS topographic maps and 4 USGS topographic map halves. This translates into 84 complete atlas blocks per full DeLorme page. Initially, most Regional Coordinators coordinated activities for 1-2 pages in the DeLorme *Ohio Atlas and Gazetteer*. More recently, we have strived to assign RCs to a single page region wherever possible.

Figure 1. Map showing 64 Ohio Regions based on the DeLorme Gazetteer; one region (page 58) is highlighted. Reproduced from Ohio Atlas & Gazetteer™ with permission of publisher. © Copyright DeLorme.



Similar to the first atlas, the survey unit of Ohio's 2<sup>nd</sup> Atlas project will be the "atlas block". Block boundaries are based on the USGS topographic map system; each topographic map is divided into 6 atlas blocks of equal area (ca. 10 square-miles). Ohio's land area encompasses 806 USGS topographic maps or approximately 4,522 Atlas blocks. Eighty-five blocks containing only small fractions of Ohio land area were dropped from the group of blocks to be surveyed leaving 4,437 atlas blocks. The Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas II plans to survey all of these blocks using a combination of atlas volunteers and paid seasonal staff.

\* The 2007 edition of the DeLorme Gazetteer has a new format that is incompatible with the Atlas block grid structure. Earlier editions should be used for Atlasing.



Reproduced from the *Ohio Atlas & Gazetteer*™ with permission of the publisher. © Copyright DeLorme.

Figure 2. Excerpt from the DeLorme *Ohio Atlas & Gazetteer* showing atlas block boundary delineations of one USGS topographic quadrangle map.

## Block ID Labels and Choosing Atlas Blocks

Each block possesses a unique 6-character ID label, which is based on its DeLorme page (see explanation in Figure 2), the grid cell within that page (e.g., A7, B4), and the position within the grid cell (e.g., NW, CW, SE). The easiest way to figure out the specific ID label of the block that you or another volunteer is interested in surveying is by using the online block finder tool:

<http://www.ohiobirds.org/obba2/blockmap/statemap.php>

To use this tool, click on the DeLorme gazetteer page that contains the area of interest. A larger map will appear with a block grid for that page. Clicking on a particular block of interest will open a larger map of that block with its associated block ID label. You can increase road detail by zooming in with the navigation tool bar.

If a volunteer has no internet access, he/she can use the DeLorme *Ohio Atlas & Gazetteer* to determine where block boundaries occur. Simply locate your survey area of interest (DeLorme page) and use grid cell indicators in the page margins to determine which grid cell contains this area. Each DeLorme grid cell represents one USGS topographic map (Figure 2) and each cell corner is marked with a small crosshair symbol. These symbols are often hard to locate but by looking at page 31 you can easily see these symbols positioned over the blue water of Lake Erie. Take a pencil and lightly outline the grid cell of interest. Use a ruler to divide the resulting rectangle once vertically and twice horizontally to create the 6 Atlas blocks. Each block is labeled according to its position within each DeLorme grid cell (Figure 2).

Once you determine the ID labels of the blocks for you or one of your volunteers, log onto the Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas II website and fill out the block registration form. Please register volunteers for blocks in your Region especially if they do not have internet access. Contact the Atlas Coordinator for further assistance.

## ATLAS BASICS FOR OBBA II

In simple terms, atlasing is bird watching while keeping records within a predefined area (atlas block). This is similar to birding during a Christmas Bird Count, but differs in that during a breeding bird atlas, birders attempt to (when possible) observe bird behaviors that may indicate whether or not a species is breeding within the block. Similar to other atlas efforts, breeding behavior in Ohio's second Atlas will be classified into one of four categories, as either: *observed*, *possible*, *probable*, or *confirmed*. A bird observed once during "safe dates" (a period of the breeding season that should exclude non-breeding migrants or dispersing individuals), but within seemingly *inappropriate* breeding habitat, is placed in the "observed" category (for these records, breeding may be viewed as unlikely). In contrast, a bird observed once within appropriate habitat and during the species' safe dates is considered a "possible" breeder. Observations that provide some indication of breeding (e.g., a male and female seen together, a bird observed in territorial counter-singing with another male) will constitute "probable" breeding. And finally, direct observation of behaviors associated with active nesting in an Atlas block represents "confirmed" breeding (e.g., nest building, observations of active nests, adults carrying food for young, or fledglings). It should be noted that direct observations of nesting behaviors should be coded regardless of whether or not the observation is within safe dates. Safe dates should be reserved for PO, OS, and X coded observations.

Species lists for blocks will be a mixture of observed, possible, probable, and confirmed breeding species, and Atlas volunteers typically work to increase breeding evidence for species that occur within their block. Please note that the effort to upgrade species from possible to probable, or probable to confirmed, should be directed mostly at species of conservation interest or concern in the state; such species are designated with a "2" or "3", or those that are regionally rare or uncommon "1R". However, please note that possible records, "OS", (i.e., observed species within safe dates and appropriate habitat) are still important records for the atlas data base.

By visiting an Atlas block several times during the nesting season and by visiting a diversity of habitats represented in a block, volunteers should be able to achieve "complete" coverage for their blocks (i.e., 75% of an expected species total in a non-priority block). Species that are uncommon or difficult to detect in some way, will make up the majority of "missed" species in a given block, and some of these will receive special efforts in order to increase detections. Special efforts may mean looking for wetland birds, going out in the early evening or predawn for American Woodcock, or trying to add owl detections at night.

***Differences between Ohio's first and second Atlases*** Like other state atlases done in the 1980s and 1990s, the first Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas mapped bird occurrences at a fairly coarse scale. In contrast, in Ohio's 2nd Atlas, volunteers will have the capability of pinpointing observations of individual birds using a map locator tool when they enter observations on the Atlas website (field data from GPS units may also be incorporated). Also different from the first Atlas, volunteers during the second Atlas will have the option to record multiple occurrences of any species within their block instead of just the single record that constitutes the highest level of breeding confirmation for a species.

In addition, during 2007-2011, point-count surveys designed to collect information on the *relative abundance* of species will be conducted by hired research assistants throughout the state; these surveys are an important new component of the second Ohio atlas. No abundance data were collected during the first atlas. In 2009 and 2010, hired research assistants will conduct special surveys for wetland species (rails, bitterns, coots, moorhen, etc.) using tape playback surveys at randomly selected wetlands in glaciated counties of the state. Initially, our intent was to conduct statewide nocturnal surveys for owls and nightjars, but we have done only limited formal surveys for these birds. Instead we have been working to encourage volunteers and RCs to record these species within priority blocks.

## **THE ROLES OF A REGIONAL COORDINATOR**

Regional Coordinators (RCs) differ widely in their ability to contribute to the overall Atlas effort. Below is a list of the most important activities for RCs, but please know that these are not all required and there is some flexibility. Please contact if you have concerns or questions about your involvement as an RC in OBBA II.

### **1) Recruiting Volunteers**

One of your roles as a RC is to recruit individuals to Atlas blocks. Although we work to advertise OBBA II in a variety of ways, we can only reach a subset of potential volunteers in Ohio and border states. You are better acquainted with birders in your area, so getting the word out about the Atlas locally is a big help. Be aware that many individuals in your area will register for blocks on their own through the website, making your work a little easier. We suggest that you seek assistance of bird/naturalist clubs and other individuals and organizations to spread the word about the atlas. Try to involve birder groups in atlasing by asking groups to sign-up for several blocks. Such groups may include a number of individuals that are unable or less interested in signing-up for a block on their own, but may be excited about doing atlasing as a group activity. Some Ohio birder groups adopted blocks in areas away from their cities and towns to do "block-busting" as part of a larger 1-day or 2-day event. When groups sign-up for blocks someone should be responsible for organizing and entering the data.

Please know that we will be happy to help with recruiting whenever help is needed. If you have ideas about promotional activities in your region, please let us know, and we will do our best to work with you.

## 2) Managing Block Ownership Requests

In 2006 the Cornell Lab of Ornithology developed our web-based atlas application. An integral feature of this application is having the ability to view up-to-date information on ownership and survey results for every Atlas block. Both RCs and volunteers can see whether or not an atlas block is owned, who owns the block, the contact information for the regional coordinator, the block's survey status (number of hours spent in block, number of species recorded by volunteer) and sign up for the block, and sign-up for an atlas block. The application was updated in early 2010 to include a more advanced Google Maps interface for easier navigation.

Requests for block ownership may be submitted via the internet and our block registration webpage: <http://www.ohiobirds.org/obba2/registration/blockform.php> (We thank Ned Keller for generously developing the "block finder tool"). If a block is already owned, then a volunteer will be unable to register for that block. These requests will be emailed to the appropriate Regional Coordinator for approval; note that we routinely accept these requests when RCs have not responded within a week or so. Occasionally, block ownership requests come directly to us via phone calls and regular mail. Please contact us for instructions on how to register volunteers who do not have internet access or personal email addresses.

***Who can survey blocks?*** A major goal of OBBA II is to promote public interest in birds. Therefore, we encourage involvement in the Atlas and wish to avoid turning people away from participating. When individuals sign up for blocks we will request information about their birding background. This information and any additional knowledge that RCs have about a volunteer will be used to decide whether blocks will be assigned to individuals. Note that we envision that few people should be denied a request to own a block due to their experience. If someone seems less qualified to do an atlas block, we suggest that you do one of the following:

- Find a partner to share work on an atlas block with the individual
- Take the volunteer to the field when you are atlasing or find someone else that can (this will promote learning about bird ID and atlas methods)
- Invite the volunteer to a bird identification session that you or someone else can organize
- Suggest that they get involved with atlasing efforts through a bird club
- Help the volunteer with resources on bird identification (e.g., field guides, CDs)
- Tell the volunteer that *anyone can contribute to the Atlas for any block in Ohio*; it is not necessary to own a block to submit data for that block.

## 3) Monitoring Block Coverage by Volunteers

Monitoring block coverage by volunteers (how thoroughly blocks are surveyed) is a very important issue for bird atlases. Of primary importance is the percentage of target species

attained relative to the priority block surveyed during the first Ohio atlas. Please note that the expected species targets are *minimum* values and when possible the atlaser should work to achieve 100% or higher. Of secondary importance is the number of hours of field survey effort (driving time not included). We have set the following coverage standards for atlas blocks (Note: these numbers have been modified from those initially laid out in the Atlas):

- ***For priority blocks:*** Record a **minimum of 90% of the expected species target**. A secondary goal is to spend 25 hours of actual *field survey effort* per block. Note that the coverage standard for time is more flexible and depending on circumstances 15-20 hours of field time may be acceptable for priority blocks if the expected species target is met. Fewer hours (possibly as few as 10 hours) may be acceptable in regions with few active volunteers and the atlaser is a highly experienced individual.
- ***For Non-priority Blocks:*** Record a **minimum of 75% of the expected species target**. A secondary goal is to spend 25 hours of actual *field survey effort* per block. However, the coverage standard for time is flexible and 10-15 hours of field time will be acceptable for non-priority blocks if the expected species target is met. Fewer hours may be acceptable in regions with few active volunteers and the atlaser is a highly experienced individual.

The Cornell application is a valuable tool for monitoring survey effort for your region. You can view blocks that are being surveyed and blocks that are not. You can access a current species list and associated highest breeding codes for each block and you can monitor survey effort hours in blocks. This is very useful when monitoring the coverage status of blocks in your region.

We suggest that volunteers make an effort to complete a block within a *single year*, especially if they have only signed-up for one block. Once a block has received sufficient survey effort as defined above, it should be designated by the RC as “complete”. However, even after blocks are “complete”, the block owner (or any other individual) can still add records to that block – block coverage goals are simply used to direct effort to new blocks and expand survey coverage within Ohio. \*\* Ideally, we would like to have the typical observer in Ohio’s second Atlas register for and survey 5 Atlas blocks (or more!) during the 5-year project.

***Important Note #1:*** If a block is over-surveyed, perhaps due to birding popularity or an enthusiastic volunteer, please suggest that the volunteer redirect their time and effort to other blocks that are not owned or under-surveyed. This is a key role for RCs as it will be difficult to complete this atlas if volunteer effort is not actively managed and individuals are not encouraged to switch to new blocks. If a given block has received sufficient survey time (> 25 hours of field time), but only 25 species have been recorded out of an expected total of 50, then additional efforts will still be required. Similarly, if records for key species are missing for a block, then additional effort may be required by the Atlaser or a designated person to “clean up” the block.

***Important Note #2:*** Use of the Cornell web application to monitor volunteer effort requires that volunteers submit data in a timely manner and this may require that RCs push volunteers to regularly submit their data. Unnecessarily slow data entry can keep the Cornell system from functioning efficiently. We will help with this as needed.

#### 4) Reviewing and confirming data submitted by volunteers

RCs will provide the first stage of data quality assurance, by reviewing some records submitted for blocks in their region. The online data entry application makes our work much easier because a system of data checks helps ensure that submitted data are as complete as possible. For a variety of reasons, some observations that are submitted are “flagged”. This may happen because the entered record is of a regionally rare species, or because the species is of high conservation concern, or a species observed outside the safe dates with no breeding evidence provided.

In the case of rare species, regionally rare breeding species, or species of special conservation concern, RCs and project staff will be notified automatically via email when such observations are submitted by volunteers. Decisions about additional follow-up for such observations will be left to the discretion of each Regional Coordinator, but please keep us informed of your intentions. Assistance in confirming such records may also be provided by project staff in Columbus. Especially significant records should be quickly confirmed so that additional details on precise location, breeding status, and number of birds can be noted. ***NOTE: For threatened, endangered or highly unusual species, the precise location of the Atlas breeding record should not be advertised to the birding public if you learned of the record through OBBA II. The Atlas makes each record publicly available through the website (assuming someone has entered the data), but it is not possible for the public to determine the precise locality (beyond the block level. If you were the original observer, then how you choose to disseminate the information is up to you.***

It is relatively simple for anyone who has “registered” on the Atlas website to enter observations for birds seen in any block. Such records, however, will be distinguishable from those submitted for a block by that block’s registered owner. Both the block owner and RC will be able to make recommendations about the retention of those records.

RCs should periodically view results and coverage statistics for all blocks in their region. For blocks in which no data have been entered, RCs should determine if the block owner did not do field work, did not enter data yet, or does not have the ability to enter data. RCs may have to remind owners to enter their data, assist owners with data entry questions (or direct them to the Project office for assistance), and, if possible, collect data forms and have these entered for the block owner. If RCs are unable to help with data entry, data forms should be sent to the main Atlas office as soon as possible.

#### 5) Training Volunteers in Atlas Methods

Atlas volunteers will possess a range of birding skills and some may need clarification about certain aspects of atlas protocol. There may be simple questions pertaining to issues such as song identification, how to confirm breeding, or other aspects of survey protocol. Many questions can be answered with a quick email or phone call. However, we suggest that RCs also consider informal presentations or field-training for volunteers to help improve the field skills and knowledge base of volunteers. We will assist with training when we can, but it isn’t possible

to reach all volunteers in need of help, so some assistance is needed, and certainly appreciated. Another possibility would be to pair less-experienced individuals with volunteers that have more extensive experience with birds. See “*Who can survey blocks?*” on page 3 for additional suggestions.

***Training/educational resources for Regional Coordinators.*** A variety of additional information will be available to assist RCs in the training of volunteers. The Atlas Handbook provides detailed instructions about how to survey Atlas blocks (<http://www.ohiobirds.org/obba2/atlasmaterials.php>). We have created an Atlas Message Board, which again, is available through our website. This board is similar to Toledo’s rare bird message board ([http://www.rarebird.org/forum/forum\\_topics.asp?FID=1](http://www.rarebird.org/forum/forum_topics.asp?FID=1)) and allows atlasers to post questions about any topic related to OBBA II. These messages do not need to be emailed to participants, but instead can be viewed and responded to directly through the message board. This message system should enable volunteers to get feedback from multiple individuals across the state. Finally, we produce a periodic newsletter, the most recent issued in May 2010. This color newsletter should be especially useful for volunteers that do not have computers or internet access. It is viewable on our website, but feel free to request hard copies from us.

## **6) Helping Volunteers with Limited Computer Availability/Familiarity**

Many Atlas volunteers will not have computers or internet access. We request that Regional Coordinators assist volunteers by providing them with atlas materials such as block maps, handbooks, landowner permission letters, field cards, and species lists from the first Atlas. We often have a good supply of these at our talks or at conferences and you are welcomed to take what you need. Alternatively, we can also send directly to volunteers if requested. In other cases, volunteers may have computer and internet access at local libraries; if so, volunteers should be able to print most atlas materials and (hopefully) enter their own atlas data. Other volunteers may simply need instruction concerning technical aspects of using the website to register for blocks, enter data, or view current data. Part of the Atlas Handbook will deal with website operation, but questions will still arise. Again, we will help whenever we can, but assistance from RCs will be both very helpful and much appreciated!!

## **7) Surveying Atlas Blocks**

As a Regional Coordinator you have committed to overseeing the surveying of atlas blocks in your region. This means that *you* also need to actively surveying blocks and this is perhaps the most important contribution of all that an RC can make to the Atlas. While the various roles of Regional Coordinators will constrain your time somewhat, it is important not to sacrifice too much of your field time. Keep in mind that your observations are essential to achieving high quality of coverage in your region. Please note that we can provide assistance in covering blocks in more remote locations using research assistants that are hired each year by the project. Indeed, there are some regions where paid staff has contributed over 50% of all records. We will provide advice whenever needed.

In 2010 and 2011 we will have active discussions with each RC about finishing priority and non-priority blocks. Please keep in mind that if volunteer coverage for any block is ultimately inadequate (e.g., low species tallies, key species missed, few “confirmed” species) efforts must be made to improve coverage of such blocks. Such work will be completed by Regional Coordinators, individuals designated by RCs, or by hired Atlas surveyors. To the extent possible, Regional Coordinators should work to obtain records on owls, nightjars, and woodcock *within priority blocks*.

## **8) Marking Blocks as “Complete”**

It is difficult to record all species that occur in a given block, making it necessary to call a block “complete” prior to documenting all possible species. This is important because these decisions that Regional Coordinators make can enhance the efficiency of volunteers and should help move people into adopting new atlas blocks (or at least start adding records to new blocks). In some cases, it may be better to invest additional effort-hours in new blocks with little coverage than in blocks with a more limited number of species to be added. Please note that some blocks may attain solid coverage of species after 10-15 hours of effort. This will be especially true with experienced Atlas volunteers or in blocks with low bird diversity, such as areas dominated by urban or agricultural land. To expand the survey efforts of volunteers in your region, such blocks can be marked as “complete” ahead of the 25-hour effort goal, assuming that over 90% (priority blocks) 75% (non-priority blocks) of target species have been recorded for the block.

Please review survey effort in all blocks within your region before each field season. The Cornell data entry website offers a useful tool to help with this process (see figure below). To access this tool, go to please click on your Region ID that is listed under your “My Regions” section. Once you see your Region’s block profile map, click on the tab above the map titled “Blocks Summary.” This report gives you all the information that you will need when considering whether to mark blocks as “COMPLETE”.

***IMPORTANT TIP #1:*** Please note that Atlas volunteers who enter data online often may not update their field effort-hours. If you notice that a block has a high number of species with few effort hours, ask the volunteer about their effort so you can make a more informed decision about marking the block. To determine who has entered data in “un-owned” blocks, click on “View All Evidence” and query data from that specific block. You can then access that person’s contact info by clicking on their highlighted name. If in the end, there is little reported effort and yet species coverage is very good, please mark the block as complete and inform us of the situation.

***IMPORTANT TIP #2:*** Try to keep records on the progress of blocks in your region. As you follow-up with individual volunteers about their progress, make notes on a print-out of your region’s block summary as to when the volunteer was contacted and the block statistics at that time. This information may be helpful in making decisions about block completion. Also, you may want to stay in frequent contact with all volunteers in your Region in order to give them important reminders about survey progress or other important developments in the Atlas.

## Block Summary Report Screen

Home	My Home	Enter Observations	Enter Effort	View Regions & Blocks	View Results							
Jump To: <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Block ID"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Region ID"/>		<div style="display: flex; border-bottom: 1px solid #ccc;"> <div style="flex: 1; padding: 2px;">General Information</div> <div style="flex: 1; padding: 2px; border: 2px solid black; border-radius: 50%;"><b>Blocks Summary</b></div> <div style="flex: 1; padding: 2px;">Species Summary</div> </div>										
<b>My Account</b>  My Blocks 58B2CW 58C1CW 58D1SE 58D1SW 67A7SW 68A1NE 79B7CE  <a href="#">View My Requests</a> <a href="#">Change My Password</a> <a href="#">Edit My Profile</a>		Hours of Effort		Number of Species			Complete					
		Owner	Others	OB	PO	PR		CO	Total (-OB)	Target	% of Target	
		58A1CE	0	.5	0	0	0	2	2 (2)	81	2%	<input type="checkbox"/>
		58A1CW	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (0)	81	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
		58A1NE	0	.5	0	7	3	0	10 (10)	81	12%	<input type="checkbox"/>
		58A1NW	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (0)	81	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
		58A1SE	0	47.25	0	34	21	13	68 (68)	81	84%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		58A1SW	0	12.25	0	2	1	0	3 (3)	81	4%	<input type="checkbox"/>
		58A2CE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (0)	68	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
		58A2SE	0	.25	0	0	0	1	1 (1)	68	1%	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Step 1:** Examine “% of Target” column (under block summary tab on your Region Profile page)

- If greater than 90% (priority blocks) or 75% (non-priority blocks) of the species target has been achieved, then proceed to **Step 2**.
- If the percentages are less than 90% or 75% for priority and non-priority blocks, respectively, then leave the block as INCOMPLETE and proceed to **Step 1B**.

**Step 1B:** Recommended steps for blocks that have less than 90% (priority blocks) or 75% (non-priority blocks) of the species target:

- Examine the current species list and look for groups of birds (warblers, sparrows, hawks, nocturnal or wetland species) that are poorly represented or others that are easily missed because they are difficult to detect. The focus for the volunteer effort should be more on less common or hard-to-detect species, with much less effort devoted to common species that in some areas may be localized (maybe a House Sparrow or Rock Pigeon). Encourage the volunteer to target appropriate species or recruit another volunteer for block clean-up. At this step it is important to consider the experience of the volunteer; less experienced volunteers may make more valuable contributions by working a new block than by trying to record a few uncommon or difficult species.
- Examine block mapping resources available through the Atlas website. To focus efforts of the block owner, try to highlight areas with habitat diversity or areas likely to harbor key species (an excellent mapping website with great aerial imagery is <http://maps.live.com/>).
- If block is “owned”, please make suggestions to the block owner about strategies for completion (if necessary). First, suggest that they spend a certain number of

hours of additional survey effort. Other general suggestions might include targeting key species absent from the current list, or locations and times to find missing species. If the observer has recorded five or fewer (new) species in five hours of additional targeted effort, please proceed to **Step 3**.

- If block is “unowned”, try to recruit someone to complete the block, or if possible, complete the block on your own, or let us know where you need help.

**Step 2:** Examine bird groups represented in the block species list

- If there are particular species or groups (for example, warblers, sparrows, owls, hawks) that have poor representation on the block list, then encourage specific ideas of how the volunteer might “round out” the species list. The focus for field effort should be on more local or uncommon species and not so much on common, widespread species that were somehow missed.
- If species list has all or nearly all expected species, then proceed to **Step 3**. Don’t put off marking a block as complete just to get 1-2 common species if the block has very good coverage otherwise.

**Step 3:** Mark block as “COMPLETE”

- **IMPORTANT:** If the completed block was an owned block, please encourage the block owner to sign-up for a new block(s) that has little or no effort. You may want to select 1-2 blocks and provide the volunteer with the Block IDs. You may want to encourage experienced birders to sign-up for priority blocks if some are available, but remember that our goal is to complete all priority blocks in 2010 (so volunteer should commit to completing the block).
- Remember that a block’s “complete” status does not prevent the block owner or anyone else from adding new species to the block.

## **A Final Note...**

As in Ohio's first Atlas, Regional Coordinators in the Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas II are integral to the Atlas. RCs and OBBA II Administration have all been challenged since the start of OBBA II and this will continue in the coming years given the task at hand. We are encouraged by dedication of the RCs that have been involved throughout, and look forward to working with those recently added to the project.

We understand that Regional Coordinators differ in the amount of time they can dedicate to this project. Please bear in mind that we will assist you to our best ability – please do not hesitate to ask for assistance from us if you need it!! Anytime you have questions, concerns, or suggestions about Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas II, we can be reached at:

Paul Rodewald, Director OBBA II  
Matthew Shumar, Atlas Coordinator/Research Associate  
The Ohio State University  
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### **E-mail:**

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[ohiobba2mbs@gmail.com](mailto:ohiobba2mbs@gmail.com) (Matt only)  
[rodewald.2@osu.edu](mailto:rodewald.2@osu.edu) (Paul only, but [ohiobba2@gmail.com](mailto:ohiobba2@gmail.com) preferred)

### **Phone:**

614-247-6458  
614-292-7432 (FAX)

### **Atlas Website:**

<http://www.ohiobirds.org/obba2/>