

## DRAFT Guide to the Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas 2 Online Data Management and Information Tool

Thank you for helping with the Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas 2. Please take the time to enter your field shortly after data collection. This will help to reduce lost data, and will give others working in the block a clear idea of the species found in the block so far. The steps for data entry are listed below, but, in a nutshell,

- Go to [http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bba/index.cfm?fa=explore.ProjectHome&BBA\\_ID=MA2007](http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bba/index.cfm?fa=explore.ProjectHome&BBA_ID=MA2007) to enter data.
- Log in using the **observer code** your Regional Coordinator assigned to you.
- From your list of assigned block select the card you want to open.
- Enter field trip dates and hours.
- Enter breeding codes and dates for each species. Hit “Save”.
- Review the data entries. Edit if needed.
- Print out a “receipt” of your entered data.

At the end of the season, if you are a Primary Observer and have completed your 20 hours, or after you have entered an incidental,

- **Finalize** the data for the block by using the button at the bottom of the data entry form.
- Data is considered DRAFT until the Regional Coordinators review it.

We encourage you to explore the data entry site – you can’t hurt it, and there are many ways to view Atlas 2 and Atlas 1 data. You need to be a registered atlaser to enter data, but anyone can have a look at the data. In this guide we will go through the basics of navigating the site. First, we will go through the steps to log in to the site, and then to navigate through the main windows. In Part 2 we will work on data entry, and in Part 3 we will describe some places to get often requested information.

### **Part 1 – Log In and Get to Know the Main Windows**

#### **Getting An Observer Code**

Some features are only available to registered atlasers, but many features (look at the Results pages) are available to anyone. To join the Atlas, go to the Atlas 2 Home Page (<http://www.massaudubon.org/birdatlas/bba2/methods/index.php>), read the methods and handbook and sign up. In a few days you will be contacted and assigned a block, and an **observer code** for data entry.

#### **Log In**

- Go to the USGS Breeding Bird Atlas Explorer site , [http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bba/index.cfm?fa=explore.ProjectHome&BBA\\_ID=MA2007](http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bba/index.cfm?fa=explore.ProjectHome&BBA_ID=MA2007) .
- In the rightmost window click on the top field that prompts you for your “First and last name *or* your e-mail address”. Either your name (in first, last order, not case-sensitive) or your e-mail address will work.
- Hit <tab> or <enter> and you will jump down to the next blank field where you will enter the **observer code** provided by your Regional Coordinator.
- Ignore the “Password” field (only coordinators are required to have a password).
- Click the outlined “Go” button. You’ll notice in the upper right of the screen that you are “logged in”. If there were typos in your entry, you’ll see a bright yellow bar pop-up telling you that you were not successfully logged in. Retry.
- **LOST OBSERVER CODE?** – Select **Forgot Password?** Enter your name, and the observer code will be emailed to you in a few minutes. Your name must be entered exactly as your Regional Coordinator entered it (e.g. Tom Smith does not equal Thomas Smith).

There are multiple ways to get to the different windows in this site. There are menus along the top, and menus along the left-hand side. **These menus are often the same, but for fun you will want zip around and explore all the features of the site.** If you get lost, just navigate back to **My Atlas View**.

When you go to any of the new windows (My Assigned Blocks, My Incidentals etc) be sure to look at the bottom of the window – there are often links (in [Green Underlined>>](#) letters) to a new window for new data entry, or a deeper view into the data.

## Main Menu

After you log in you'll see **Massachusetts 2007-2012** along the top, and a menu below with three options (the menu across the top is nearly identical to the menu on the far left)

**MA2007Home**

**Results**

**My Atlas View**

**MA2007Home:** Gives you access to **Methods**, **Species Info** and **Results**

- **Methods** - is an abbreviated summary.
- **Species Info** – gives you access to the list of breeding birds, Safe Dates, and breeding habitats.
  - This list can be sorted by beginning or end of safe dates, which is very helpful at the beginning and end of the season.

**Results:** Gives you access to results by block, region etc.

- This is where you get a list of the birds seen in your block during Atlas 1, and any number of other views into the data.

**My Atlas View:** Gives you access to all your own information. You'll spend a lot of time going through this "hub". This hub opens several smaller windows – be sure to notice the [Green Underlined>>](#) links at the bottom of each smaller window, they are very important!

- **My 2007 Assigned Blocks** – shows your assigned blocks, you available cards (*Primary and Supporting*), gives status on your data entry (*start card, open card*), lets you open a card to enter field trip hours and data, and gives access to all blocks in all years
- **My Contributions Summary** – shows a summary of all your sightings, allows you to open and edit cards, allows for downloads of effort and data.
- **My 2007 Incidental** – shows all your Incidental contributions, and their status
- **Block Results Detail** (on left-hand menu) – gives you access to all of the data reported in a block thus far. The stage of the data review is noted, and you can make a copy of this list by highlighting it, and cutting and pasting it into Excel or Word.
- **My Profile** (on left-hand menu) – takes you to your profile where you can change your email address or observer code. If you change any of the fields, remember to hit the **Update** button.
- **Part 2 – Data Entry** Data entry and editing is accomplished on two forms in two windows – the first window records your effort (hours), and a second window records the birds you saw, and what they were doing. After you click **start card** you arrive at the **Field Form: Enter Effort**.

## Open Card

- Log in and get to **My Atlas View**.
- In the **My 2007 Assigned Blocks** window are the names of the blocks your Regional Coordinator has assigned to you, the status of the data entry, and the action you can take.

- Click on the **card name** (*Primary or Supporting*) to add or edit data.
  - Be sure to open the proper card – if you are entering Primary Atlaser data (20-Hour), open that card. If you are entering Supporting Atlaser data (20+-Hour), open that card.

## Enter Effort Form

- For each field trip enter the following-
  - Date,
  - Location in block (this field is mostly for you, sort of a “notes” section),
  - Start time,
  - End time,
  - Total Hours (the website doesn’t calculate the hours, you do. Use 15 minute intervals)
  - Click if owling (owling is defined as birding at night –use this code if owling, whip-poor-willing – any night birding)
- When you are done entering your field trips, hit <enter> or scroll to the bottom and hit **Go**. This takes you to the **Sightings Form**.

## Sightings Form

- Enter the breeding code and date for each species. Use your mouse to navigate to the next species.
  - **TIP:** If you are entering multiple records don’t hit <Enter> between entries – it will automatically Save the data and kick you into the **Field Form Report**. From that point you can select **Edit** and jump back in to data entry, but that could get annoying.
- If you are upgrading, just type over the date of the previous sighting. The previous data will be stored – not overwritten.
  - **TIP:** The column titles are not fixed, so as you scroll through the list of species you will lose the titles. The columns are in the same order as the field checklist, but be sure you are entering data in the correct columns.
- While entering data the website may alert you to problems with your data entry. The error messages are clear, and the actions you need to take are obvious. Most of the error messages appear on the next screen (after you Save your data) – but you can go back and edit data easily.
- **At the bottom** of the Sightings Form are important buttons.
  - **Save** – submits the records you have entered. Don’t worry; you can still edit your records in this session, or at a later date.
  - **Show all species** – toggles between the whole state list, and the smaller state list. If you have a rare bird, it may not be on the smaller list – and you’ll want to see the larger list.
  - **Cancel Entry** – ignores all the information you just typed in. **Needless to say, don’t use it unless you mean it!**
- Click the **Save** button when you are done entering data (at the bottom of the Sightings Form). This calls up a new window, a **Field Form Report**.

## Field Form Report

- This is a summary of all the data entered by you on that field card for the block, and any error messages. It is only your own data for this card – you can’t see the data from other observers in that block, and you can’t see data from your other cards in this or other blocks.
  - **TIP** – use the **Block Results Detail** button (on left menu in My Atlas View to see all data submitted for any block.
- From this form you can **Edit or add trips**, or **Edit or Correct** the sightings you have entered.
  - **Remember to make maps of the rare species, and to fix your error messages.**
- Here you can also **Finalize** the block. **Don’t Finalize unless you have finished your 20 hours as a Primary Observer, have entered an incidental or are done for the season.**

- If you do hit **Finalize** before you want to, a warning notice will appear and you can back out.
- Only a coordinator or MassAudubon ([birdatlas@massaudubon.org](mailto:birdatlas@massaudubon.org)) can reopen a finalized field form. It is not the end of the world, but lets avoid it.
- You can also **Print The Page** as a receipt of the current state of the highest code for each species in the block that you have entered, and any Messages (these are likely to be either error messages, or reminders to submit maps for rare species).
- To get out of this window, look at the options on the bottom to, or select one of the buttons on the top or left.
- Don't forget to log out (up top), and exit the web site.

***That's it!*** You have successfully entered your Atlas data. The data can be viewed by others through the **Block Results Detail** button, but is still available for editing by you until you hit **Finalize**. All data is considered DRAFT until it has been Finalized by the observer, and Reviewed by the Regional Coordinators and Mass Audubon.

### Entering Incidentals

- Log in and get to **My Atlas View**.
- Choose **Enter New Incidental >>** in the **My Incidentals** window.
- Fill in the form with name, block etc. Hit **Continue** button.
- Fill in the date and behavior code. Hit **Save**.
- **Finalize** Incidentals when you enter them. You should not need to edit them later.
  - If you get more information from the same block at a later date simply enter it as a new Incidental.

### Part 3: How Do I.....?

- ...Get a copy of the block data from Atlas 1?
  - Go to **Results** (you get lots of info here)
  - Select the quad and block name
  - Highlight the data with your mouse, and, cut and paste into Word, or Excel
  - Look for a Print feature in the future
- ....Know what other people have found in my block?
  - Go to **My Atlas View**
  - Choose **Block Results Detail** button on left
  - Cut and paste as above
  - Look for a Print feature in the future
- ....How do I change my email or Observer Code?
  - Go to **My Atlas View**
  - Choose the My **Profile** button
  - Make changes and hit **Update**
  - We use a different email list for communications. Please let Mass Audubon also know if your email changes at [birdatlas@massaudubon.org](mailto:birdatlas@massaudubon.org). Put "email change" in the subject line.